



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department

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Delegated Decisions

Delegated Executive/Officer Decisions

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- on the Council's Intranet Site at <https://modgov/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx>
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The urgent decision detailed below can be implemented immediately.

Delegated Decisions

I. Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of Plymouth City Council:

I.1. Urgent Decision- Household Support Fund: Food Vouchers **(Pages 1 - 16)**

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member

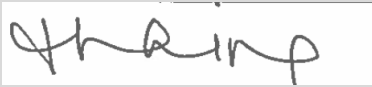


REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L07 22/23

| Decision | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Title of decision: Household Support Fund: Food Vouchers |
| 2 | Decision maker: Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of the Council |
| 3 | Report author and contact details: Rachel Silcock, Community Empowerment Operational Lead, 01752 307176 |
| 4 | <p>Decision to be taken:</p> <p>To approve the award of a contract to Wonde Limited to deliver eVoucher codes (food vouchers for supermarkets) at an estimated total cost of £1million, to cover the October 2022 half term, Christmas 2022 school holidays, February 2023 half term and Easter 2023 school holidays.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>Funding from central government for the Household Support Fund (HSF) was confirmed on the 22nd September, to support vulnerable households during the winter months including with food and energy costs. Whilst the grant guidance does not require support to be provided to families with children, recent research into food insecurity in the city (March 2022) has highlighted that families with children on low incomes are very vulnerable to food insecurity.</p> <p>The most effective way of distributing funds to vulnerable families to support with food costs is via e-vouchers and this method has been tried and tested over previous school holidays in Plymouth.</p> <p>Wonde Limited were identified as the preferred provider for Plymouth City Council in October 2021 through a procurement process under a Crown Commercial Services framework for voucher schemes and they provided this service during the previous round of HSF. This call-off contract under the CCS Framework ended in March 2022, however the CCS Framework continues and can be accessed until March 2023.</p> <p>The government has recently confirmed that there will be a third round of HSF. An urgent decision is required due to the late confirmation of funding by the Government (September 23rd 2022). It is important that a contract is let to cover the period up to and including the Easter holidays to ensure there is a single provider for every school holiday and to avoid disruption and confusion for both Council and school staff. The process has to be well understood and in place in plenty of time before the school holidays to allow good communications between the schools and parents</p> <p>Having used Wonde Limited previously with a good level of service, the recommendation is that an urgent contract award is made to Wonde Limited to enable the provider to mobilise in time</p> |

| | | | | |
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| | for the delivery of vouchers for the October half term holiday. | | | |
| 6 | <p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <p>Option 1: Do Nothing</p> <p>This is not an option as the Council has been awarded grant funding to support vulnerable households, of which families with children on low incomes are a target group based on local intelligence. To not use or accept this funding would be to the detriment of Plymouth families.</p> <p>Option 2: Deliver food parcels</p> <p>Food parcels - PCC (CATERed) does not have the capacity or capability to deliver a cost effective solution due to the practicalities that would be required to produce and distribute food parcels.</p> <p>Option 3: Provide cash payments or post office vouchers</p> <p>This option would require a significant amount of preparatory work which couldn't be carried out in time for October half-term. Additionally, the procurement of pre-payment cards would incur service charges.</p> | | | |
| 7 | <p>Financial implications:</p> <p>The funding for this contract is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The total grant for the Council is £2,294,796.82, to cover the winter of 2022/23.</p> <p>£1m is estimated to be needed to provide food vouchers for families for the October half term, Christmas holidays, February half term and Easter holidays – a total of 6 weeks.</p> | | | |
| 8 | <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</p> <p>in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total</p> <p>in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million</p> <p>is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.</p> |
| | <p>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions</p> | <p>The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that this can be considered to be an Urgent Key Decision, due to the need to ensure there are arrangements in place for the October half term for families. As central government funding was not announced until the 23rd September, it has not been practicable to include the decision in the Forward Plan.</p> | | |
| 9 | <p>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:</p> | <p>This proposal links to the Child Poverty agenda for the city and also A Bright Future 2021 – 26 in supporting children to stay safe and well, through the provision of adequate nutrition.</p> | | |
| 10 | <p>Please specify any direct</p> | <p>None</p> | | |

