



Officer Decision Record – Key Decision

Key decisions taken by an officer are subject to the 5 day call in period from circulation to Members, and therefore the decision will be released for implementation following the call-in period and no call in being received

1. Cabinet date and copy resolution this key decision relates to

1/5/2020 report on the impact of Covid, the implementation of emergency powers and details of the funding from Government to be used for specific Covid related purposes. Under those powers an Emergency Officer Decision was made on 3rd December 2020 relating to the use of the first tranche of Winter Support Grant from the Department for Work and Pensions. This report relates to the latest grant that we have been given from the Covid Support Grant which is the new name for the Winter Support Grant.

2. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision)

Covid Support Grant – on the 21st June 2021 the council received confirmation from the Government that it is extending the Covid Support grant to cover the period up to the end of September 2021. The Covid Support Grant replaced the Winter Support Grant and has the primary aim of providing food and warmth to vulnerable families. As with most other Local Authorities we have used the funding primarily to provide food to eligible free school meal children over the school holidays. It is proposed that we use approximately £420,000 of our allocation of £590,000 to provide vouchers via schools to families to provide food over the summer holidays. The remaining funding will be used for grants to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations who supported the council with the provision of food and utility support over the Winter and who have direct contact with vulnerable families.

The funding must be fully spent by 30th September 2021 and the vouchers need to be bought and distributed before the start of the summer holidays in less than 3 weeks' time.

3. Decision being taken

To authorise the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Skills to utilise the £590,000 grant allocated to NELC to provide food for eligible pupils over the summer holidays and to use the remaining

funding to provide grants to voluntary organisations that work directly with vulnerable families.

4. Is it an Urgent Decision? If yes, specify the reasons for urgency. Urgent decisions will require sign off by the relevant scrutiny chair(s) as not subject to call in.

Yes, to provide the vouchers in time for the school holidays means that we need to work with schools now to purchase and distribute the vouchers. The grants to voluntary organisations need to be distributed via a funding agreement that needs to be returned to us before spend can commence and then the organisations have to have spent their allocation by 30th September 2021.

5. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits

Over 7,000 children will be supported with food over the Summer holiday period and an anticipated 200 families will receive direct support to help with food / utility costs preventing many of them from going into, or further into, debt.

6. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision (this should be similar to original cabinet decision)

There was an option not to provide food as there is a Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme running in NEL. After consulting with the officers running the HAF programme it was felt that the vouchers would benefit a greater number of children than the HAF can currently access through the proposals it has received.

All the money could be used to provide food and utility support through existing organisations. It was felt that given the time available this was not a viable option and that the proposal to fund both food vouchers and give small grants to VCS organisations was the most viable option.

7. Background documents considered (web links to be included and copies of documents provided for publishing)

The DWP press release announcing the funding available to each area
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/english-families-get-extended-support-with-food-and-utility-bills>

8. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons

No

9. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)

None save that support for urgency will be sought through the Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

10. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)

The dissemination of COVID grant funds has quickly become core business of the Council consistent with s138 Local Government Act 1972 and other enabling legislation permitting response to an emergency scenario. The decision and delegation sought is appropriate and consistent with previous decisions.

11. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)

S138 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to make grants or loans to other persons or bodies on conditions determined by the Council in respect of any such action taken by those persons or bodies to alleviate the potential effects of the Covid-19 virus within the local community. The proposed spending will be funded entirely through external support grant.

12. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)

There are no direct HR implications.

13. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)

There is a risk that people take advantage of the support available via the voluntary and community sector, we have a small number of examples of this happening over the last 12 months through the Hardship and Winter Grant funding but action was taken against the individuals who abuse the system. There is a real opportunity to support families that have been negatively impacted by Covid, enabling them to deal with the financial and health impacts that they have experienced.

