**Information for Unitary Councillors**

Sheet Number:

2022-27/49

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| **From:** | **Paul Harding** |

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| **Relevant ELT Director and sign-off date:** | **Nicola Hix**  **6/4/23** |

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| **Date:** | **Wednesday 6th April 2023** |

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| **To:** | **All Unitary Councillors** |

**Energy Support Schemes**

Dear Councillors,

We want to make you aware of a couple of domestic energy support schemes which the district councils have been asked to administer by the government in case you are asked about these.

The unexpected request from government was made in February and is a task that has been inherited by Somerset Council to complete.

There are two schemes available to certain households. The **Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding** (EBSS AF) and **Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP).**

* The **Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding** (EBSS AF) is providing support of **£400** to around 900,000 households in Great Britain who are not supplied by a domestic electricity contract and who are unable to receive support automatically through the Energy Bills Support Scheme (the £66pm discount delivered by electricity suppliers).

Eligible households need to complete a short online application form [via the GOV.UK webpage](https://www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic) (or via a call centre for those not online) which launched on 27 February and **closes on 31 May 2023.**

Once an application has been made, eligible applicant’s details are shared with their local authority who must undertake various checks on the application before they deliver the £400 support in a single, non-repayable payment into the applicant’s bank account.

Some examples of likely eligible households include:

* + Care home residents and others in care facilities/sheltered accommodation (wholly or partly self-funded)
  + Park home residents
  + farmhouse on a commercial farm site
* The **Alternative Fuel Payment scheme** is delivering **£200** to households who use alternative fuels such as heating oil, liquifies petroleum gas (LPG), coal or biomass, helping around 2 million off-grid households to meet their energy costs.  The scheme particularly supports households in rural areas that are not connected to the mains gas grid.

Most households have received payment directly from their electricity supplier. A small proportion of households will need to apply for the AFP, for example because they do not have a relationship with an electricity supplier. Applications for this Alternative Fund opened on 6 March through [a GOV.UK portal](https://www.gov.uk/apply-alternative-fuel-bill-support-if-not-automatic) which includes an overview of eligibility and what steps households need to take to apply for support. The **closing date is 31 May 2023.**

Some households will be eligible for both payments. One example is a park home resident that receives their electricity from their site owner and who uses LPG for heating.

We have received New Burdens funding to help us meet any additional costs incurred in dealing with these schemes.

Now that annual Council Tax billing and preparations for moving to the new Council are behind us, we are starting to make good progress in processing the 3,000 or so applications we have received so far and expect to make a substantial number of payments in early April, with further batches of payments thereafter. For both schemes we have been given a target of validating applications and making payment within 30 working days (6 weeks).

Members of the public should use the following **government department contact information** if they have questions or queries about these schemes rather than contact the Council.

Email: [alternativefunding@ebss.beis.gov.uk](mailto:alternativefunding@ebss.beis.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 0808 175 3287  
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

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