

By: Roger Gough – Leader of the Council
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To: County Council – 23 July 2021

Subject: **Annual Report on Urgent Decisions taken by the Executive – 2020-21**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Constitution requires that the Leader of the Council reports urgent Executive Decisions to County Council on an annual basis.

Recommendation: The Council is asked to note the report.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Constitution makes provision, under sections 12.31 and 12.32, for the use of urgency procedures as part of Executive Decision-making, complying with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. In accordance with section 12.36 of the Constitution, this paper serves as the required annual report to Council providing details of when urgency procedures have been used. The purpose of this report is provide a collated list of urgent decisions and draw Members' attention to those instances when urgency has been necessary. The period covered by the report is 2 June 2020 to 15 July 2021.
3. Detailed consideration of these decisions and the related areas of Council business is the responsibility of the Cabinet Committees and the Scrutiny Committee. The relevant Cabinet Committee will have considered these urgent decisions following their implementation, including receiving reports on the urgency and reasons why pre-decision consideration was not possible when applicable. Should further consideration of any of these issues be desired, Members are asked to liaise with Democratic Services and the relevant Committee Chairs to add them to their work programmes.
4. Since June 2020, 22 decisions were taken via the urgency procedures detailed in the Constitution and the Executive Arrangements Legislation during the timeframe covered by this Annual Report to Council. 6 of these decisions were semi-urgent, with the remainder progressed via the full statutory urgency process allowing for immediate implementation.

5. This report sets out: the key information of each of these decisions; the decision-maker; the date of decision; a brief summary of the decision; the type of urgency process used and the reason for urgency.
6. The Executive, when required, uses two types of urgent decision permitted under the relevant legislation and detailed in the Constitution. These are;
 - the General Exception route which is referred to in KCC documentation as 'semi-urgent' because all they involve compliance with all normal decision-making processes but the notice of the proposed decision will have been published on the list of Forthcoming Executive Decisions (FED) for more than 5 but fewer than 28 days; and
 - Cases of Special Urgency, referred to as Statutory Urgency Process or 'full urgency' in KCC. These decisions are subject to a process of requiring agreement by the decision-maker, the relevant senior officer and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee that urgency is necessary, followed by consultation with relevant non-Executive Members where possible. Such decisions may implemented immediately, without advance notice on the FED and they are not subject to call-in.
7. It should be noted that a significant number of the urgent decisions were taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including implementing local lockdowns under the Coronavirus Regulations as well as the acceptance and management of vital Government grants to deliver key COVID mitigation activities. As Members will be aware, it was necessary for the Council to respond quickly and decisively to these challenging circumstances. The urgency process was required, in many cases, because of very tight deadlines from government in terms of committing to legally binding terms and conditions for the relevant grants.
8. Several decisions were also progressed via semi-urgent process in March 2021 due to the need to progress these matters prior to the pre-election period which ran from close of business on 19 March until the May 2021 elections. tightened project timetables and early planning was involved to ensure these decisions could be taken with appropriate transparency and normal governance activity as far as possible and were progressed in this way as it was not possible to defer them until after the election and reconstitution of the Council. These decisions were, in the main, managed via the normal decision-making processes, including consideration by the relevant Cabinet Committee.
9. The list provided below for Members' information has been separated out into Non-COVID related urgent decisions (Full Statutory Urgency followed by semi-urgent process) and then COVID related urgent decisions (broken down by urgency type again).

General Urgent Executive Decisions – June 2020 to July 2021

20/00092 - Highway Term Maintenance Contract Extension

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 14 August 2020.

