

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

**Roger Gough - Leader of the Council**

**DECISION NO:**

20/00093

**For Publication****Key decision: YES**

*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)*

**As Leader of the Council, I agree to:**

Accept the £1.67m Emergency Grant from DEFRA and agree that it should be;

1) Used to provide locally-targeted support to individuals and families in need, with sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging and changing need across the county;

2) 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

And:

3) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Finance to, in consultation with the Leader, update, review and amend the VCS and existing county-wide service funding arrangements in response to changing need and the emergency assistance landscape, and 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 allocated £1,669,165.92 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 is the Council's share of the widely-trailed £63m nationally, which is 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 has been allocated by population weighted by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the authority area. Government expects most of this to be spent in the next 12 weeks – i.e. by around 20th October 2020.

**Financial Implications:**

£1,669,165.92 – external grant funding.

There is no direct financial implication for KCC because the vehicles by which the grant will be distributed are already in place. Reasonable administration costs can be charged to the grant.

**Reason for Urgency:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to all individuals and families but the need to deliver appropriate support to those facing significant hardship is very pressing. It is important to set up the relevant funding streams and begin the necessary financial transfer arrangements to ensure support can be delivered as soon as possible. It is therefore necessary to implement the decision immediately to minimise delay and also to allow for the funding to be spent within the timeframe dictated by Government.

**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:

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

The Chair and Group Spokespeople of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee provided the following comments:

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

KCC could have refused the grant but this would have removed the opportunity to deliver increased support to those facing significant hardship.

In terms of planning the various funding pots, KCC could have retained all grant funding and administered it directly but in keeping with the government guidance, this approach was rejected in favour of sharing the funding with key partners at the most local level including VCS organisations and District / Borough Councils.

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

None



17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

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signed

date