



## North Devon Council

Report Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July

### Topic: Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme

Report by: Head of Customer Focus

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the guidance for the Energy Rebate scheme in February 2022.
- 1.2. As part of this scheme there is a discretionary element which NDC has the autonomy to allocate to support those suffering hardship as a result of the rising cost of living.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To approve the recommendations for the dispersal of the discretionary fund as set out in 4.4 – 4.8.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure we distribute the discretionary element of the Energy Rebate Fund to those who did not meet the criteria of main scheme but have a proven need.
- 3.2. To ensure we have a targeted approach top up those households who have already benefited from the main scheme but we have identified as most vulnerable.

#### 4. REPORT

- 4.1. On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 DLUHC published the guidance and billing authority allocations for the implementation of the Council Tax (Energy) Rebate and the Discretionary Fund.
- 4.2. NDC was allocated £192,000 to distribute for the Discretionary element of the fund which must be spent by end November 2022.
- 4.3. Guidance on the distribution of this fund states ‘ Councils can determine locally how best to make use of this funding to support those suffering financial hardship as a result of the rising cost of living. This could include households living in property valued in bands E to H that are on income related benefits or those where the energy bills payers are not liable for council tax. Where councils consider it the best means of supporting those in financial difficulty, they can use the discretionary fund to offer carefully targeted ‘top-up’ payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A to D (for example, those on means tested benefits), or to offer discretionary support exceeding £150 per household.’

- 4.4. In accordance with 4.3, we will be awarding £150 to each household in bands E-H who claim council tax support.
- 4.5. We will, through social media, website and other means encourage householders in bands A-D who are not direct Council Tax payers but are liable for utility bills, to apply for a payment of £150.
- 4.6. We will use a proportion of the fund to 'top' up' payments to working age households in bands A-D who claim council tax support as at 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- 4.7. This will be administered via the Post Office payout scheme, incorporated with an allocation from the separate Household Fund, meaning only one visit to the post office will be required. By combining these funds households will receive a payment of around £70.
- 4.8. These Post Office vouchers will be issued end July / start August which is when many households incur additional costs within the school holidays.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The discretionary allocation of £192,000 is funded by Government Grant which the Council has already received.
- 5.2. New burdens funding will cover all additional administration costs for this fund.
- 5.3. Existing internal resources will be used for the administration.

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Please detail if there are/are not any equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report. If so, please complete the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Summary form available on Insite and email to the Corporate and Community Services Team at [equality@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:equality@northdevon.gov.uk).
- 6.2. No equality implications have been identified.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. Please undertake an Environmental Assessment and complete the checklist (EAC) form available on Insite. If there are no environmental implications arising from your proposals please state that there are none. If after completion of the assessment there are environmental implications please provide a brief summary. If you require any further information please contact the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer. Email completed EACs to [donna.sibley@torridge.gov.uk](mailto:donna.sibley@torridge.gov.uk)
- 7.2. There are no environmental implications arising from the proposals in this report.

## 8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:
  - 8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda:

8.1.2. Improving customer focus - this scheme will give our most financially disadvantaged households a cash boost to assist with the ongoing increase in household expenses.

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development

## 9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Article of Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph: 1(d)

9.2. Referred or delegated power? Delegated

## 10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

- Support for energy bills – the council tax rebate 2022-23: Billing Authority Guidance

## 12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Sarah Higgins Head of Customer Focus