10. Urgency process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation.
11. Summary:
The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport was asked to approve the award of a 20-month extension with Amey until 30th April 2023.
12. Kent County Council is the statutory Authority responsible for the delivery of highway services for the residents of Kent (excluding Medway). Under the Highways Act 1980, as the local Highway Authority, the Council has a legal duty to maintain its respective sections of the highway network under section 41. This includes responsibility for maintaining, managing and, where necessary, improving their section of the network.
13. The Highway Term Maintenance Contract (HTMC) delivers a large number of services which are currently provided by Amey which is due to terminate on the 31 August 2021. To procure a replacement contract is complex and time consuming. The original programme was extremely tight with minimal time to deal with unforeseen circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic impact has meant that it was not possible to deliver that programme. It was proposed to mitigate against this risk that the contract be extended until 30 April 2023.
14. Reason for Urgency:
Whilst good progress was being made to re-procure the contract, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated measures taken by government, a re-procurement of a strategic contract of this kind during this time would have represented a high operational risk for the Council to meet its statutory duty and obligations as the Local Highways Authority which includes our emergency response and Winter Service. The contract extension implemented was on the prevailing terms and conditions and pricing schedule.
15. Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 01/20 provided advice and guidance for central and local government authorities to consider when evaluating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on its contracts with any decision subject to this legislation being shared with the wider market through a modification notice. It was expected that central and local government would implement a return to business as normal by October 2020 and thus all decisions were required to be taken by this date.

20/00074 - Grant for Kent's road network needs to support transition

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 14 August 2020.

16. Urgency process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
17. Summary:

The decision entailed the acceptance of the Section 31 Grant monies award from the Department for Transport (DfT) to procure and manage works to deliver customs checking and freight holding areas and associated infrastructure at sites secured by DfT to support Government Transition arrangements.

18. The decision would support operational traffic management plans relating to Transition from the EU on the 31st December 2020.
19. Reason for Urgency:
The site had to be delivered in advance of 31 December 2020 to allow time for training and testing. Confirmation of the site and offer was only received mid-July and, to achieve the deadline, some enabling works commenced. This key decision was required urgently to ensure appropriate authority was in place to support the delivery of the site and to provide necessary flexibility to allow for swift significant Officer decisions on this project to enable the site to be delivered by the deadline date.

21/00034 - Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund grant award

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment on 1 March 2021.

20. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
21. Summary: The purpose of the proposed decision was for KCC, subject to S151 officer sign off, to accept a Grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund from Salix Finance on behalf of the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The grant funding would be for up to £21m for several proposed energy projects, and up to a further £2.25m for school site energy projects. A Section 31 grant was proposed.
22. Reason for Urgency:
The Grant Offer Letter required KCC to sign and return binding documents accepting the grant by 1 March 2021.
23. This funding has the potential to help KCC make significant reductions to its carbon emissions and meet its target to be net zero by 2030. It also has the added benefits of reducing KCC's energy costs and providing an income to KCC. It also helps to stimulate the low carbon economy in Kent and create local jobs as well as set up some key development infrastructure to meet future energy challenges such as security of supply.

21/00040 - Domestic Abuse Act - New Burdens Funding

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 19 March 2021.

24. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

25. Summary:

Although the Domestic Abuse Bill was still going through the Parliamentary process at the time of the decision, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) allocated £3.1m to KCC to implement the new duties from 1 April 2021. A decision was needed to accept the funding within that tight timeframe. Further work was underway to assess how the funding would be allocated, in line with the grant conditions. The decision was to accept the £3.1m in full, with no expected direct impact on the Council's budget.

26. Reason for Urgency:

MHCLG only notified KCC of the funding on 3 March, and a key decision was needed to accept the funding and confirm planned deployment within a timeframe not compatible with the non-urgent executive decision process. Also, although the allocation of most of the funding would be determined by a needs assessment, some of the funding was required from 1 April to pay for the staff who were implementing the new arrangements.

General Semi-Urgent Executive Decisions (2020-21)

21/00011 - Kent Rail Strategy 2021

Decision taken by the Cabinet on 25 January 2021.

27. Urgency process:

Semi-Urgent

28. Summary:

The principal purpose of the Kent Rail Strategy 2021 is to influence the infrastructure outputs, rolling-stock fleet and rail service specifications which will inform the next South Eastern concession agreement, for the operation of Kent's rail passenger network for at least the next decade.

