

COUNCIL

24 NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A.1 EXECUTIVE DECISION(S) TAKEN AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To notify Members of recent Executive Decision(s) taken in the circumstances set out in the Council's Constitution in:-

- (a) Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Special Urgency); and/or
- (b) Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Call-in and Urgency); and/or
- (c) Rule 6(b) of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the requirements of Rule 16.2 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and/or Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and/or Rule 6(b) of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, this report notifies Members of recent Executive Decision(s) taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and/or Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of the report be noted.

PART 2 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The "Special Urgency" procedure in Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules provides that where a key decision cannot be reasonably deferred to allow the procedure in Rule 14 (General Exception) of those procedure rules to be followed, it may still be taken with the agreement of the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee, or failing him/her, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules provides that the "call-in" procedure will not apply to a decision if the Chairman, or failing him/her the Vice-Chairman, of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee agrees both that the decision is reasonable in all its circumstances and that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

DECISIONS TAKEN AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

(1) Changes to the Council's Discretionary Business Grants Policy

On 24 September 2020, the Housing Portfolio Holder (Councillor P B Honeywood) acting in accordance with a power delegated to him and in view of the urgency of the issue concerned, in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedures Rules and also Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, sought and subsequently obtained the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (Councillor M E Stephenson) consent that his decision relating to a change to the Council's Discretionary Business Grants Policy be both taken using the 'Special Urgency' procedure and be exempt from the Council's call-in procedure.

The Housing Portfolio Holder's decision, in consultation with the Chief Executive, was as follows:

"To introduce a new grant level of £5,739 to replace the existing £5,000 grant level within the Council's Discretionary Business Grants Policy."

It was felt that any delay likely to be caused by the usual key decision and call-in processes would have seriously prejudiced the Council's and the public's interest for the following reasons:-

"It was felt to be vital that the Council was able to pay money out to local businesses as quickly as possible in order to meet the Government's expectation of making all payments under the Discretionary Business Grants scheme by the end of September 2020."

BACKGROUND PAPERS

(1) Changes to the Council's Discretionary Business Grants Policy

Letter dated 24 September 2020 from the Housing Portfolio Holder to the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Accompanying Briefing Note prepared by the Assistant Director (Finance & IT).

Reply dated 25 September 2020 from the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee signifying his consent to allow the decision to be both taken using the 'Special Urgency' procedure and also exempt from call-in.

APPENDICES

None.