

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough – Leader of the Council

DECISION NO:

20/00110

For Publication**Key decision: YES**

As Leader of the Council, I agree to:

- 1) Accept the £4.5m COVID Winter Grant for use in line with the guidance published by Department of Work and Pensions and relevant terms and conditions
- 2) Approve use of approximately £2.5m of the grant funding to support the provision of vouchers to families with children in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals during the December 2020 and February 2021 school holidays
- 3) Approve the use of the remaining grant funding, in accordance with the funding principles and criteria set out within the decision report and any associated Policy Documents/Funding Frameworks, to provide support to low income families in Kent, including allocating a proportion of the funding to District and Borough Councils in Kent, to allow for local targeting of support in line with the government guidance.
- 4) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Finance to, in consultation with the Leader and Corporate Directors for CYPE and Adult Social Care, update, review and amend the proposed distribution of the funding in response to changing need and the emergency assistance landscape, as evidenced by the monitoring of grant expenditure, and to take other necessary actions including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.
- 5) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

On Sunday 8 November Government announced it was making £170m available to upper tier authorities “to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs and to ensure no child goes hungry over Christmas.” KCC has been allocated £4.5m to be spent between early December 2020 and 31 March 2021. At least 80% of the money must go on families with children, and 80% must also go on food, energy, water bills and other associated costs.

The aim is “to give vulnerable households peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the Winter months during the pandemic by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials, so every child will be warm and well-fed this winter.” The distribution formula was based on population weighted by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Financial Implications:

KCC has been allocated £4.5m as part of the COVID Winter Grant.

Funding must be used in accordance with the guidance set by government, and the terms and conditions of the grant. KCC will apply appropriate legal mechanisms as part of issuing or deploying any grant monies to ensure any partners or third parties in receipt of grant funding remain compliant.

Reason for Urgency:

The Government has stated that local authorities should start to spend the money from early December, and where third party organisations are delivering elements of the programme, to get resources to them by the end of November if possible. Whilst the council is being given discretion over how to target the most vulnerable households, there is a general expectation that families with children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) should be supported over the Christmas holidays. To achieve this, the decision would need to be implemented in late November due to the need to collaborate with schools and collate relevant pupil data in advance of issuing vouchers.

Member and other consultation:

No Cabinet Committee consultation possible due to urgency process.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, in addition to agreeing that the decision could not be reasonably deferred provided the following comments:

Mr Booth supported the decision.

The Group Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee providing the following comments:

Mr Bird supported the decision.

The Chair and Group Spokespeople of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee provided the following comments:

No comments

The Chair and Group Spokespeople of the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee provided the following comments:

No comments

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Several options considered. These are detailed in accompanying Decision Report.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None



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signed

30th November 2020

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date