29. This strategy therefore sets out in detail Kent County Council's ambitions for the next South Eastern concession to:

- determine the required passenger service levels in each sector of the network: High Speed, Mainline and Metro
- determine the requirements for rail infrastructure enhancements to facilitate these levels of passenger service
- establish the requirements for new fleets of rolling-stock in each sector to enable these levels of passenger service to operate
- improve the provision of passenger station facilities and communications.

30. Reason for Urgency:

The notice of decision was not published on the list of Forthcoming Executive Decisions for the normal 28 days in advance of this meeting due to a minor administration error. The intention that the decision to adopt the Kent Rail Strategy

be taken by Cabinet on 25 January was recorded at previous Cabinet Committee meetings and was stated elsewhere on KCC's website. More than 5 days' notice of the decision was given on the list of Forthcoming Executive Decisions list.

Reason for urgency:

31. Administrative error delayed publication of the entry on the list of Forthcoming Executive Decisions. The plan to take the decision on this date at Cabinet had been published in other reports and agendas in 2020, meaning that the delay to FED publication did not negatively impact on transparency or practical notice periods.

21/00030 - Inland Border Facility - White Cliffs

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 19 March 2021.

32. Urgency process:
Semi-Urgent

33. Summary:
The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport was asked to approve the acceptance of the Section 31 Grant award from the Department for Transport (DfT) to procure and manage the Inland Border Facility and Border Control Post works at White Cliffs, Dover.

34. Reason for the decision:
KCC had been working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT), Kent Police and Highways England, amongst others, to implement plans to manage freight in Kent. DfT identified White Cliffs as a potential site for an Inland Border Facility to help facilitate the flow of trade to assist with freight movements across the Short Straits.

Reason for urgency:

35. Decision required before the pre-election period.

21/00036 Defra Grant Funding - Farming in Protected Landscapes – for the Kent Downs AONB

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment on 19 March 2021.

36. Urgency process:
Semi-Urgent

37. Summary:
The Cabinet Member for Environment was asked to agree to:

- accept a Grant from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' funding and
- Delegate authority to Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as necessary to implement decisions to spend the grant.

38. Reason for the decision:

Since the UK left the EU, a new series of funding structures were put in place to support farmers and land managers. Rather than having a centrally-managed farm subsidy based primarily on area payments, the basis for future farm payments would be providing 'public money for public good'. Public goods included: carbon management and climate mitigation; public access to land; enhancement of biodiversity; enhancement of the water environment and provision of clean air. Funding could also be used to support farm business' diversification and green jobs. Authority was needed to receive funding from Defra and for the Kent Downs AONB Unit, under the KCC Scheme of Delegations, to distribute it to farmers and land managers in the Kent Downs AONB.

Reason for urgency:

39. Decision required before the pre-election period.

21/00037 Low Carbon across the South and East (LoCASE)

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment on 19 March 2021.

40. Urgency process:

Semi-Urgent

41. Summary:

The Cabinet Member for the Environment was asked to give approval for KCC to continue to deliver the Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) programme, by accepting to act as the accountable body for the European Structural Investment Funding (ESIF) administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

42. Reason for the decision:

The decision was sought to approve the continued delivery of Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) - an integrated programme of financial assistance and business support to increase demand for low carbon technology, increase efficiency and grow business in the low carbon environmental goods and services sector.

43. Encouraged by MHCLG after the demonstrated success of the LoCASE project, the additional funding would be used to continue and grow LoCASE to deliver a multi-LEP business support programme through a partnership made up of 16 public and private sector organisations across four Local Enterprise Partnerships (South East, Coast2Capital, Enterprise M3, and the Solent). The programme activities would be undertaken by partners, and outputs delivered through a range of Partnership Agreements and contracts administered by Kent County Council in its role as Accountable Body.

- Reason for urgency:
44. Decision required before the pre-election period.

