



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department

Plymouth City Council

Ballard House

Plymouth PL1 3BJ

T 01752 305155

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

Published 29/10/20

Delegated Decisions

Delegated Executive/Officer Decisions

Delegated Executive and Officer decisions are published every Wednesday and are available at the following link - <https://tinyurl.com/ms6umor>

Cabinet decisions subject to call-in are published at the following link - <http://tinyurl.com/yddrql6>

Please note – urgent decisions and non-key Council Officer decisions cannot be called in. Copies of the decisions together with background reports are available for viewing as follows:

- on the Council's Intranet Site at <https://modgov/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx>
- on the Council's website at <https://tinyurl.com/jhnax4e>

The decisions detailed below may be implemented immediately.

Delegated Decisions

I. Councillor Chris Penberthy - Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development:

I.a Urgent decision - Free School Meals

(Pages 1 - 12)

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member




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

Executive Decision Reference Number – HCD07 20/21

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Free School Meals (FSM)
2	Decision maker: Councillor Chris Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development
3	Report author and contact details: Judith Harwood (Judith.harwood@plymouth.gov.uk)
4	Decision to be taken: To approve the decision to make a payment of £11 available to families whose child is eligible for FSM.
5	<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>To support families over the school holiday period. In Plymouth there is a continuing increase of eligible families for free school meals and since March numbers have risen in the city by over 14%. Universal credit claimants (28,500 in September 2020) also continue to increase meaning that the trend upwards of FSM will continue.</p> <p>We recognise that families experiencing poverty and exceptional circumstances over a period of longer than 7 months do need additional financial support at this time, in order to ensure that they can feed their children over the half term break.</p>
6	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <p>In previous school holidays arrangements were made to ensure that children not attending school, who are eligible for FSM, had vouchers through the national voucher scheme, could pick up take away meals from their school, or collect weekly food parcels. The government recognised that those eligible for FSMs would need continued support during the long summer holiday period and the national voucher scheme was put in place.</p> <p>Along with other Local Authorities and school leaders we have lobbied the government to ensure that arrangements for the October school break were put in place, and in view of the timing of previous announcements had anticipated a late decision in relation to this half term. This has not been forthcoming.</p>
7	<p>Financial implications:</p> <p>If all families with children eligible for FSM did make a claim, there is a potential full cost impact of over £90k. However it is more likely that around a third of those most in need will apply and this will bring a cost of £30k.</p>

	In the event that these funding options are not possible, it is the case that this spend will be additional COVID related expenditure for the Council. Our current understanding of how existing national grants are being deployed means that we do anticipate this may bring an additional financial burden that will need to be managed within the COVID Council related reserve.			
8	Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			x	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
			x	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million
		X	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.	
	If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions			
9	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:		With other factors related to COVID likely to cause further disruption to children's education, we will continue to support schools to manage periods of self isolation among pupils and staff. We believe we should support access to a holiday meal for those families that do need additional financial assistance over the school holiday.	
10	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)		None	
Urgent decisions				
11	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes	x	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No		(If no, go to section 13a)
12a	Reason for urgency: In recognition of the hardship experienced by many families, and the impact for their children this required an urgent decision, and actions to be taken as half term began.			

12b	Scrutiny Chair Signature:	Councillor Mary Aspinall Approved by email.	Date	28/10/20
	Scrutiny Committee name:	Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
	Print Name:	Councillor Mary Aspinall		
Consultation				
13a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		No	<input type="checkbox"/>	(If no go to section 14)
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)		
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted	27/10/20		
14	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Alison Botham	
		Job title	Director for Childrens Services	
		Date consulted	27 October 2020	
Sign-off				
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DS55 20/21	
		Finance (mandatory)	Djn.20.21.122	
		Legal (mandatory)	lt/62225/271020	
		Human Resources (if applicable)		
		Corporate property (if applicable)		
		Procurement (if applicable)		
Appendices				
17	Ref.	Title of appendix		
	A	Free School Meals (FSM) Briefing report		
	B	Equality 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									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. 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.								
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		29/10/2020		
Print Name		Councillor Chris Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development							

FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM)



Introduction

All children and their families have found themselves in exceptional and unexpected circumstances since March 2020, as a result of COVID 19.

During the period of full lock down between 23rd March 2020 and the end of the summer term the majority of children were not attending school. The impact on employment and income nationally, saw a significant rise in the families needing to claim free school meals.

