

# URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a **Cabinet Member**




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

Executive Decision Reference Number – L5I 23/24

Decision				
1	<b>Title of decision:</b> Urgent Decision: Household Support Fund Round 5			
2	<b>Decision maker:</b> Councillor Tudor Evans OBE, Leader of the Council			
3	<b>Report author and contact details:</b> Rachel Silcock, Community Empowerment Operational Lead, 01752 307176			
4	<b>Decision to be taken:</b> To approve the distribution of Household Support Fund monies through the proposed Framework for Round 5			
5	<p><b>Reasons for decision:</b> An extension of the Household Support Fund (HSF) was announced by the Chancellor in the Spring Budget on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, for six months 'at current levels'. There is therefore an urgent need to agree on a framework for the next 6 months of HSF, in particular to fund food vouchers for children entitled to free school meals in the Easter Holidays which is in 3 weeks' time.</p> <p>The implication from the Chancellor's speech is that there will be the same level of funding that Plymouth City Council has received for the last 4 rounds which will be £2,294,796.82 for six months.</p> <p>As the Chancellor talked about 'continuation funding', it is likely that the objective and criteria for the fund will remain the same or very similar. However, Councils have not received written guidance to this effect, which means that this framework proposal will be high level at this stage.</p>			
6	<p><b>Alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p> <p><b>Option 1: Do Nothing</b> This is not an option as the Council has been awarded grant funding to support vulnerable households. To not use or accept this funding would be to the detriment of Plymouth households at a time of an ongoing cost of living crisis.</p> <p><b>Option 2: Provide cash payments or post office vouchers directly to claimants</b> This option would require a significant amount of staff capacity which wouldn't be in place in time to deliver the funding. Additionally, the procurement of pre-payment cards would incur service charges.</p>			
7	<b>Financial implications:</b> The funding for this contract is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.			
8	<p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> (please contact <a href="#">Democratic Support</a> for further advice)</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<p><b>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</b></p>
			<p>√</p>	<p>in the case of <b>capital</b> projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of <b>£3million</b> in total</p>

			√	in the case of <b>revenue</b> projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of <b>£1 million</b>
			√	is <b>significant</b> in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising <b>two or more</b> wards in the area of the local authority.
	<b>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the <a href="#">Forward Plan of Key Decisions</a></b>	The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that this can be considered to be an Urgent Key Decision, due to the extremely late announcement from the government of the continuation of HSF beyond March 2024. Until the spring budget on the 6 <sup>th</sup> March, the government were maintaining their decision (as stated by the Chancellor during the Autumn Statement in November 2023), that there were no plans to extend the Household Support Fund after March. This decision was therefore unexpected and leaves very little time to set up the mechanism to fund and distribute food vouchers for parents during the Easter Holidays which start on the 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2024. As central government funding was not announced until the 6 <sup>th</sup> March, it has not been practicable to include the decision in the Forward Plan.		
<b>9</b>	<b>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:</b>	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.		
<b>10</b>	<b>Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)</b>	None.		
<b>Urgent decisions</b>				
<b>11</b>	<b>Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	√	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support ( <a href="mailto:democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk">democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk</a> ) for advice)
		<b>No</b>		<b>(If no, go to section 13a)</b>
<b>12a</b>	<b>Reason for urgency:</b>	This is an urgent decision due to the extremely late announcement from the government of the continuation of HSF beyond March 2024. Until the spring budget on the 6 <sup>th</sup> March, the government were maintaining their original decision (as stated by the Chancellor during the Autumn Statement of November 2023) that there were no plans to extend the Household Support Fund after March. This decision was therefore unexpected and leaves very little time to set up the mechanism to fund and distribute food vouchers for parents during the Easter Holidays which start on the 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2024. As central government funding was not announced until the 6 <sup>th</sup> March, it has not been practicable to include the decision in the Forward Plan		
<b>12b</b>	<b>Scrutiny Chair Signature:</b>	Councillor Ian Darcy	<b>Date</b>	07 March 2024
	<b>Scrutiny</b>	Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee		

	<b>Committee name:</b>			
	<b>Print Name:</b>	Ian Darcy		
<b>Consultation</b>				
I3a	<b>Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
		<b>No</b>	√	<b>(If no go to section I4)</b>
I3b	<b>Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?</b>	n/a		
I3c	<b>Date Cabinet member consulted</b>			
I4	<b>Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		<b>No</b>	√	
I5	<b>Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?</b>	<b>Name</b>	Ruth Harrell	
		<b>Job title</b>	Director for Public Health	
		<b>Date consulted</b>	06 March 2024	
<b>Sign-off</b>				
I6	<b>Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:</b>	<b>Democratic Support (mandatory)</b>	DS116 23/24	
		<b>Finance (mandatory)</b>	HLS070324	
		<b>Legal (mandatory)</b>	LS/00001312/1/L B/8/3/24	
		<b>Human Resources (if applicable)</b>	N/A	
		<b>Corporate property (if applicable)</b>	N/A	
		<b>Procurement (if applicable)</b>	SS/SC/048/ED/CA/03 24	
<b>Appendices</b>				
I7	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Title of appendix</b>		
	A	Household Support Fund Round 5 April 2024 to September 2024 Framework		
<b>Confidential/exempt information</b>				
I8a	<b>Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?</b>	<b>Yes</b>		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for

		<b>No</b>	√	publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in <b>18b</b> below.  (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
		<b>Exemption Paragraph Number</b>						
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>18b</b>	<b>Confidential/exempt briefing report title:</b>							
<b>Background Papers</b>								
<b>19</b>	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 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.							
<b>Title of background paper(s)</b>		<b>Exemption Paragraph Number</b>						
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Signature</b>								
<b>20</b>	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.							
<b>Signature</b>			<b>Date of decision</b>	12 March 2024				
<b>Print Name</b>	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE, Leader of Plymouth City Council							