

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

## DECISION TAKEN BY:

**Roger Gough – Leader of the Council**

## DECISION NO:

21/0024

### For Publication

#### Key decision: YES

*Key decision criteria. The decision will:*

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
  - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
  - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

#### As Leader of the Council, I:

- 1) Agree a £10m allocation from the available Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding. This will be:
  - i) Used to provide targeted support to low income households and households in financial distress, including individuals and families; and local businesses, in line with the funding principles and criteria set out within this decision report and the associated Policy Documents/Funding Frameworks, which are intended to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging and changing needs across the county;
  - ii) Allocated as follows:
    - (a) £4m to support low income households and households in financial distress, including through council services such as the Kent Support and Assistance Service, district and borough councils, voluntary and community sector organisations, such as Kent Community Foundation and utility companies such as South East Water.
    - (b) £3m to provide a range of support for businesses and the self-employed that meet specified criteria, including through council services, district and borough councils, voluntary and community sector organisations, and business support organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce.
    - (c) £2.5m to tackle digital poverty, working with schools and colleges, district and borough councils and voluntary and community sector organisations.
    - (d) £500k to match fund crowdfunded community projects and initiatives that support local communities in responding to and recovering from the impact of the pandemic.

and;

- 2) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Finance, after consultation with the Leader, to update, review and amend the proposed distribution of the funding in response to changing need, as evidenced by the monitoring of all Covid-19 related grant expenditure, including consideration of the use of any remaining unallocated grant funding; and

3) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, 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:**

The Government has provided significant grant funding to Kent County Council to support the local response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The Council has worked with a range of partners to allocate funding to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's services, to meet its public health obligations and to support those residents, families and businesses most in need of support since the start of the pandemic. In addition to a number of specific grants, a total of £95m Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding has been received since March 2020.

As a result of the latest national lockdown and the new variant of the virus, additional and on-going needs have been identified that the Council, working with partners is keen to respond to, ensuring the continued support for residents and businesses in Kent. It is proposed that these areas of support utilise an initial £10m of the currently unallocated Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding.

**Financial Implications:**

£10m allocation of COVID grant funding.

There are no direct financial implications on the Council's revenue budget as the allocation is grant funding received from the government to support the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The activities and projects funded by the Emergency Grant Funding are time limited and will not be a recurring cost to the Council. Any additional staff resourcing required as a result of activities and projects funded by the grant are eligible to be charged to the grant.

**Reason for Urgency:**

The deployment of the available grant funding is required urgently to address the many challenges facing a range of Kent residents due to the ongoing pressure of the pandemic and the latest national lockdown in particular. Compliance with the standard Executive Decision timeframes would significantly delay the delivery of vital support to residents in need across the county.

**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 provided the following comments:

No Comments.

The Chair and Group Spokespeople of the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee provided the following comments:

Mr Sweetland supported the decision.

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

Mrs Cole and Mrs Linfield supported the decision.

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

The Council could have chosen not to allocate this funding but this was rejected on the basis that the majority of the support provided to residents and businesses since the start of the pandemic could not continue without this funding allocation.

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

None



8 February 2021

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signed

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date