COVID-19 Related Urgent Decisions - 2020

20/00061 - Infection Control Fund

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 12 June 2020.

45. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
46. Summary:
On 14 May 2020, the Government wrote to local authorities announcing that £600 million would be issued to councils to support care providers through a new Infection Control Fund. This would be received in two instalments: 50% in late May and 50% in July. The Government required that 75% of this funding was for direct passporting to homes that met the conditions outlined in the grant. There was more discretion over how the remaining 25% of the grant could be spent.
47. Reason for Urgency:
To support the security of the social care provider market in Kent during the COVID19 crisis and enable providers to maintain delivery of essential services to the vulnerable people of Kent.

The Government stipulated that 75% of the initial grant should be passported to providers as quickly as possible. While the Government advised that this should be within ten working days upon receipt of the funding, given the scale and complexity of the social care market in Kent, and the number of providers with whom we have no relationship, funds needed to be passported as quickly as possible.

20/00093 - Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 18 August 2020.

48. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
49. Summary:
The Government allocated £1.67m to KCC as a one-off contribution for the 2020-21 financial year to support households experiencing financial hardship as a result of Covid 19. This was the Council's share of the £63m national allocation, which

was intended to 'help local authorities to continue to support those struggling to afford food and other essentials over the coming months due to COVID-19'. The funding was allocated by population weighted by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the authority area. The Government expected most of this money to be spent in the following 12 weeks – that is by around 20 October 2020.

50. The Leader agreed to accept the Emergency Grant from DEFRA and that it should be allocated as follows:

(a) £200k for distribution via the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) across Kent, based on agreed criteria

(b) £735k for existing county-wide services such as the Kent Support & Assistance Service

(c) £735k for Kent's District & Borough Councils, distributed using the same methodology used by DEFRA to allocate the KCC share of the national allocation

51. Reason for Urgency:

The pandemic had presented many challenges to all individuals and families but the need to deliver appropriate support to those facing significant hardship was very pressing. It was important to set up the relevant funding streams and begin the necessary financial transfer arrangements to ensure support could be delivered as soon as possible. It was therefore necessary to implement the decision immediately to minimise delay and to allow for the funding to be spent within the timeframe dictated by Government.

20/00105 – Issuing Direction under Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020 – Hop Farm, Paddock Wood

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 23 October 2020.

52. Urgency Process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

53. Summary:

54. On 12 January 2020, it was announced that a new Coronavirus had been identified. COVID-19 is highly contagious and the World Health Organisation declared the risk and spread of the disease as a pandemic with Europe at its epicentre. To protect Public Health the Government introduced restrictions to help control the spread and rate of infection.

55. Circus Zyair proposed a run of events (shows) from the 23/10/2020 until the 1/11/2020 at the Paddock Wood Hop Farm. A detailed assessment of the arrangements for this event was carried out by Public Health Professionals. It concluded that the event should not go ahead and that a direction was necessary and proportionate in order to respond to a serious and imminent threat to public health and control the transmission of COVID-19 in Kent & Medway.

56. The Cabinet Member agreed to issue the following Direction: “Kent County Council, in its capacity as an upper tier local authority, hereby directs that circus performance events being organised by Circus Zyair Ltd. of registered office B3 Kingfisher House Kingsway, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead. NE11 0JQ at The Hop Farm, Maidstone Road, Beltring, Tonbridge TN12 6PY from 23rd October 2020 at 18:45 until and including 1st November 2020 23:59 are prohibited”.
57. Reason for Urgency:
It was necessary to implement the restrictions outlined in the Direction immediately. Therefore, it was not possible to follow the normal decision timeframes as required under the KCC and legal governance arrangements, requiring it to be progressed under the urgent decision provisions. The Direction came into effect immediately when issued.

20/00106 - Infection Control Fund (Round 2)

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 28 October 2020.

58. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
59. Summary:
On 1 October 2020, the Government wrote to local authorities announcing that the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (first introduced in May 2020) would be extended until 31 March 2021, with an extra £546m of funding. This was a new grant, with revised conditions from the original Infection Control Fund.
60. Reason for Urgency:
It was expected the grant would be fully spent on infection control measures (as outlined in the grant determination letter) by 31 March 2021. The guidance was clear that ‘spent’ meant that expenditure had to be incurred on or before 31 March 2021.
61. The guidance stated that local authorities ought to prioritise passing on the ‘per bed’/‘per user’ allocation to care homes and CQC-regulated community care providers (domiciliary care, extra care and supported living) in their geographical area. It was expected that, where possible, this would take no longer than 20 working days upon receipt of the funding in a local authority, subject to providers meeting the conditions as stated in the local authority circular (October 2020).
62. At the time it was unclear whether further Infection Control Funding was going to become available either before or post 31 March 2021. Therefore, as part of this decision, it was proposed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health also agreed to accept any future additional Infection Control Funding, should it become available. This would be allocated in line with the guidance and terms and conditions issued by the Government.

20/00110 - COVID Winter Grant Scheme

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 30 November 2020.

63. **Urgency Process:**

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

64. **Summary:**

On 8 November 2020, the Government announced that it would make £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 was allocated £4.5m to be spent between early December 2020 and 31 March 2021. At least 80% of this money had to be spent on families with children, and 80% had to be spent on food, energy, water bills and other associated costs.

65. **Reason for Urgency:**

The Government stated that local authorities were required to use this grant from early December 2020 and that, where third-party organisations were delivering elements of the programme, local authorities were encouraged to allocate resources to them by the end of November 2020, wherever possible. While KCC was given discretion over how best to support the most vulnerable households, there was a general expectation that families with children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) had to be supported over the Christmas holidays. To achieve this, the decision had to be implemented in late November 2020, due to the need to collaborate with schools and collate relevant pupil data in advance of issuing vouchers.

20/00111 - Funding for support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 30 November 2020.

66. **Urgency Process:**

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

67. **Summary:**

The Leader of the Council took the decision to distribute the full amount of the funding for support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable funding through to Kent District and Borough Councils.

68. **Reason for Urgency:**

On 2 November the MHCLG wrote to KCC to inform the Local Authority that there were 60,975 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) individuals who needed to take special care during the 4-week period in which the whole country had to adopt stringent public health measures. The Government provided advice and guidance to CEVs, and expected local government to:

- contact all CEV individuals
 - assess food and basic support needs
 - facilitate the delivery of the support funding
69. KCC, and the Kent District and Borough Councils, were given lists on a regular basis of the CEVs in their area. Since 5 November 2020, when the new arrangements came into place, all of the CEVs who were known to Adult Social Services were contacted by their care managers, and all the others were contacted by their District Council to ask whether they needed support.
70. As expected, only a minority of CEVs needed direct support. When direct support was required, this was coordinated by the District and Borough Councils. It therefore made sense to distribute the full amount of this funding through Kent District and Borough Councils.

20/00125 - Local Lockdown Direction - Broadstairs Christmas Market

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 11 December 2020.

71. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
72. Summary:
The Cabinet Member, on advice from the Director of Public Health, agreed to issue a Direction with immediate effect to prohibit the holding of a Christmas Market event in Broadstairs.
73. Reason for Urgency:
Following a second period of national lockdown on 2 December 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force. Due to very high disease prevalence in Kent, the County was placed into Tier 3 which had the most severe restrictions.
74. It was necessary to implement the restrictions outlined in the Direction immediately due to the events being held from 11 December 2020. Therefore, it was not possible to follow the normal decision timeframes as required under the KCC and legal governance arrangements, requiring it to be progressed under the urgent decision provisions as set out in the Constitution and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

20/00131 - Local Lockdown Direction - Pantiles Market

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 18 December 2020.

75. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

76. Summary:
The event organiser proposed to hold an outdoor Market event at The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells on 19 and 20 December 2020. KCC's Public Health department reviewed the risk assessment prepared by the event organiser. Their professional view was that the event represented a serious and imminent threat to public health but that, with the appropriate measures in place, it could be held safely.
77. The Direction imposed requirements on the event. The purpose of this Direction was to ensure that the appropriate legal infrastructure was in place to enforce those measures in support of the organiser and the marshals working the event. The organiser consented to and, indeed, welcomed this direction.
78. Reason for Urgency:
Following a second period of national lockdown, on 2 December 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force. Due to very high disease prevalence in Kent, the County was placed into Tier 3 which had the most severe restrictions.
79. It was necessary to implement the restrictions outlined in the Direction immediately due to the events being held from 11 December 2020. Therefore, it was not possible to follow the normal decision timeframes as required under the KCC and legal governance arrangements, requiring it to be progressed under the urgent decision provisions as set out in the Constitution and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

COVID-19 Related Urgent Decisions - 2021

21/0024 - COVID Emergency Grant Funding the Helping Hand Support scheme for Residents and Businesses

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 8 February 2021.

80. Urgency Process:
Statutory urgency – immediate implementation
81. Summary:
The Government provided grant funding to Kent County Council to support the local response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Council worked with a range of partners to allocate funding to respond to the impact of the 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 was received since March 2020.
82. As a result of the national lockdown and the new variant of the virus, additional and on-going needs were identified. In order to ensure the continued support for

residents and businesses in Kent, it was proposed the utilisation of an initial £10m of the currently unallocated Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding.

83. Reason for Urgency:

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

21/00031 - Council Tax Hardship Relief Support Scheme

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 16 February 2021.

84. Urgency Process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

85. Summary:

The Government provided grant funding to Kent County Council to support the local response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Council worked with a range of partners to allocate funding to respond to the impact of the 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 was received since March 2020.

86. As a result of the economic impact of the virus, the number of working age households that received a discount to their Council Tax through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme increased, reflecting increased levels of financial hardship across the county.

87. The Leader was asked to agree up to £6m allocation from the available one-off Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding to fund Council Tax Hardship Relief Support as part of the Helping Hands Scheme. The funding would be distributed to Kent district and Borough councils so that they could apply up to a £50 reduction to all eligible 2021-22 Council Tax accounts, and award Council Tax Hardship Relief support through their existing S13A Council Tax Hardship schemes.

88. Reason for Urgency:

The District and Borough Councils required the funding as soon as possible to ensure they could make the necessary software changes, calculate the reductions in the council tax liability, and update the funding allocations for their Hardship Relief Schemes in time for 1st April 2021.

21/00038 - COVID Winter Grant Extension

Decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 16 March 2021.

89. Urgency Process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

90. Summary:

KCC had 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.

91. Reason for Urgency:

In early March 2021, the Government indicated the period during which this grant could be spent and the additional funds that were 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 in order to ensure FSM arrangements for the Easter Holidays required the use of urgency procedures.

21/00039 - Purchase of Designated Beds

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 19 March 2021.

92. Urgency Process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

93. Summary:

In November 2020, there was a requirement to procure additional bed capacity from the current Older Persons Residential and Nursing market due to the ongoing situation in the UK concerning Covid-19. Initially, the planned need to support this process was calculated at approximately £600,000. However, due to the emergence of the Covid-19 variant that increased cases over the winter, the expectation was that the need for those type of beds would exceed spend of £1million in the near future, and a decision was sought to continue with these purchases.

94. Reason for Urgency:

The additional costs arising just prior to, and during, the pre-election period required an urgent key decision. It was necessary to ensure that the decision was in place prior to the pre-election period to allow for continued bed purchasing, and this prevented the adherence to normal decision timeframes.

21/00062 – COVID Support Grant – Summer

Decision taken by the Leader of the council on 6 July 2021.

