

Strategy and Resources Committee

25 January 2024

URGENT DECISIONS

Head of Service:	Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	Not applicable
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) To note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the Committee.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

2 Background

- 2.1 The scheme of delegation sets out that the Chief Executive and Directors are authorised to take decisions on grounds of urgency regarding matters which would otherwise be reserved for determination by a Committee or Council. A matter can be deemed urgent if, in the reasonable opinion of the officer concerned, a delay would seriously prejudice the interest of the Council or of the public and it is not practicable to convene a quorate meeting of the relevant decision-making body in sufficient time to take the decision.

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- 2.2 Since the last meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee, two urgent decisions have been taken. Both were agreed with the Chair of this committee. They are as follows:

Urgent decision 1, number 114, household support fund

- 2.3 Last year, central government introduced Tranche 4 of Household Support Fund (HSF) for 2023/24. Funding for the scheme is initially provided to Surrey County Council (SCC) who have overall control and responsibility for administering HSF.
- 2.4 As in previous years SCC allocated each Surrey District a percentage of the funding for use in their area. EEBC was allocated £214,528 on condition it uses the funding as specified by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance and submits the complex management information required to County throughout the year.
- 2.5 It was previously agreed by Strategy and Resources Committee to continue with the successful arrangements that had been put in place for Tranche 3 of HSF. This involved The Good Company being awarded £100K of funding to use within the borough, with the remaining £114k to be dispersed to individuals by Epsom & Ewell BC's revenues and benefits department.
- 2.6 £50k was passed to the Good Company in summer 2023 and has been successfully dispersed, with the second £50k instalment due to be passed to The Good Company on request. However, over Christmas The Good Company informed officers that it now expects to only successfully disperse a further £25k within the rules of the scheme, before the scheme deadline of 31 March 2024. Therefore EEBC now needs to decide how to allocate the remaining £25k to avoid potentially losing the funding by 31 March 2024.
- 2.7 To address this it is proposed that The Good Company is provided with the additional £25k that they have requested and the remaining £25k will be added to the £114k that is currently held by EEBC. The total of £139k will then be awarded by the Revenues team on to the council tax accounts of qualifying residents, who are identified using the benefit and vulnerability data already held within the department. This would also allow each award made to qualifying residents to be larger.
- 2.8 Given the need to spend this money within the timescales set, this matter has been discussed with the Chair of S&R and the action set out in 2.7 above agreed.

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Urgent decision 2, number 115, consultation response to provisional 24/25 government finance settlement

2.9 In providing the council with its provisional financial settlement for next year, the government also asked a series of questions, by way of consultation on the settlement, the responses to which were required by the 15th January 2024.

2.10 The Head of Finance provided a draft response to the consultation which was shared with the Chair of S&R committee and was also produced on members news. No comments were received on the proposed wording and the chair agreed to support the proposed response to the consultation, which has been submitted.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None arise directly from this report, although the beneficiaries of the household support fund will be people who are recognised as vulnerable and in need of support.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None arise from this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 No issues arise from this support.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None

4 Financial Implications

4.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The financial implications are set out in the report above and on the urgent decision notices.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** this report details decisions made by the urgent decision process and is consistent with the provisions of the constitution.

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6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- n/a

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** N/a

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

6.5 **Partnerships:** The partnership working with The Good Company is referenced

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- N/a

Other papers:

- N/a