

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director Finance

DECISION NO:

21/0008

For publication

Subject matter:**Household Support Grant****Officer decision to which this action relates:****Decision details**

21/00062 - COVID Support Grant Summer

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2490>

Decision:

- 1) Accept the £11.065m Home Support 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 £750,000 to support the provision of vouchers to families with children in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals or families in need of support through KSAS during the October 2021 school holidays
- 3) To bring a further report to Cabinet setting out proposals for the use of the remainder of the Household Support Grant.
- 4) 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 Household Support Grant is to provide support to households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency) this winter as the economy recovers. This is very similar to the COVID Local Support Grant, which was used to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.

The Leader of the Council took Key decision – 21/00062 which authorised ‘the Corporate Director Finance to accept and administer any further grant monies providing they are given by government on very similar terms of reference and that they can be appropriately managed under the funding / governance framework put in place by this decision.’ As the grant terms for the Household Support Grant are very similar to the COVID Support Grant an Officer decision to accept the grant can be taken.

A further key decision will be taken to allocate the remainder of the funding available.

Further information on the decision can be found in the report attached to this document.

Financial Implications:

The decision is to accept the £11.065m Household Support Grant in full and allocate £750,00 for

immediate use to provide FSM provision over the October half term. There should be no direct impact on the council's budget. If the costs slightly exceed £750,000, for example because the number of families entitled to free school meals and families in need has increased since the summer, it is proposed to cover these costs from the remainder of this grant.

Legal implications:

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.

Equality Implications:

There are clear eligibility criteria for benefits-related free school meals, which reduces the risk of arbitrary decisions and subjectivity, and efforts will continue to be made to ensure that those who are entitled to this support are made aware of that entitlement and encouraged to take it up.

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

Roger Gough, the Leader of Kent County Council has been informed of the grant and is supportive of the decision.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The option of turning down the grant was not considered to be realistic, as there are many Kent families in need who will benefit from receiving this support.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L. C. E.', is written on the page.

signed

Date 13 October 2021