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| | environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact) | | | |
| Urgent decisions | | | | |
| 11 | Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? | Yes | √ | (If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice) |
| | | No | | (If no, go to section 13a) |
| 12a | Reason for urgency: This decision comes under Regulation 32(2)c of the Public Contract regulations 2015 for extreme urgency. The reason for this is the extremely late confirmation of funding by the Government (September 23 rd 2022). There is an urgent need to mobilise a company able to deliver food vouchers to Plymouth families for the October half term, which starts on 24 th October 2022. This will require the company to make arrangements for the delivery of vouchers and for the Council to ensure that comms are in place with schools and families. It is important to have a single provider for all school holidays within this academic year to avoid disruption and confusion for schools and families. | | | |
| 12b | Scrutiny Chair Signature: |  | Date | 05/10/2022 |
| | Scrutiny Committee name: | Education and Children's Social Care, Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| | Print Name: | Jemima Laing | | |
| Consultation | | | | |
| 13a | Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? | Yes | | |
| | | No | √ | (If no go to section 14) |
| 13b | Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision? | n/a | | |
| 13c | Date Cabinet member consulted | | | |
| 14 | Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? | Yes | | If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer |
| | | No | √ | |
| 15 | Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted? | Name | Sharon Muldoon | |
| | | Job title | Director of Children's Services | |
| | | Date consulted | 30/09/2022 | |
| Sign-off | | | | |
| 16 | Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted: | Democratic Support (mandatory) | DS55 22/23 | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|
| | | Finance (mandatory) | djn.22.23.237 |
| | | Legal (mandatory) | EJ/38851/5.10.22/1 |
| | | Human Resources (if applicable) | N/A |
| | | Corporate property (if applicable) | N/A |
| | | Procurement (if applicable) | SS/TSHI/015/ED/102 2 |

Appendices

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 17 | Ref. | Title of appendix |
| | A | Food Vouchers briefing report |
| | B | Equalities Impact Assessment |

Confidential/exempt information


| | | | | |
|------------|--|------------|---|--|
| 18a | Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? | Yes | | If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain) |
| | | No | √ | |

| | | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18b | Confidential/exempt briefing report title: | | | | | | | |

Background Papers

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| 19 | <p>Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below.</p> <p>Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</p> |
|-----------|--|

| Title of background paper(s) | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| Cabinet Member Signature | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------|
| 20 | I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached. | | |
| Signature |  | Date of decision | 05/10/2022 |
| Print Name | Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of Plymouth City Council | | |

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HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND – FOOD VOUCHERS

Contract Award Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to describe the recommendation for the Local Authority (LA) to distribute Household Support Fund (HSF) monies to vulnerable families, and to recommend the award of a contract to support this aim.

The recommendation is to award a contract to Wonde Limited to deliver eVoucher codes during the October, December, February and Easter school holidays, up to a value of £1m.

This support is needed for children at risk of going hungry during school holidays. Wonde were previously selected by a mini-tender procurement process and provided this service during a previous round of HSF. However, due to the timing of the government confirmation of round 3 funding, it is now necessary to mobilise a provider at speed to be able to provide vouchers for the October half term which starts on the 24th October 2022.

BACKGROUND

Since autumn 2020 the Government has awarded funding to local authorities to support families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals with the costs of food and energy, due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent increase in the cost of living. This has included schemes like the Covid Winter Support Grant and now the Household Support Fund.

Plymouth City Council (PCC) has had some flexibility around how the wider grant funding is administered and this has included food vouchers and grants to Third Party Organisations (TPOs) and to vulnerable groups via small grants schemes.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

The guidance for round 3 of HSF is that there will be no ring-fence of any proportion of funding for any particular cohort of people. There is however an expectation that the fund should be used to support households in the most need as identified by the Local Authority.

There is data on food insecurity in the city from research carried out during December 2021 and January 2022 by Transform Research. The research has found significant numbers of households in the city were in the low (8%) and very low (12%) food security categories. While the finding that 20% of Plymouth households are food insecure (either with very low or low security) is clearly of great concern, the research found that levels of insecurity were even higher in some types of households. Specifically, the impact of the pandemic on food security had been most severe in households with:

- Income below £20,000 pa:
- 1+ person with mental health condition:
- Children present: and/or
- Single adult households.

