

## Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Havering Test & Trace Support Payment Scheme
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Roger Ramsey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Jane West – Chief Operating Officer
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Chris Henry – 01708 432413
<b>Policy context:</b>	To introduce a Test & Trace Policy and Process in Havering to support self-isolating residents on in work benefits who are unable to work and have no income for 14 days.
<b>Financial summary:</b>	Financial information is not yet available however, the Department of Health & Social Care have stated that set up, administrative and scheme costs will be funded in full.
<b>Relevant OSC:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Board
<b>Is this decision exempt from being called-in?</b>	No

### The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Part A – Report seeking decision

### DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

From Monday 28 September 2020, people in England who test positive or are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace system will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Alongside the new legal requirement to self-isolate and to ease the burden on low income, working individuals, Government require Local authorities to introduce a Test and Support Payment Scheme.

The Disability Association Barking & Dagenham (DABD) currently administer the Emergency Assistance Scheme with the Council Tax & Benefits Service on behalf of the Council and are well placed to manage a Test and Support Payment Scheme in Havering.

#### Recommendations

1. That the approach set out in Appendix A for a Havering Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme in Havering is endorsed.
2. To approve DABD working closely with the Council Tax & Benefits Service to administer the Havering Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.

### AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Constitution- Responsibility for Functions: Para. 2.2 (a) (i) relating to taking decisions relating to the Councils finances including but not exclusively budget control.

### STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In a letter dated 20 September 2020, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced its plans regarding self-solation and duties for individuals and local authorities. This letter is attached at Appendix C.
- 1.2 Government, the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC), require individuals who test positive or are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace system to self-isolate for 14 days.

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- 1.3 In addition and also from 28 September 2020, new fines ranging from £1,000 up to £10,000 will also be introduced for individuals who break the rules.
- 1.4 To help stop the transmission of Covid-19 and avoid further economic restrictions, Councils are required to support people on low incomes who are self-isolating with a payment of £500.00. This is known as the Test and Trace Support Scheme and is expected to be in place
- 1.5 The Havering Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme is based on Government guidance which is attached at Appendix B.

## **2. Summary of the Test and Trace Payment Scheme**

- 2.1 From 28 September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 if they:
  - Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
  - Are employed or self-employed
  - Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
  - Are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.
- 2.2 In exceptional circumstances the Council will be able to make a discretionary £500 lump sum payment to an individual who meets the main qualifying criteria for the Test and Trace Support Payment (i.e. they are a low-income worker who is unable to work because they are self-isolating) but is not in receipt of qualifying benefits and could suffer financial hardship as a result of not being able to work.
- 2.3 Guidance around data requirements to support discretionary applications is currently in progress with DHSC and will be issued to authorities when developed.
- 2.4 Application will be made online via PCs, laptops or mobile phones (or a telephone application if the individual is digitally excluded). Evidence will be captured and verified in relation to the NHS notification to self-isolate, banks statements, benefits and employment.

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- 2.5 The £500 will be paid to individuals in a single payment and will be subject to income tax.
- 2.6 The scheme should commence no later than 12 October 2020 although residents may register to apply from 28 September 2020. Government have said the scheme will run for four months until 31 January 2021. A policy for Havering is attached at Appendix A.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 Local authorities are challenged to develop a scheme and process in such a short timescale. Some London authorities who have local welfare or Emergency Assistance Schemes are using those teams to administer the Test and Trace Support Scheme. This is because a processes around making and recording payments and verifying benefits are already set up and can easily be adapted for the Test and Trace Scheme.
- 3.2 Other London authorities will be using Benefit Assessment Officers to administer the applications for the Test and Trace Scheme where local welfare teams are not in place or unable to deliver a scheme and process by 12 October 2020.
- 3.3 Havering's Emergency Assistance scheme is administered by DABD and some procedures are already in place between them and Havering which will expedite the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. Process mapping has confirmed the remaining areas development will not prevent the scheme going live in the middle of October.
- 3.4 DABD are currently under contract to Havering and are fully briefed and keen to set up and deliver an online application and payment system for the Havering Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.
- 3.5 An addendum to the current contract would be required progress the scheme with DABD with the aim of providing a live service by 12 October 2020.

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**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

**Administer the Scheme In-House**

The speed at which the scheme is required to be introduced would have placed significant burdens on the Benefits Service who are maintaining complex housing benefit and council tax support claims. To divert staff to the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme would mean backfilling of posts and delay payments of benefits. Benefits Services will support DABD with DWP and NHS verification checks.

**PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION**

The Leader of the Council and Councillor Roger Ramsey

**NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER**

Name: Chris Henry

Designation: Head of Council Tax & Benefits

Signature:



Date: 29 September 2020

## **Part B - Assessment of implications and risks**

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

An addendum to the current contract with DABD will be drafted for a four month period. It will allow for changes in the level of service as demand dictates.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The UK Government will provide funding to meet the full estimated costs of delivering the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. This includes set-up, scheme and administration costs.

Further details will follow on the funding for scheme costs (costs of payments to applicants), administrative costs and the discretionary fund.

There will be a 'down-payment' based on expected programme/admin costs with additional funding provided as necessary on a monthly basis (based on changes in estimated costs) – and a fixed four-month envelope for the discretionary fund.

The administrative funding will be designed to cover the full estimated costs of both setting up the scheme and running the scheme, but Councils are advised it will not be possible to match fund to the specific costs incurred by individual local authorities.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)**

The recommendations in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would directly affect the Council's workforce. There will be additional verification work arising from the new Test and Trace scheme and this will be managed by the Council Tax & Benefits Service.

**EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support is even more essential to support the financial health of low income households due to the Coronavirus.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A – Havering Test & Trace Support Payment Policy  
Appendix B – Draft One Payment Implementation Guidance  
Appendix C – Letter from SoS Health and Social Care 20 September 2020

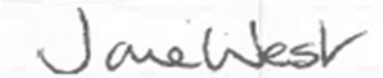
**Non-key Executive Decision**

**Part C – Record of decision**

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

**Decision**

**Details of decision maker**

Signed 

Name: Jane West

Cabinet Portfolio held:  
CMT Member title: Chief Operating Officer  
Head of Service title  
Other manager title:

Date: 07/10/2020

**Lodging this notice**

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

**For use by Committee Administration**

This notice was lodged with me on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_