In Plymouth there is a continuing increase of eligible families for free school meals and since March numbers have risen in the city by over 14%. Universal credit claimants (28,500 in September 2020) also continue to increase meaning that the trend upwards of FSM will continue.

In previous school holidays arrangements were made to ensure that children not attending school, who are eligible for FSM, had vouchers through the national voucher scheme, could pick up take away meals from their school, or collect weekly food parcels. The government recognised that those eligible for FSMs would need continued support during the long summer holiday period and the national voucher scheme was put in place.

Current position

Schools have now fully re-opened since the beginning of the new academic year. With the support of the LA and Trusts schools had worked well to ensure COVID secure arrangements in place. For most schools in Plymouth attendance has been high; however, there have been a series of suspected cases, and confirmed cases that have required 'bubbles' (in some cases whole year groups) to remain at home and for two special schools short periods of closure. This has led to between 400 and 1100 children being at home at any one time during the first half term.

In relation to FSM the uptake has continued to rise, and there are now over 8730 pupils in the city who are eligible.

During the school term schools and the LA catering company (CATERed) provided food parcels for those children who were self-isolating and FSM eligible. Whilst not all children accessed this offer, in excess of 90 families did.

Along with other Local Authorities and school leaders we have lobbied the government to ensure that arrangements for the October school break were put in place, and in view of the timing of previous announcements had anticipated a late decision in relation to this half term.

This has not been forthcoming. In recognition of the hardship experienced by many families, and the impact for their children this required an urgent decision, and actions to be taken as half term began.

We recognise that families experiencing poverty and exceptional circumstances over a period of longer than 7 months do need additional financial support at this time, in order to ensure that they can feed their children over the half term break. Additional hardship, and difficulties in providing basic food for their children, will add to the difficulties their children will face in maintaining their health, their ability to engage in their education, and for some families exacerbate their ability to maintain and support their children's attendance at school.

With other factors related to COVID likely to cause further disruption to children's education, we will continue to support schools to manage periods of self isolation among pupils and staff. We believe we should support access to a holiday meal for those families that do need additional financial assistance over the school holiday.

It is clear that other local authorities are taking similar action to support the most disadvantaged pupils during the half term break.

Financial/budgetary implications

It is anticipated that only those most in need will access the financial assistance, and checks are in place to ensure that only those already eligible for FSM will be considered for payment.

If all families with children eligible for FSM did make a claim, there is a potential full cost impact of over £90k. However it is more likely that around a third of those most in need will apply and this will bring a cost of £30k.

Funding this additional cost are being considered in full, including whether the grant for food poverty and hardship has sufficient funds to cover these costs. It is clear that the LGA are challenging the view that this was the intention and therefore appropriate.

We will also be considering whether the school allocated FSM funding – which are usually specifically for term time only provisions, can be accessed. This will require Schools Forum consideration.

In the event that these funding options are not possible, it is the case that this spend will be additional COVID related expenditure for the Council. Our current understanding of how existing national grants are being deployed means that we do anticipate this may bring an additional financial burden that will need to be managed within the COVID Council related reserve.

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 a delegated decision is taken to support the system to make a payment of £11 available to families whose child is eligible for FSM.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Education Participation and Skills



STAGE 1: WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED AND BY WHOM?

<p>What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?</p>	<p>This EIA considers the impact of children and their families that have found themselves in exceptional and unexpected circumstances since March 2020, as a result of COVID 19.</p> <p>In order to support the health and well-being of the most disadvantaged children and continued engagement in their education, the recommendation is that a delegated decision is taken to support the system to make a payment of £11 available to families whose child is eligible for FSM.</p> <p>In Plymouth there is a continuing increase of eligible families for free school meals and since March numbers have risen in the city by over 14%. Universal credit claimants (28,500 in September 2020) also continue to increase meaning that the trend upwards of FSM will continue.</p>
<p>Author</p>	
<p>Department and service</p>	<p>Education Participation and Skills</p>
<p>Date of assessment</p>	<p>27/10/2020</p>

