

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4063

Author:

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Department:

Commercial and Operations

Contact:

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Subject:

COVID Winter Grant Scheme

Key Decision (decision valued at more than £1million):

Yes

Total Value:

£1,414,274 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

- 1) To accept the Government's COVID Winter Grant Scheme allocation to the Council.
- 2) To allocate the grant spending priorities as set out in the table in Appendix A.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for COVID Response and Recovery to release the grant funds as required for the purposes specified in the table in Appendix A.
- 4) To approve dispensation from Contract Procedure Rules 4.1.2, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 (Operational Reasons), to carry out the procurement of food vouchers without a full tendering process.

Reasons for the Decision(s) On 8 November 2020, the Government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, available from December 2020, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy, water bills and other associated costs. Nottingham City Council's allocation is £1,414,274. A Local Authority is able to determine eligibility for the grant in its area and target its support within the scope of the conditions set out below:

1) at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals;

2) at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.

The Council has identified its proposed use of this grant, as set out in Appendix A.

Dispensation from the Financial Regulations is required to procure the food vouchers to support this scheme. There are a limited number of providers for food vouchers and, due to the timetable of this scheme, there is not sufficient time to go through a full tendering process.

Briefing notes documents: 01.12.20 CLT Briefing Note - COVID Winter Grant Scheme.doc, Appendix A - COVID Winter Grant Allocation Table.pdf

Other Options Considered:

1) To not accept the grant: this option is rejected, as the grant is needed to support those most in need in the city.

2) To carry out a full tender process to procure the food vouchers: due to the short timescale, it is not possible to undertake a full tender process for the purchase of these vouchers, so the exemption from Financial Regulations is sought so that a direct award of the contract can be made.

Background Papers: None

Published Works: None

Affected Wards: Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests: None

Dispensation from Financial Regulations: Yes

Consultations: Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: None

Equality: Please login to the system to view the EIA document: Equality Impact Assessment - COVID Grant.pdf

Social Value Considerations: Not applicable.

Decision Type: Leader's Key Decision

Subject to Call In: No
The call-in procedure does not apply to the proposed decision because the delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or Vice-Chair) in his/her absence has been consulted and agreed both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all circumstances and that it should be treated as a matter of urgency.

Person Consulted: Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Consultation Date: 04/12/2020
The use of part of the funding for food vouchers requires an urgent decision for this to be put in place as rapidly as, to ensure that schools have the ability to distribute the vouchers to parents of eligible pupils with enough time prior to the Christmas break.

Advice Sought: Legal, Finance, Procurement, Equality and Diversity

Legal Advice: Dispensation is required from Contract Procedure Rules 4.1.2, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29, for a direct award of a contract, for the reasons set out in the main body of the decision.
Advice provided by Sarah O'Bradaigh (Senior Solicitor) on 02/12/2020.

Finance Advice:

This decision is in response to the Government announcement on the 8 November 2020, allocating £170million of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period and titled COVID Winter Grant Scheme. This grant was made available from December 2020 to be issued by County Councils and Unitary Authorities to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. Nottingham City Council's allocation is £1,414,274. The grant will be allocated across the areas as set out in Appendix A.

The spending of this grant will be in accordance with grant conditions and will require the accurate recording of both financial and non-financial information management information. It should also be noted that there is no risk to the organisation when the grant ceases. The decision requires dispensation from Contract Procedure Rules 4.1.2, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 (Operational Reasons) to procure food vouchers. The purchase of food vouchers is only available from a limited number of providers; the provider/contract the Council currently has for the provision of food vouchers for its Schools Catering are unable to provide more, therefore to support this scheme, there will need to be another provider. Due to the urgency of the issuing of this grant, it is not possible to undertake a tender process.

Vouchers for energy and water bills will be issued by Energy Services and will only apply to those citizens not on district heating, as there is a separate scheme already in place with associated funding by an alternative grant. The allocation of both food and energy vouchers will be based on a needs assessment, in accordance with the guidance and statutory practices.

Advice provided by Ceri Walters (Head of Commercial Finance) as Finance Co-ordinator on 04/12/2020.

Procurement Advice:

Dispensation is required from Contract Procedure Rules 4.1.2, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29, for the direct award of a contract, for the reasons set out in the main body of the decision.

Advice provided by Paul Ritchie (Lead Procurement Officer) on 03/12/2020.

Equality and Diversity Advice:

Comments have been provided on the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The local eligibility framework is still in development, so there is a need to ensure that this is published on the Council's website when it is available. Reference has been made in the EIA to reflect this.

Advice provided by Nasreen Miah (Equality and Employability Consultant) on 03/12/2020.

Signatures:

David Mellen (Leader/ PH Regeneration, Schools, Communications)
SIGNED and Dated: 04/12/2020
Hugh White (Corporate Director for COVID Response and Recovery)
SIGNED and Dated: 04/12/2020
Theresa Channell (Head of Corporate and Strategic Finance) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations
SIGNED and Dated: 04/12/2020
Chief Finance Officer's Comments: