

Report to Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

28 July 2022

Subject:	Energy Rebate payments update
Director:	Simone Hines – Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Ian Dunn – Revenues and Benefits Service Manager ian_dunn@sandwell.gov.uk




1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the update on the Energy Rebate payments within Sandwell be noted.




2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board have requested a general update on the Energy Rebate payments.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	The £150 energy rebate payments will provide all eligible households with financial support to help with the rising cost of living. The additional £70 for Sandwell's lowest income
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	



	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	households who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will provide further financial support
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

Background

- 4.1 In February 2022, the government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills, based on eligibility as at the 1st April 2022. This support includes providing a £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in council tax bands A to D and discretionary funding for other households in council tax bands E-H.
- 4.2 Sandwell's Discretionary Scheme is set up to provide everyone who is eligible in council tax bands E to H with £150, and to provide some additional funding of £70 to our lowest income households who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.
- 4.3 In Sandwell, as at the 1st April 2022, we had 126,620 household eligible for the Energy rebate payment in council tax bands A to D. For Bands E to H we had 3,357 households eligible. We have 32,600 households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.
- 4.4 The government have given councils until the 30th September 2022 to process the payments for council tax bands A to D and until the 30th November 2022 for the discretionary scheme.
- 4.5 Those households who pay their Council Tax via Direct Debit have had the majority of their £150 payments paid directly into their bank account without the need to apply (if the DD payer is the liable person for Council Tax).
- 4.6 Households are required to apply for the Energy Rebate payment where:
- The Direct Debit doesn't match



- They pay their council tax by another method, or
- They do not pay Council Tax.

4.7. Welfare Rights, Revenues and Benefits Customer Services and Corporate Customer Services are supporting residents to make the application if they are unable to do this themselves.

Energy Rebate update

4.8 As at the 8th July 2022:

- Overall:
 - 97,012 claims approved totalling £14,551,800 (includes 69,000 DD payers)
 - 2,153 claims pending awaiting a response from the customer
 - 4,640 requested to pay £150 onto their Council tax account (we are currently testing software to allow us to action these).

4.9 In June and July we issued reminder letters out in 3 batches to 28,500 households in Council Tax Bands A to D to apply for the energy rebate payment. If no response is received by the end of July 2022, we will credit their Council tax account with the £150 and issue a revised bill/instalments. If this payment puts the Council tax account into credit, we will issue refunds.

4.10 Letters have been sent out to 800 households in Council Tax bands E to H who do not pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit (part of the discretionary fund) so they can apply.

4.11 In relation to the number of days residents must wait from when they apply, on average this is about 34 days. We have put additional staff into processing the applications.

5 Implications

Resources:	Sandwell has received £20m to cover the cost of the energy rebate payments. In addition we have received £161,000 for administration costs.
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Legal and Governance:	Administration of the payments is being carried out in accordance with the guidance issued to councils by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Risk:	Additional resources have been added to deal with the increase in energy rebate applications and support provided for residents who need help to apply. For households who do not apply they will receive their energy rebate payment onto their council tax account so no one will miss out in receiving the financial support.
Equality:	No implications
Health and Wellbeing:	The energy rebate payments will provide additional financial support to households in Sandwell due to the rising cost of living
Social Value	No implications

6 Appendices

None

7. Background Papers

None