STAGE 2: EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (eg data and feedback)	Any adverse impact See guidance on how to make judgement	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible
<p>Age</p>	<p>Plymouth had a population of 256,384 people from the 2011 Census (Office of National Statistics (ONS), this is currently estimated at 264,200 (DATA Plymouth).</p> <p>In relation to FSM the uptake has continued to rise, and there</p>	<p>No adverse impact is expected.</p> <p>We believe we should support access to a holiday meal for those families that do need additional financial assistance over the school holiday.</p>	<p>To check other age related eligibility criteria</p>	<p>Service Director EPS</p>

	are now over 8730 pupils in the city who are eligible			
Disability	<p>A total of 31,164 people (from 28.5% of households) declared themselves as having a long-term health problem or disability. 10% of our population have their day-to-day activities limited 'a lot' by a long-term health problem or disability. 17.5 per 1,000 children in Plymouth have a learning difficulty reported by schools. 2800 people (1% of population) have some learning disability. 30,000 adults in Plymouth (10.6% of population) have some form of mental health issue.</p> <p>Additional hardship, and difficulties in providing basic food for their children, will add to the difficulties their children will face in maintaining their health, their ability to engage in their education, and for some families exacerbate their ability to maintain and support their children's attendance at school.</p>	No adverse impact is expected	With other factors related to COVID likely to cause further disruption to children's education, we will continue to support schools to manage periods of self isolation among pupils and staff.	EPS and wider PCC services
Faith/religion or belief	Data shows 32.9% of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. Those with a Hindi, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh religion combined totalled less than 1%. 0.5% of the population had a current religion that was not Christian,	No adverse impact is expected	Payment to families will enable them to have choice related to any religious dietary requirements	EPS, Schools and wider PCC services

	Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, or Sikh such as Paganism or Spiritualism.			
Gender - including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	<p>Circa 130,000 (50.7% of the population) are female. 77,154 (39% people are married. 16,572 (8.5% people have remarried. 5382 (2.8%) are separated and still legally married.</p> <p>In 2013 there were 3163 live births in Plymouth¹</p> <p>During the school term schools and the LA catering company (CATERed) provided food parcels for those children who were self-isolating and FSM eligible. Whilst not all children accessed this offer, in excess of 90 families did.</p>	No adverse impact is expected	It is anticipated that only those most in need will access the financial assistance, and checks are in place to ensure that only those already eligible for FSM will be considered for payment.	EPS Services
Gender reassignment	We don't currently have any data about gender reassignment of our people	No adverse impact is expected	No adverse impact is expected.	No adverse impact is expected.
Race	238,263 (92.9%) of Plymouth's population identify themselves as White. 7.1% identify themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) with White Other	No adverse impact is expected.	No adverse impact is expected.	No adverse impact is expected.

¹ Office of National Statistics

	<p>(2.7%), Chinese (0.5%) and Other Asian (0.5%) the most common ethnic groups. BME population has risen from 3% in 2001 to 6.7% in 2011 therefore has more than doubled since the 2001 census. At least 43 main languages spoken in the City, showing Polish, Chinese and Kurdish as the top three. Based on a full year data for 2012-13, our top most requested languages are Polish, British Sign Language (BSL) and Chinese Mandarin. We have seen the trend for Polish and BSL to continue into 2013-14 however the third language varies; we believe this is due to patients and clients needing repeat appointments and treatment. Ethnicity and language statistics of school children (0-18 years) Data for 2012² shows out of a total population of 36711, 33,646 (95.65%) were identified as white British. 1123 (3.06%) as 'white other background'; 'other ethnic</p>			
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² School census data 2012 provided by Policy, Performance & Partnerships Department, Plymouth City Council, Jan 2013.

	group' 438 (1.19%); BME counted for 932 (2.54%).			
Sexual orientation - including civil partnership	Data sets are not recorded centrally	No adverse impact is expected.	No adverse impact is expected.	No adverse impact is expected.

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 gap in average hourly pay between men and women by 2020.	No adverse impact has been identified.	No adverse impact is expected.
Increase the number of hate crime incidents reported and maintain good satisfaction rates in dealing with racist, disablist, homophobic, transphobic and faith, religion and belief incidents by 2020.	No adverse impact on human rights has been identified.	No adverse impact is expected.
Good relations between different communities (community cohesion)	No adverse impact on human rights has been identified.	No adverse impact is expected.
Human rights Please refer to guidance	It is important that all people of Plymouth 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. We recognise that families experiencing poverty and exceptional circumstances over a period of longer than 7 months do need additional financial support at this time, in order to ensure that they can feed their children over the half term break.	In recognition of the hardship experienced by many families, and the impact for their children this required an urgent decision, and actions to be taken as half term began.

STAGE 4: PUBLICATION

Responsible Officer: Judith Harwood

Date 27 October 2020

Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills

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