Households with children/young people were significantly more likely to be experiencing food insecurity (28%) than those without (16%). Nearly half of lone adult households with children/young people said that they were experiencing insecurity (45%), making them among the most likely of all groups to need food support. In addition, those households with more children/young people were significantly more likely to be experiencing food insecurity: half (50%) of those with 3+ children/young

people compared with a quarter (24%) of those with 1 or 2 and just one in six (16%) of those without any.

Households with children are therefore a key target group for receiving HSF support.

This contract award covers specifically the provision of meal vouchers to children in the school holidays, but there will be further recommendations regarding spend from the HSF fund on other cohorts identified as vulnerable.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

The Household Support Grant is entirely funded by DWP – the value of the grant for Plymouth is £2,294,796.82. The food vouchers comprise part of the funding (approx. £1m) and a plan is currently being developed which will set out the Council's plans for the total grant amount. This also has to be reported to the DWP for transparency.

RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION

In order to support the health and well-being of the most disadvantaged children and continued engagement in their education, this report recommends that the Council approves the award of a contract to Wonde Limited to deliver eVoucher codes at an estimated total cost of £1 million, to provide food vouchers to cover the October 2022 half term, Christmas 2022 school holidays, February 2023 half term and Easter 2023 school holidays.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMUNITY

COVID Winter Grant Scheme

| STAGE I: What is being assessed and by whom? | |
|--|--|
| What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives? | <p>When considering this EIA it is important to have due regard to the public sector equalities duties imposed upon the Council by section 149 Equalities Act 2010.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are 9,900 (18.6%) children living in poverty, which is one in five. Data shows that 7,308 children under 16 are living in income deprived households with 79% living in workless households, indicating that they are more likely to be experiencing child poverty. For example, eight out of 10 children living in the Barne Barton neighbourhood are effected by income deprivation.</p> <p>The Household Support Grant has been agreed for the winter of 2022/23, to provide vulnerable people including households with families with support with food and fuel costs during the coldest months of the year.</p> <p>The Household Support Grant enables local authorities to provide extra support to the Free School Meals cohort, but also those families who have been identified by schools and early years settings as vulnerable to poverty.</p> |
| Responsible Officer | Ming Zhang, Service Director, Children, Young People and Families Ming.Zhang@plymouth.gov.uk |
| Department and Service | Children's Services, Strategic Cooperative Commissioning |
| Date of Assessment | 29 th September 2022 |
| Author | Rachel Silcock, Community Empowerment Operational Lead |

| STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Protected Characteristics (Equality Act) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback) | Any adverse impact? | Actions | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| Age | There 60,200 CYP aged 0-19 in the city (22.9% 2015). Of the 16 SW authorities, we have the fifth highest percentage of children and young people (under 18). CYP under 18 account for 19.8 per cent of our population, within this 88.8 per cent are under 16. In Plymouth there are 9,900 (18.6%) children living in poverty, which is one in five. Data shows that 7,308 children under 16 are living in income deprived households with 79% living in workless households, indicating that they are more likely to be experiencing child poverty. | No. Our strategic intentions confirm the ambition to truly give every child “A Bright Future” by commissioning and providing place based Integrated Children, Young People and Families services covering wellbeing, physical and mental health, social care and education. Children, young people and families will be supported to stay safe, healthy, achieve and aspire. The Household Support Grant will support our ambitions, during these challenging times, which includes support to other vulnerable groups | Provide assistance and support for our most vulnerable children, young people and families in our society, across the full range of ages. | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |
| Disability | There are 3,142 children with disability. Plymouth schools report that of every 1,000 children 17.5 have a learning difficulty. A total of 31,164 people (from 28.5 per cent of | No adverse disability related impact has been identified. | | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |

| STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------|---|
| Protected Characteristics (Equality Act) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback) | Any adverse impact? | Actions | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| | households) declared themselves as having a long-term health problem or disability (national figure 25.7 per cent of households), compared with the total number of people with disabilities in UK (11,600,000). 10% of our population have their day-to-day activities limited a lot by a long-term health problem or disability. 1,297 adults registered with a GP in Plymouth have some form of learning disability (2013/14). There are 27166 adults with a disability in work. There are 23,407 carers aged between 18 and 64 in Plymouth known to our services. There are 17,937 state pension age people with disability. 2011. | | | |
| Faith, Religion or Belief | There is no specific CYP data for this category. However, data shows 32.9% of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. Those with a Hindi, | This projects & its work packages will not discriminate against faith, religion or belief as those affected will have social equality proactively | | Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team Commissioning team |

| STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------|---|
| Protected Characteristics (Equality Act) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback) | Any adverse impact? | Actions | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| | Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh religion combined totalled less than 1%. 58.1% of those who responded declared themselves Christian. 0.8% declared that they were of Islam, 0.3% Buddhist; 0.2% Hindu; 0.1% Jewish; 0.1% Sikh. 0.5% of the population had a current religion that was not Christian, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, or Sikh such as Paganism or Spiritualism. | enhanced. The in-scope services and functions affected will work with vulnerable children, and families, irrespective of faith, religion or belief. | | |
| Gender - including marriage, pregnancy and maternity | Analysis from the Office for National Statistics shows that one in five women (compared to 4% of men) have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16. Survey results have shown that 59% of girls aged 13-21 have faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year and almost a third (29%) of 16-18 year old girls have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school. | The project and its work packages will not discriminate against gender, as those affected will have social equality proactively enhanced. The services affected by the requirements of the project and its work packages will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, irrespective of gender. | | Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles |

| STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Protected Characteristics (Equality Act) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback) | Any adverse impact? | Actions | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| Gender Reassignment | There is no specific CYP data for this category, but the average age for presentation for reassignment of male-to-females is 40-49. For female-to-male the age group is 20-29, it is anticipated the number of CYP affected in the city is small. | No gender reassignment related impact has been identified. The services affected by the project and its work packages will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, regardless of gender reassignment. | | Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles |
| Race | White British boys are less likely to do well than most Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BAME) pupils. Pupils from Indian and Chinese communities outperform White British pupils whilst children from Black Afro Caribbean, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi communities do less well. Roma and Irish Traveller children do least well. Some areas of the city are more diverse than others: the area around the university, the city centre, Stonehouse and the East End are among the most diverse. | The in-scope services and functions affected will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, irrespective of race. | PCC will ensure service accessibility via on-going commissioning management. Appropriate measures need to be put in place to ensure that language barriers do not adversely affect person centred assessments and support. | Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles |

| STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------|--|
| Protected Characteristics (Equality Act) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback) | Any adverse impact? | Actions | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| Sexual Orientation -including Civil Partnership | There is no precise local data on numbers of Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) CYP in Plymouth. | No adverse impact has been identified in services affected by the project or its work packages. | | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |

| STAGE 3: Are there any implications for the following? If so, please record 'Actions' to be taken | | |
|--|---|--|
| Local Priorities | Implications | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| Reduce the inequality gap, particularly in health between communities. | <p>The actions identified above will positively impact on vulnerable CYP and families. This project aims to minimise the impact on outcomes of COVID, the winter season and rises in the cost of living, by delivering food support to those that most need it.</p> <p>Vulnerable CYP and families will experience improved support, not only during the winter months, but beyond.</p> <p>Commissioning strategies, action plans and workforce development will continue to focus on innovation and integration between all the services that support vulnerable CYP & their families.</p> | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |
| Good relations between different communities (community cohesion). | No adverse impact on community cohesion has been identified, as statutory requirements will enable vulnerable CYP and families to access good quality support and services whatever their circumstances. | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |

| STAGE 3: Are there any implications for the following? If so, please record 'Actions' to be taken | | |
|--|--|--|
| Local Priorities | Implications | Timescale and who is responsible? |
| Human Rights | It is important that all CYP and families are treated fairly, their views are taken into account and that their human rights have been respected. No adverse impact on human rights has been identified. | October 2022 – April 2023 Ming Zhang |

| STAGE 4: Publication | | | |
|---|------------|------|---------------------------------|
| Director, Assistant Director/Head of Service approving EIA. | Ming Zhang | Date | 29 th September 2022 |

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