



Reading
Borough Council
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DECISION BOOK

Issue: 662 Date: 13 OCTOBER 2022

Decisions set out in the book have been made under delegated powers by the Chief Executive, Executive Directors or the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, in consultation either with the relevant committee or Lead Councillor.

This issue of the decision book will be in public circulation up until **Sunday 23 October 2022**. During that period three Councillors may request in writing to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services that a decision should be referred either to a committee, or to the Council (as appropriate) for formal resolution.

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<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/mgListOfficerDecisions.aspx?bcr=1&BAM=0>

The officer reports accompanying the decisions are attached.

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DECISION BOOK - ISSUE 662 - 13 OCTOBER 2022

1. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - EXTENSION - PHASE 2

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - EXTENSION - PHASE 2	COUNCILLOR BROCK	BOROUGHWIDE	1

This report sets out the decision to use the latest round of Household Support Funding to support vulnerable families and individuals from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. The funding amount allocated to the Council by the Department for Work and Pensions is £1,130,648.94. The fund must be spent or committed to by 30 September 2022.

It is the decision of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council that the remaining Household Support Fund extension funding will be allocated as follows:

- (a) Reading voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to support Reading residents with ongoing food, warmth and living costs, as laid out in section 4 of this report
- (b) A targeted Energy Voucher Scheme for families with school age children eligible for Pupil Premium Free School Meals, vulnerable children up to nursery age and care leavers (1 x £49 voucher per family/care leaver)

2. APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
2. APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS	COUNCILLOR MCEWAN	WHITLEY	6

This report sets out the decision to appoint Local Authority governors to Reading schools.

It is the decision of the Director of Education, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education that the proposals as set out in paragraph 4 be approved.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR BROCK - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL		
DATE:	13 OCTOBER 2022		
TITLE:	HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - EXTENSION - PHASE 2		
SERVICE:	CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
AUTHOR:	ISABEL EDGAR	TEL:	07923 272292
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES	E-MAIL:	isabel.edgar@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to use the latest round of Household Support Funding to support vulnerable families and individuals from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. The funding amount allocated to the Council by the Department for Work and Pensions is £1,130,648.94. The fund must be spent or committed to by 30 September 2022.
- 1.2 In summary, the Grant Conditions are to provide support to households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in cases of genuine emergency) due to significantly rising living costs.
- 1.3 This funding round places a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain priorities. Additionally, at least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on people receiving the state pension.
- 1.4 The previous Decision Book (issue 658) laid out initial proposals for this funding. This report provides proposals for use of the remaining funding (approx. £290,000) as set out in section 4.
- 1.5 The following nine Decision Books have been completed relating to previous Household Support Funding:
 - January 2021 (issue 620, dated 7 January 2021)

- March 2021 (issue 624, dated 12 March 2021)
- April 2021 (issue 631, dated 27 April 2021)
- June 2021 (issue 634, dated 17 June 2021)
- July 2021 (issue 637, dated 29 July 2021)
- October 2021 (issue 641, dated 19 October 2021)
- December 2021 (issue 646, dated 21 December 2021)
- April 2022 (issue 655, dated 7 April 2022)
- May 2022 (issue 658, dated 18 May 2022)

2.0 DECISION

2.1 It is the decision of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council that the remaining Household Support Fund extension funding will be allocated as follows:

- (a) Reading voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to support Reading residents with ongoing food, warmth and living costs, as laid out in section 4 of this report**
- (b) A targeted Energy Voucher Scheme for families with school age children eligible for Pupil Premium Free School Meals, vulnerable children up to nursery age and care leavers (1 x £49 voucher per family/care leaver)**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) have over the past two years provided several rounds of grant funding related to provision of food and energy support. The details of these can be found in the previous nine decision books.
- 3.2 The DWP have revised the funding criteria for the latest funding round. At least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on people receiving the state pension. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that the HSF extension should be used in a similar way as the original HSF scheme, although, with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain priorities.

4. PHASE 2 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Approximately £290,000 of funding is likely to be available from the original funding allocation. The exact total will be confirmed after 30 September 2022 once the energy voucher scheme has closed and any underspends have been calculated.
- 4.2 Consultation across services and directorates has taken place in order to identify key priorities for the remaining funding (within the parameters of the grant conditions) that are simple to administer and quick to distribute.
- 4.3 An additional £49 Energy Voucher will be provided to the same families / care leavers who have been provided with an initial £49 voucher earlier in this funding round - those with school age children eligible for Pupil Premium Free School Meals / vulnerable children up to nursery age (1 x £49 voucher per family) and approximately 140 care leavers (1 x £49 voucher per care leaver). Maximum spend

= £197,000.

4.4 Grant proposals:

- Food support for vulnerable families/individuals:
 - Readifood inc. Norcot Pantry (£20,000)
 - Whitley Community Development Association (£7,500)
 - Weller (£7,500)
 - New Beginnings (£7,500)
 - Wycliffe (£7,500)
 - CIRDIC (£5,000)
 - Sadaka (£5,000)
- Winter clothing for children and young people:
 - New Beginnings (£3,000)
 - Whitley Community Development Association (£3,000)
 - Weller Centre (£3,000)
 - First Days (£3,000)
 - Sadaka (£3,000)
- Winter clothing and warmth support (including for carers, people with disabilities and the homeless) (£10,000) - The Cowshed
- Winter clothing and food support for refugees (£5,000) - Reading Refugee Support Group

5. APPEALS

- 5.1 Discretionary Support Schemes are not subject to any formal statutory appeals process and therefore there are no appeal rights.

6. FRAUD

- 6.1 The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any resident caught falsifying their records to gain support will face prosecution and any payment issued will be subject to claw back, as will any payments paid in error.
- 6.2 One of the biggest risks for this scheme is impersonation fraud, where fraudsters work through a residential area and falsely claim under the names of eligible recipients. Risk has been reduced by a targeted scheme to eligible families/individuals.
- 6.3 The DWP advise that Authorities wishing to work with Third Party Organisations to deliver the scheme must carry out suitable due diligence checks to ensure they are viable and able to deliver the support. So, for example, ensuring all charities are registered and taking extra caution if they are new organisations.
- 6.4 Authorities are also encouraged to ensure checks are in place to verify the identity of those eligible.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 7.1 This proposal will contribute to the following key priority set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 - 2022
- Thriving Communities: by ensuring the most economically disadvantaged

families and children receive Government funding to tackle the impacts of the pandemic

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None to note.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

9.1 Communications appropriate to a targeted scheme will be sent to all those eligible to benefit from the scheme. Schools and our key VCS partners will also promote take up of the scheme and general communications will be provided on our website. There will be minimal social media promotion to mitigate any potential risks of fraudulent claims.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the original Decision Book report. There are no additional equalities impacts to note.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None to note.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The cost of these payments will be met by Central Government - the Household Support Scheme is ring-fenced funding.

12.2 The Household Support Scheme funding allocation includes reasonable administration costs to enable Authorities to deliver the scheme. Authorities should deduct their estimated administration costs from the total allocation to determine the amount remaining. In all cases, Authorities should keep administrative costs to a reasonable level. Administration costs for each Authority will be published on www.gov.uk alongside detail of all spend related to this scheme.

12.3 Reading Council will claim 5% admin costs to fund the administration of the scheme (including for Post Office Payout vouchers) and BfFC admin costs.

12.4 The table below summarises the overall allocation/spend against the various aspects of the scheme.

Area of spend	Details	Spend	Status
Food Voucher Scheme - Easter	Remainder of Easter not funded by previous HSF - £20 per child per week based on 6,007 eligible children / individuals	£43,113	Complete (approved in Decision Book 655)
Food Voucher Scheme - May HT	May Half Term - £15 per child per week based on 6,007 eligible children / care leavers	£73,980	Complete
Energy Voucher Scheme - Families	1 x £49 voucher for 4,139 eligible families / care leavers	Estimated £160,000	Closes 30 September 2022

Energy Voucher Scheme - Families (Phase 2)	1 x additional £49 voucher for all eligible families / care leavers	£197,056	Closes 14 October 2022 (original deadline extended by 2 weeks)
Energy Voucher Scheme - People receiving the state pension	1 x £98 voucher for 4,300 eligible people receiving the state pension	Estimated £310,000	Closes 30 September 2022
Energy Voucher Scheme - discretionary	Discretionary Scheme - used to fund families with school age children (Pupil Premium Free School Meals), vulnerable children up to nursery age and care leavers and people receiving the state pension on CTRS / pension credit who have become eligible during the course of the funding period	£0 (included in figures above)	Closes 30 September 2022
VCS Grants	Additional funds to support food, energy and other essential living costs	£190,000	Complete (grants awarded)
VCS Grants (Phase 2)	Additional funds to support food, energy and other essential living costs	£90,000	To be awarded
Housing Arrears	Funds to support residents with Housing Arrears	£10,000	Complete
Admin	To co-ordinate Food and Energy Voucher schemes, generate finance/MI returns, pay Post Office Payout admin costs	£56,500	Complete
Total		£1,130,649	
Funding available		£1,130,649	
Funding remaining		£0	

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 There are none.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR MCEWAN - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH		
DATE:	13 OCTOBER 2022		
TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS		
SERVICE:	SCHOOL STANDARDS	WARDS:	WHITLEY
AUTHOR:	SARAH SHORTT	TEL:	07962 240 715
JOB TITLE:	GOVERNOR SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Sarah.shortt@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the decision to appoint Local Authority governors to Reading schools.

2. DECISION

2.1 It is the decision of the Director of Education, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education that the proposals as set out in paragraph 4 be approved.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 As the Local Authority the Council has a duty to nominate governors for appointment to school Governing Boards in Reading.

4. THE PROPOSAL

That the following be nominated as an LA governor

ANDREW TOWSE for GEOFFREY FIELD INFANTS

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Equal Opportunities - To meet the needs of the diverse community in Reading, governors are recruited from within the local black and minority ethnic groups during each recruitment campaign.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

N/A

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 9, paragraph 3, provides for the appointment of LA governors to school governing boards within the Reading Borough Council boundary.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Governing Boards may decide to pay governors' expenses from the individual school budget.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Information regarding the applicant.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR MCEWAN - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH		
DATE:	13 OCTOBER 2022		
TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS		
SERVICE:	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	WARDS:	WHITLEY
AUTHOR:	SARAH SHORTT	TEL:	07962 240 715
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BACKGROUND PAPER:

Information regarding the applicants: for appointment at: Geoffrey Field Infants

Name: ANDREW TOWSE

The applicant's relevant experience and skills are as follows:
Teaching, safeguarding, Inspector for Independent Schools.

Supporting statement by the applicant:

I would like to give back to the community and help support the state education sector. Having taught for nearly 20 years I feel my knowledge of education along with safeguarding will enhance a governing body. I am also a schools' inspector with the ISI.

Application endorsed by:

Frazer Hunt (colleague) "Andy has multiple years of experience in education, both as a classroom teacher and in leadership positions. He is a regular Inspector of ISI, thus is up to date on current policy and procedures. He is also very professional, approachable, and well-organised in his school environment. Andy always strives to improve the school he works in, he would be most valuable as a governor."