

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

**DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS**1. Purpose of Report

To request approval for an increase in the level of funding available in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to be funded from the Council's own financial resources.

2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that an increase in funding of £36,000 from the Council's own resources be provided to support the DHP funding allocation in 2022/23, with the costs being met from a one-off allocation from General Fund reserves.**

3. Detail

The Council has received notification from the DWP of a reduced level of funding in respect of DHP for 2022/23, with the amount notified being £81,905. This is a reduction in the allocation from £88,387 at the same point in 2021/22, although the government did then provide an additional £29,565. The government has announced that a further £2m is to be made available in 2022/23 to local authorities, with Broxtowe receiving an additional £1,698. This will take the total DWP contribution in 2022/23 to £83,608, albeit over £36,000 less than the £119,655 that was distributed in the previous financial year.

Under the DHP legislation, the Council is able to allocate its own resources if it feels necessary to the value of 2.5 times that of the allocation from the DWP making a potential fund of £209,008.

As at 18 August 2022, the Council had already issued payments totalling £23,525 in 2022/23 and committed a further £20,582 in future spend. Based on this trajectory, the allocation of DWP funding would be exhausted by December 2022.

Although measures have been implemented to assist with the rising cost of living, such as the Housing Support Fund and the Energy Rebate, it is still expected that the most vulnerable will require additional support. DHP provides the Council to target those most vulnerable in the community and provide direct support to them for any housing costs.

4. Financial Implications

The comments of the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

It is proposed that the Council provides additional funding from its own resources to bring the level of DHP funding available in 2022/23 up to the value of the amount distributed in 2021/22 (£119,655).

If supported, the additional cost of up to £36,000 would have to be met by a one-off allocation from General Fund revenue reserves. Any additional commitment beyond the current financial year will be considered as part of the annual budget setting process.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The power to award DHP's is contained within the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001(SI2001/1167) as amended. These regulations govern the Council's ability to make payments by way of financial assistance to persons that are entitled to housing benefit or relevant universal credit who appear to the Council they need further assistance to meet housing costs. However, the Regulations are clear that the Council has complete discretion as to whether to make any payment and or the amount of payment.

6. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL Sensitive information.

7. Background Papers

Nil