



OFFICER DECISION RECORD

This form should be used to record Executive decisions taken by Officers

Decision Ref. No:			
Service Area:		Date:	13 July 2021
Contact Name:	Jo Collis-Heavens Debra Jones	Tel No:	01202 127574 / 01202 123870
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Subject:	Covid Local Support Grant – extension to end of September 2021.		

The chief executive is being asked to make an urgent decision on behalf of Council to agree the allocations for the Covid Local Support Grant (CLSG) from the DWP announced on 21 June 2021.

The decision needs to be made in time for schools to organise spending their allocations before the summer break.

Total grant = £1,005,484.78

The CLSG which replaced the Winter Fund Grant has been extended to the end of September 2021.

We need to tell the DWP how we intend to spend the grant by 16 July 2021. The conditions of the grant are that at least 80% must be spent on households with children. Up to 20% can be spend on households without children and single individuals.

Our first priority with the grants has previously been to purchase vouchers for food for children who get free school meals, and other vulnerable children identified by schools, at £15 per child per week of each holiday. The remaining grant allocations have been shared between younger children for food vouchers, and with the community (via the CAB) for households with and without children experiencing hardship due to the pandemic, principally providing support with food and utility bills.

We are proposing the following in respect of vouchers purchased through schools and Bournemouth and Poole College.

- that we provide vouchers for school children and those at Bournemouth and Poole College who received vouchers in the summer half term holiday (plus any new FSM and vulnerable children)
- that the value of the voucher is £12.50 per week per child. Whilst this is a lesser per week value than previous holidays this is in line with the cost of school meals
- that the maximum number of weeks that we will provide vouchers for is 6.

Remaining monies will be available for allocation to the younger children cohort and via the community (CAB) as per the below table:

	Proposal
School Vouchers	£ 750,000.00
FIS Vouchers spend	£ 125,000.00
CAB	£ 120,000.00
Advertising/Marketing of scheme	£ 2,500.00
Contingency	£ 7,984.78
Total	£ 1,005,484.78

We would anticipate that by the end of September

- BCP schools would have ordered vouchers for about 10,000 FSM and school age vulnerable children (this will be done by the end of July and is the biggest expenditure)
- our family information service would have ordered vouchers for about 1,100 pre school age BCP children
- the Citizen Advice Bureau would have provided advice and financial support to about 400 BCP households.

Decision taken:

To accept this proposal.

Reasons for the decision:

Officers and Cllrs agree that this is the best use of the limited resource. There is no funding available to bridge the gap to enable us to deliver what we have previously delivered in school holidays.

Due to the time constraints the need to submit to the DWP our proposed action for spend and the need for schools to be ordering vouchers before the summer holiday begins the decision must be made week commencing 12/07/21.

Consultations undertaken:

Members:

- Cllr Nicola Greene, Cllr Mike White and Councillor Drew Mellor, as Leader of the Council, support the proposals.

Officers:

- Kelly Ansell (Service Director – Communities) and Sarah Rempel (Director of Education) support the proposals

Note: It is the responsibility of the 'Responsible Officer' – that is the Officer making the decision – to obtain the comments and signature of the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer **before** taking the decision and then send the completed record of the decision to Democratic Services for publication.

Finance and Resourcing Implications:

The total grant of £1,005,484.78 is allocated through this proposal. Any unspent grant must be returned to the DWP which the service will seek to avoid by monitoring expenditure and adjusting plans as necessary.

Name: Adam Richens

Date: 14 July 2021

Redacted

Signature (of Chief Finance Officer):

Legal Implications:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic.

DWP guidance sets out the required collaboration between DWP and the Council and any delivery partners to meet the policy intentions within the agreed framework. The guidance also details any constraints and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.

The Council should ensure that it complies with its duties set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and with the guidance as updated from time to time in administering the funding.

Name: Richard Jones (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Date: 13/07/2021

Redacted

Signature (of Deputy Monitoring Officer):

Risk Assessment:

The following risks to the Council are mitigated by the proposal being agreed prior to 16 July 2021 -

Reputational risk to the Council that -

- the Council does not meet the DWP deadline (16th July) for submitting our intentions as to how the grant money is to be spent
- grant money is not all spent and we do not make a full claim to the DWP
- grant money is spent inappropriately through not following the grant conditions
- grant money does not reach our target groups e.g. our decision is not made in time for our schools to purchase vouchers before the summer holidays begin and our target households do not get the help that they need.

Financial risk to the Council that the money is spent inappropriately and our claim to the DWP will not be paid in full.

Name: Debra Jones

Date: 13 July 2021

Redacted

Signature (of Officer Completing Assessment):

Impact Assessments:

The purpose of the DWP grant is to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials, providing assistance to vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic.

There is an expectation from Government that the majority of the grant will be used to replace free school meal provision in the holidays.

The agreed proposal will ensure that this grant will reach a wide range of vulnerable households including children of pre-school age, and that this money will ease the burden faced by a wide range of vulnerable households across BCP worrying about paying the next utility bill or the next food shop due to the pandemic.

To provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in our area we have identified vulnerable households using a range of sources of information, such as from Children's Services workers (including social workers), and schools. Disadvantaged households will include those of any race, religion or sex, and with disabilities.

Information for publication

Are there any reasons why this decision should be withheld from publication?

No

Background Papers

Previous grant allocations for the Covid Winter Grant were presented and agreed at CIMT.

Any declaration of interest by the
Officer responsible for the decision

Nature of Interest

No*

Note: No Officer having an personal financial interest in any matter should take a decision on that matter. Other interests of a non-disqualifying matter should be recorded here.

Any conflict of
interest declared
by a Cabinet
Member who is
consulted by the
Officer taking the
decision

Name of
Cabinet
Member

Nature of
interest

Details of any
dispensation
granted by the
Monitoring Officer

No*

Decision taken by: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive, BCP Council

Redacted


Signature: Date of Decision: 14 July 2021

Date Decision Effective:

Date of Publication of record of decision: (to be inserted by Democratic Services)

Note: A record of this decision should be kept by the Service Area within which the decision falls.

Include additional guidance if considered appropriate