

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL**

**GENERAL EXCEPTION NOTICE – HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND**

**(under regulations 10(1) and 10(3) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”))**

Notice is hereby given that the Cabinet Member for Children’s Service, Education and Lifelong Skills intends no earlier than Monday 29 November 2021 to make executive decisions regarding the Household Support Fund.

These decisions are regarded as ‘key decisions’ and ordinarily under regulation 9 of the Regulations at least 28 clear days’ notice is required to be given in advance on the Forward Plan, setting out that a key decision is to be made, the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made, the name of the decision-making body and its members or the name of the individual decision maker, the date on which, or the period within which, the decision is to be made, a list of the documents submitted, the address from where copies of documents may be obtained, notice that other documents may be submitted to the decision maker and the procedure for requesting details of these documents (if any) as they become available.

Where such notice is impracticable, a general exception notice may instead be given in accordance with regulation 10 of the Regulations.

The Monitoring Officer has by written notice informed the Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee of the matter about which the decisions are to be made, namely

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Lifelong Skills is recommended as set out in the accompanying report, following receipt of the report on 19 November 2021, to agree the following (under delegated authority granted to her):

1. That funding of up to £237,630 be approved to be granted to schools, colleges, and early years settings to provide Free School Meal Vouchers of £15 per child, per week for children meeting the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 12 of the accompanying report, covering the Christmas 2021 and February 2022 half-terms.
2. That the purchase of a £50 food or fuel voucher for each care leaver be approved, to the value of £7,500 such that vouchers and/or gifts and/or food can be provided to care leavers not in receipt of vouchers through the free school meal voucher offer.
3. That a grant of £30,000 be approved and be made available to Citizens Advice for them to use to financially support households with fuel bills over the winter period and provide a telephone signposting service to the Connect4Communities programme. Such grant will be provided on terms to be agreed by the Director of Children’s Services and in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 5 of the accompanying report and that the Director of Children’s Services be granted delegated authority to agree such terms.

4. That the Director of Children's Services be granted delegated authority to approve grant awards to Holiday Activity and Food scheme providers to deliver extended schemes during the Christmas 2021 holiday and to operate holiday activity and food programmes over the February 2022 half term. Such individual grant awards will be made in compliance with the criteria for the grant and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills up to the value of £30,000.
5. That the Director of Children's Services be granted delegated authority to approve community grant awards to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant (as set out in paragraph 5 of the accompanying report) for targeted financial support for those in need over winter, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills, up to the value of £200,000.
6. That a total of £125,000 be approved to be used to establish and support a network of community pantries across the Isle of Wight, offering a more sustainable approach to helping households.
7. That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, be granted delegated authority to agree the eligibility criteria for direct financial awards to vulnerable households to a total value of £250,000.
8. That the Director of Children's Services be delegated authority to approve the reallocation of any Household Support Fund scheme funds remaining or underspent funds to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member. (This will ensure that where spend does not meet the approvals set out in this report, the Isle of Wight Council can rapidly adapt the approach to ensure needs are met).

The reason why it was impracticable to have complied with the standard advance notice requirement is that whilst on 30 September 2021 the government announced a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period, guidance and grant determinations have only just been confirmed on 5 November 2021. In order to administer the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) scheme and deliver its objectives, decisions must be made as soon as possible and there is an established need to be met. The background is that the £421 million Household Support Fund made available by the DWP is being distributed through County and Unitary Councils and is to be used primarily to support households in the most need with food, energy, and water bills. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need. A copy of this notice has been made available for inspection by the public and published on the Council's website.

Dated 19 November 2021

Signed: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer