

Appendix A4

Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF)

The government recently announced a new cost of living support scheme to support people living in domestic accommodation who fail to qualify for the Energy Bills Support Scheme. This will include, for example, many care home residents and people living in boats or caravans as their sole or main home. It will also include those who pay for their energy costs as part of their rent, eg residents of some sheltered housing flats, although not those who live in shared accommodation if the landlord has already received a payment from the EBSS.

New funding of £1.9 million will be provided to Bristol, and new burden funding is also anticipated to assist with increased administrative costs.

This EBSS AF has previously been reported to Full Council on 21 February 2023 as part of the Budget Report for 2023-24 at section 8.7 and 8.8.

Further details around the delivery model for this funding are now set out here below.

The Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) provides a discount on energy bills of £400 for most households and is being delivered through domestic electricity suppliers in six instalments from October 2022 to March 2023.

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) was set up to provide the payment to households who pay for their electricity in a different way, such as through a commercial intermediary and so will not receive support through EBSS. This could include partly and wholly funded care home residents, boats on residential moorings, or tenants supplied via a landlord with a commercial meter.

The EBSS AF is a one-off £400 payment to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment but are still facing increased energy costs. Individuals will need to apply for the EBSS AF via a Gov.UK portal.

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will undertake a number of verification and eligibility checks before passing applications onto the council to perform other checks and decide the applications within the BEIS processing system. Payment files will be periodically downloaded for processing through our financial system to credit eligible applicants' bank accounts.

BEIS will reimburse local authorities for the cost of making the EBSS AF payments through grants under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022. The initial grant is £1.926m, which would provide funding for an estimated 4815 households.

The scheme is scheduled to go live on 27 February 2023 and will close to new applications on 31 May 2023. The council must process all payments by 30 June 2023.

Cabinet is asked to note the delivery model for EBSS AF.