95. Urgency Process:

Statutory urgency – immediate implementation

96. **Summary:**
Government confirmed in late June that the COVID Local Support Grant would be extended over the Summer Break. While previous acceptance and management of related grants was possible via delegated authority arising from previous decisions, it is appropriate and necessary for these previous arrangements to be noted and the ongoing acceptance of the Grant to be subject to Executive Member decision-making. The decision enabled KCC to accept the additional grant funding for deployment to continue supporting vulnerable children and families over the Summer Holidays.
97. **Reason for urgency:**
Confirmation from Govt of the latest extension and associated arrangements prevents compliance with normal Executive decision-making timeframe while allowing for implementation in advance of the School Summer break.

COVID-19 Related Semi-Urgent Decisions (2020-21)

20/00084 - Section 75 Partnership Agreement Variation - COVID-19 Hospital Discharges and out of Hospital Work

Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on 18 September 2020.

98. **Urgency process:**
Semi-Urgent
99. **Summary:**
The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health agreed to approve a variation to the S75 Partnership Agreement with the NHS. This would allow the pooled budget to include COVID-19 funding in relation to hospital discharges and out of hospital work. The Cabinet Member delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including the finalization of the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.
100. **Reason for Urgency:**
To enable the Council to reclaim the costs associated with avoiding hospital admission and enabling hospital discharge, as part of the Council's response to Covid-19 in support of the NHS. The Covid-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements funding for the NHS required the Council to establish a pooled budget before any costs could be reclaimed.

21/00035 - Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme

Decision taken by the Cabinet on 15 March 2021.

101. **Urgency process:**

Semi-Urgent

102. Summary:

The Cabinet was asked to agree the creation of the 'Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme'.

103. The Programme aims to reconnect Kent children and young people to:

- Health and Happiness
- Learning Missed
- Family, Friends and Community
- Sport, Activities and the Outdoors
- Economic Wellbeing

104. Reason for the decision:

The pandemic has had an impact on all children and young people in Kent. It was recognised, nationally and internationally, that children and young people had sacrificed more than most over the course of the pandemic. It was proposed that KCC led a wide-ranging programme across the whole of Kent to reconnect children and young people to some of the things they had missed, and provide them with a wide range of new opportunities. The programme would focus on positive opportunities, and aimed at drawing together a wide range of partners and resources - including community resources - to invest in the children and young people of Kent.

Reason for urgency:

105. Decision required before the pre-election period.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to note the report.

Background Documents (listed in date order)

20/00061 - Infection Control Fund

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2358>

20/00074 - Grant for Kent's road network needs to support Transition

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2383>

20/00084 - Section 75 Partnership Agreement Variation - COVID-19 Hospital Discharges and out of Hospital Work

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2398>

20/00092 - Highway Term Maintenance Contract Extension

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2384>

20/00093-Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2385>

20/00105 – Issuing Direction under Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020 – Hop Farm, Paddock Wood

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2412>

20/00106 - Infection Control Fund (Round 2)

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2413>

20/00110 - COVID Winter Grant Scheme

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2418>

20/00111 - Funding for support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2419>

20/00125 - Local Lockdown Direction - Broadstairs Christmas Market

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2423>

20/00131 - Local Lockdown Direction - Pantiles Market

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2426>

21/00011 - Kent Rail Strategy 2021

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2433>

21/0024 - COVID Emergency Grant Funding the Helping Hand Support scheme for Residents and Businesses

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2451>

21/00030 - Inland Border Facility - White Cliffs

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2479>

21/00031 - Council Tax Hardship Relief Support Scheme

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2457>

21/00034 - Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund grant award
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2460>

21/00035 - Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2464>

21/00036 Defra Grant Funding - Farming in Protected Landscapes – for the Kent Downs AONB
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2475>

21/00037 Low Carbon across the South and East (LoCASE)
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2476>

21/00038 - COVID Winter Grant Extension
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2463>

21/00040 - Domestic Abuse Act - New Burdens Funding
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2485>

21/00062 – COVID Support Grant – Summer
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2490>

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