14. Has the Cabinet Tracker been updated with details of this decision?

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15. Decision Maker(s):

Name: Helen Isaacs

Title: Assistant Chief Executive

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 28/6/21

16. Consultation carried out with Portfolio Holder(s):

Name: Councillor Ian Lindley

Title: Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Skills

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 5th July 2021

17. If the decision is urgent then consultation should be carried out with the relevant Scrutiny Chair/Mayor/Deputy Mayor

Name: Councillor Oliver Freeston

Title: Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

Signed: approved via email

Dated: 9th July 2021

Key Decisions are defined in the Constitution as:

A decision (whether taken collectively or individually by members) which is likely:

- (i) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

A decision will be considered financially significant if:

- (i) in the case of revenue expenditure, it results in the incurring of expenditure or making savings of £350,000 or greater;
- (ii) in the case of capital expenditure, the capital expenditure/savings are in excess of £350,000 or 20% of the total project cost, whichever is the greater

In determining whether a decision is significant in terms of its effect on an area comprising two or more wards, consideration shall be given to:

- (i) the number of residents/service users that will be affected in the wards concerned;
- (ii) the likely views of those affected (i.e. is the decision likely to result in substantial public interest)
- (iii) whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.

APPENDIX 1 – EMAIL APPROVAL

From: Cllr Oliver Freeston (NELC) <Oliver.Freeston@nelincs.gov.uk>
Sent: 09 July 2021 11:53
To: Jamie Dunn (NELC) <Jamie.Dunn@nelincs.gov.uk>; Cllr Paul Silvester (NELC) <Paul.Silvester@nelincs.gov.uk>
Cc: Laura Cowie (NELC) <Laura.Cowie@nelincs.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: ODR Key Decision COVID Support Grant final v2 (1)

Hi

Read the report and content, I can see it has already been to Cabinet for approval too.

Many thanks. Oliver.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Jamie Dunn (NELC) <Jamie.Dunn@nelincs.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, July 8, 2021 1:45:24 PM
To: Cllr Paul Silvester (NELC) <Paul.Silvester@nelincs.gov.uk>; Cllr Oliver Freeston (NELC) <Oliver.Freeston@nelincs.gov.uk>
Cc: Laura Cowie (NELC) <Laura.Cowie@nelincs.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: ODR Key Decision COVID Support Grant final v2 (1)

Thank you. Cllr Freeston could you let me know if you support please.

Jamie

From: Cllr Paul Silvester (NELC) <Paul.Silvester@nelincs.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 July 2021 14:53
To: Jamie Dunn (NELC) <Jamie.Dunn@nelincs.gov.uk>; Cllr Oliver Freeston (NELC) <Oliver.Freeston@nelincs.gov.uk>
Cc: Laura Cowie (NELC) <Laura.Cowie@nelincs.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: ODR Key Decision COVID Support Grant final v2 (1)

Good afternoon Jamie

I fully support the ODR however given that Foresight might benefit I think it would be prudent for Cllr Freeston to affirm his support for this decision

Kind regards

Cllr Paul Silvester
From: Jamie Dunn (NELC) <Jamie.Dunn@nelincs.gov.uk>
Sent: 06 July 2021 14:22
To: Cllr Oliver Freeston (NELC) <Oliver.Freeston@nelincs.gov.uk>; Cllr Paul Silvester (NELC) <Paul.Silvester@nelincs.gov.uk>
Cc: Laura Cowie (NELC) <Laura.Cowie@nelincs.gov.uk>
Subject: ODR Key Decision COVID Support Grant final v2 (1)

Good afternoon, please find attached an officer decision record for the latest use of the Covid Support grant. The latest grant has to be spent by 31st September and the majority of the funding will be used to provide food vouchers to eligible free school meal children over the summer holiday, hence copying in Cllr Freeston and the need for an ODR. The remainder will be allocated to various VCS organisations to provide support to individuals and families in relation to food, utility costs and other essentials, hence copying in Cllr Silvester. Please could you e-mail to say you whether or not you are happy to agree the ODR and if you need anything clarifying please contact me.

Cllr Silvester, please note that Foresight has received funding from previous Winter Grant / Covid support and may be a recipient of some of the current funding.