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Meeting	CABINET
Time/Day/Date	5.00 pm on Tuesday, 23 March 2021
Location	Remote Meeting using Microsoft Teams
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

AGENDA

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring disclosable interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is pecuniary or non-pecuniary.	
3. AMENDMENTS TO THE TEST AND TRACE DISCRETIONARY POLICY	
Report of the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services Presented by the Housing, Property, and Customer Services Portfolio Holder	3 - 6
4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
The officers consider that the press and public should be excluded during consideration of the following items in accordance with Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 as publicity would be likely to result in disclosure of exempt or confidential information. Members are reminded that they must have regard to the public interest test and must consider, for each item, whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure outweighs the public interest in making the item available.	
5. NEEDHAM'S WALK COALVILLE	
Report of the Strategic Director of Place Presented by the Leader of the Council	7 - 18

Circulation:

Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)
Councillor R Ashman (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor R D Bayliss
Councillor T Gillard
Councillor N J Rushton
Councillor A C Woodman

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021



Title of Report	AMENDMENTS TO THE TEST AND TRACE DISCRETIONARY POLICY	
Presented by	Councillor Roger Bayliss Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	<u>Test & Trace - Discretionary Payment Scheme – Officer Decision October 2020</u>	Public Report: Yes
		Key Decision: Yes
Financial Implications	The revision of the scheme will increase the number of eligible claims for Test and Trace payments. This is funded by Central Government grant in full and as such, there are no anticipated implications to NWLDC.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	None.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	None.	
	Signed off by the Deputy Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To revise the Test & Trace - Discretionary Payment Scheme to increase the number of eligible claimants.	
Reason for Decision	The original discretionary scheme was approved under the emergency decision making powers of the Chief Executive and did not include further delegation. The report seeks authority to revise the scheme to increase the number of eligible claimants.	
Recommendations	THAT CABINET: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) APPROVE REVISION TO THE DISCRETIOANRY SCHEME BY WAY OF THE FOLLOWING CHANGES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REMOVAL OF THE NON-DEPENDENT RESTRICTION • INCREASE THE CAPITAL LIMIT TO £2,000 2) DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO MAKE FURTHER REVISION TO THE DISCRETIONARY SCHEME AS REQUIRED FOR THE DURATION OF ITS EXISTENCE. 	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In October 2020 the Council launched a Test and Trace payment scheme, as mandated by Government, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The scheme was launched to ensure that those on low income, would not be financially disenfranchised by the requirement to self-isolate under the Track and Trace scheme, by virtue of a £500 payment to supplement income during the mandatory isolation period.
- 1.3 Local Authorities were asked to devise a discretionary scheme, which was to cater for those who did not meet the automatic entitlement criteria but otherwise were in need of financial support.
- 1.4 NWLDC's discretionary scheme was approved in October 2020, under the emergency decision making powers of the Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.5 The scheme has been live since October. Utilisation to March 2021 is detailed in table.

Table 1: NWLDC Discretionary Test and Trace Payments.

Original Allocation	Additional funding *	Total	Spend @ 2/3/21	Fund remaining
£21,663	£6,836	£28,499	£2,000	£26,499

- 1.6 Demand for the discretionary scheme, as detailed in Table 1 is relatively low.

2.0 RECENT NATIONAL CHANGES

- 2.0 The scheme has been extended until 30 June 21.
- 2.1 Applications are allowed 28 days after being told to isolate.
- 2.2 New monies have been issued for discretionary funding.
- 2.4 The scheme is to be expanding to allow us to pay one parent or guardian who has to stay off work to look after a child who is self-isolating (where the parent or guardian is not required to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace but meets all the other eligibility criteria for a main support payment or a discretionary payment).

3.0 CURRENT QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Test and Trace Discretionary Support Payment

- 3.1 To be considered for a Discretionary Payment a claimant must be on a low income, facing financial hardship and meet all the following criteria:
 - A resident within the LA area
 - Have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace either because they've tested Positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.
 - Be employed or self-employed.
 - Be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.

- Have not received a payment under the Scheme for their current period of self-isolation.

3.2 Additionally, in considering whether a Discretionary Support Payment should be made, the claimant must also meet the following criteria:

- They are not currently in receipt of Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based), Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.
- Will face severe demonstrable financial hardship, as a direct result of not being able to work whilst self-isolating and unable to pay essential bills.
- Will usually have maximum earnings of no more than £250 gross per week (with a lower limit of £80 and would normally work 16 hours a week).
- (*Please note that the full household expenditure will be taken into account when assessing any applications).
- Have savings below £1,000.
- The discretionary scheme is not open to University students, those in Higher Education together with non-dependents in a household that don't have a rent/mortgage liability/council tax liability.
- Applicants who usually have no recourse to public funds may be considered, providing they meet all of the above discretionary criteria.

4.0 PROPOSED CHANGES

4.1 It is proposed to make the following changes:

- Remove the non-dependent restriction.
- Increase the capital limit to £2,000.

4.2 It is recommended that delegation is given to the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Service, in consultation with the Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, to revise the scheme going forwards.

5.0 RETROSPECT AND URGENCY

5.1 The Chief Executive Officer's urgent decision making powers, have been used to permit the award of payment under the proposed revised scheme, prior to the Cabinet date, bringing payment of the revised scheme in line with other Revenues and Benefits Partnership partners.

5.2 The approval of the Chairman of the Council has been given to the exemption of the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules, in relation to the call-in of the decision on this item, to avoid any delay in the payment of the revised scheme, ensuring maximum availability to potential claimants.

5.3 This has been done to harmonise the payment of scheme with other Revenue and Benefit Partnership partners, and to ensure that all claimants who would be entitled under the revised scheme, are not financially disenfranchised from self-isolating.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	N/A
Safeguarding:	The changes will help ensure that those who should be self-isolating but on low income, are financial able to do so.
Equalities/Diversity:	The changes will help ensure that those who should be self-isolating but on low income, are financial able to do so.
Customer Impact:	The changes will help ensure that those who should be self-isolating but on low income, are financial able to do so.
Economic and Social Impact:	The changes will help ensure that those who should be self-isolating but on low income, are financial able to do so.
Environment and Climate Change:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	N/A
Risks:	None.
Officer Contact	Tom Shardlow Head of Customer Service, Corporate Property and Assets tom.shardow@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Likely to contain exempt information under paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 5.

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