

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – URGENT RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate
and Traded Services

DECISION NO:

20/00050

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); and*
- b) *affects two or more Electoral Divisions*

Title: Continued bulk purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

As Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, I agree to increase the funding allocation from £2m to £5m to support the PPE purchase arrangements set out in Key Decision 20/00035 and maintain the previous agreements and delegations set out in that decision, which were as follows:

- a) The purchase of bulk Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including but not limited to masks, gloves, goggles, aprons, and hand sanitiser.
- b) The ongoing review and replenishment of KCC stocks of PPE as required to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) Delegate authority to the Strategic Commissioner to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, reviewing and agreeing the necessary replenishment of stock over the course of the pandemic, placing orders and entering into relevant contracts and other legal agreements, as necessary to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Record of Decision 20/00035 was made to facilitate the bulk purchase of PPE to a value of £2m. This decision represents additional expenditure of £3m bringing total expenditure to £5m.

The decision is required to allow for the continued bulk purchase of PPE. This forms an integral part of KCC's response to the outbreak of the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the measures to reduce the risk of further human-to-human transmission.

KCC's role in the supply of PPE is to provide it to its own staff and, working with the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF), provide mutual aid to those outside of the NHS acute and ambulance services where their supply chains have failed such as care homes. Mutual aid is for those who currently have close, unavoidable contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, including highly vulnerable "shielded" groups, that can outline their needs in line with the latest clinical guidance. Furthermore, it is only for those in urgent need in vital services, where service providers have explored their usual routes for PPE and there remains an urgent need for additional stock.

Financial Implications:

£3m additional funding (resulting in £5m total for the additional PPE purchasing programme).

This decision provides for expenditure of £3m in addition to the £2m covered in Record of Decision 20/00035. A further decision will be made should expenditure need to exceed that. This is additional expenditure above the budget for 2020/21 agreed by full Council in February 2020. The expenditure has been identified as an additional financial commitment arising from the council's response to COVID-19. The expectation is that the government will fully reimburse the council for the costs it has incurred. The council has already received £39m emergency grant funding from the government. The original £2m for PPE has been recorded against the grant funding. The council has now been advised its next emergency grant allocation from the government will be £27.93m.

Reason for Urgency:

The demand for PPE has increased significantly and been far greater than was envisaged when Record of Decision 20/00035 was made to facilitate the bulk purchase of PPE, orders to a value of £2.1m have already been placed. Further urgent bulk orders must now be placed of a similar magnitude to secure continuity of supplies.

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 providing the following comments:

No additional comments

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

No additional comments

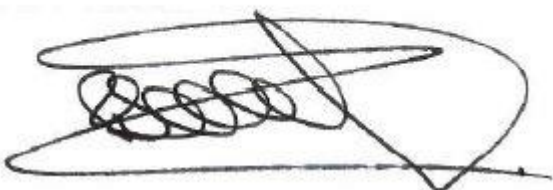
Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not providing any mutual aid and relying on direct Government provision of PPE (discarded):

KCC could itself attempt to rely on mutual aid from central government and its partners in the KRF for its own needs, requiring its other partners and providers to source PPE for themselves. It is though clear that the supply of PPE in the immediate future is such that the critical services provided by KCC, its partners and providers, would not be able to function properly.

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

None



29 April 2020

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signed

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date