

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member

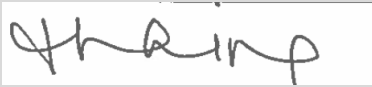


REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L07 22/23

| Decision | |
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| 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 | |

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| | | 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

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

Confidential/exempt information

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| 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 | √ | |


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| | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

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| 18b | Confidential/exempt briefing report title: | | | | | | | |
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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> |
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| Title of background paper(s) | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
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| Cabinet Member Signature | | | |
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| 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 | | |