



City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services
Date:	19 January 2018
Classification:	For General Release (Exempt from disclosure – Appendix A)
Title:	Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel: (15.01.18) Determination of Discretionary Housing Payment Review Applications
Wards Affected:	None
Policy Context:	Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme
Financial Summary:	See paragraph 5
Report of:	Gwyn Thomas, Senior Benefits Policy Officer (Revenues & Benefits)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report contains recommendations from the Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel meeting on 15 January 2018 relating to the review of decisions made in respect of claims for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Appendix A to this report be exempt from public disclosure by virtue of paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because the applications involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services approves the recommendations of the Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel meeting of 15 January 2018.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 The Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel has set out the reasons for the recommendations in each case considered by the Panel in the

recommendations in Appendix A, which are more fully set out in the case papers submitted to the Panel.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel is an advisory body of elected Members, which has been established to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property & Corporate Services.
- 4.2 The Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel reviews decisions made in respect of a claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment and makes recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property & Corporate Services. The Cabinet Member is then asked to determine the applications for a Discretionary Housing Payment having regard to the recommendations of the Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme is cash limited and is provided for in part by a contribution from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The limit and the DWP's contribution are set out in annual financial orders by way of a Permitted Total. If, or when, the DWP contribution is spent an authority has the discretion to call on its own funds in order to make payments. The maximum amount that an authority has the discretion to spend is the difference between the DWP contribution and the Permitted Total for that year. If any DWP contribution is unspent at the end of the financial year it is returned to the DWP.
- 5.2 For 2017/18 the funds available for DHP will be £2,405,376 which comprises the Government contribution of £1,405,376 and £1,000,000 the City Council has made available.
- 5.3 To date for 2017/18 the City Council has committed to making awards that will result in spend of £1,721,770 which does not exceed the total amount available.
- 5.4 The proposed recommendations will result in an additional Discretionary Housing Payment award of £14,484.60 being made. Of the total award, DHP of £10,584.90 will be drawn from the funds available for 2017/18. The remaining £3,899.70 will be drawn from the funds available for 2018/19 which will be confirmed when DWP announce the Government contribution for 2018/19.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Discretionary Housing Payments were introduced by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 and started from 2 July 2001.
- 6.2 The Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme allows an authority to grant an award to someone where the authority considers that that person requires further help in addition to the Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit that they receive.
- 6.3 A Discretionary Housing Payment can be paid where:

There is some entitlement to Housing Benefit, but:

- i) the claimant receives less than the full amount of Housing Benefit because his or her income is too high; or
- ii) the amount of rent used in the assessment is less than the rent charged because of rent restriction; or
- iii) a combination of the above.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Tristan Fieldsend on 020 7641 2341 or e-mail: tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report and supporting papers from DHP meeting of Monday 15 January 2018.

For completion by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: _____

Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services

State nature of interest if any

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(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Discretionary Housing Payment Review Advisory Panel (15.01.18): Determination of Discretionary Housing Payment Review Applications** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy & Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

