

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

Roger Gough – Leader of the Council

**DECISION NO:**

21/00038

**For Publication****Key decision: YES****As Leader of the Council, I agree to:**

- 1) Accept the additional £1.5m 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 the full £1.5m to support the provision of vouchers to families with children in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals during the Easter 2021 school holidays
- 3) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Finance to, in consultation with the Leader to take any other actions needed to ensure that the £1.5m is spent in full by 16 April 2021.
- 4) 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:**

KCC has been deploying COVID Winter Grant funding under Decision 20/110 since November 2020, which involved supporting Free School Meals (FSM). In early March, the DWP advised KCC that it was extending the period in which this funding could be spent and also confirmed that it was awarding a further £1.5m to support this activity.

This is decision required to confirm KCC's acceptance of the additional grant monies and its planned use.

**Financial Implications:**

The decision is to accept the £1.5m second tranche of Covid Winter Grant in full, and there should be no direct impact on the council's budget. The risk of costs exceeding the £1.5m are now very small, given the experience of providing these vouchers over the previous school holidays.

**Reason for Urgency:**

In early March, Government indicated that the period during which this Grant could be spent and that additional funds were being made available. Confirmation of the funding and the timescales from Government did not allow for KCC compliance with normal Executive Decision timeframes.

Additionally, the need to implement the decision as soon as possible so as to ensure FSM arrangements for the Easter Holidays requires the use of urgency procedures.

**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.

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

- Rejecting the funding due to administrative or other challenges (not appropriate due to the clear need for this support)
- Deploying the funding across other elements of the original Winter Grant scheme (KSAS, fuel poverty etc). This was rejected because the additional funding will only cover FSM provision and this is the only element of the scheme which can be delivered within the permitted timeframe.

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

None



16 March 2021

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signed

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date