




## EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE AND PENSIONS</b>
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	<b>APPROVE SPENDING PLAN FOR HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND (FREE SCHOOL MEALS COMPONENT)</b>
<b>DECISION</b>	<p>To approve the spending plan for the Household Support Fund in respect of the free school meals component `as set out in this report and in particular</p> <p>(a) That Free School Meals vouchers be provided to cover school breaks during the grant period with the value of each voucher be increased from £15 per child per week to £20 per child per week over the Christmas break to reflect the increased living costs associated with the holiday season.</p> <p>(b) That Free School Meals vouchers be purchased before the expiry of the grant period to enable them to be provided for the Easter break 2022 at £15 per child per week.</p> <p>It noted that it is expected that this stream would cost around £1.4 million and will satisfy the requirements for 50% of the funding to be spent on families with children and for 50% to be spent on food. The utilisation remaining £0.8m is to be subject to a separate report.</p>
<b>DECISION TAKER(S):</b>	<p>Councillor Brenda Warrington</p> <p>Councillor Oliver Ryan</p> <p>Councillor Leanne Feeley</p>
<b>DESIGNATION OF DECISION TAKER(S):</b>	<p>Executive Leader</p> <p>Executive Member for Finance &amp; Economic Growth</p> <p>Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage</p>
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	1 December 2021
<b>REASON FOR DECISION:</b>	<p>The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have released a one-time fund for local authorities to support residents with their costs of living through from October 2021 to March 31 2022. Tameside MBC was awarded approximately £2.2 million in this funding package.</p> <p>We need to satisfy the requirements for 50% of the funding to be spent on families with children and for 50% to be spent on food to support residents.</p>
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</b>	<p>The alternative would be wither not to undertake these options and find alternatives or not to spend the Funding at all. We believe not to find appropriate solutions to the impact of covid and increased poverty would be a dereliction of our duty to reduce health inequalities. Any unspent funding would be returned to Government and the options proposed are tried and tested and have maximum impact.</p>
<b>CONSULTEES:</b>	Executive Board
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)	<p>On 30 September the DWP announced a new Household Support Fund to support vulnerable households and individuals during winter 2021/22. The fund is to be administered by Local Authorities and</p>

	<p>Tameside has been allocated £2.224m. The grant must be claimed in arrears based on actual expenditure incurred up to 31 March 2022. Plans will need to be put in place to ensure the maximum grant amount is utilised and claimed within the eligible claim period.</p> <p>The grant is expected to be targeted at the most vulnerable and those in need to support essential living costs, particularly food, energy costs, water and other essentials. At least 50% of the grant must be used to support families with children. The proposals set out in this report will result in £1.4m of grant being allocated for the provision of supermarket vouchers to families with children eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>The utilisation remaining £0.8m is to be subject to a separate report.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</p>	<p>As set out in the main body of the report, the funding specifies how this money should be spent. This proposal sits within those specifications being food related.</p> <p>The proposal is to continue the voucher scheme, which has already been established by the council.</p> <p>It remains essential for the scheme to be robustly managed to ensure that vouchers are not provided either in error or as a result of fraud and a robust system of recovery should be in place to ensure that this funding is being used as intended for the benefit of Tameside residents.</p>
<p><b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST:</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>DISPENSATION GRANTED BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE ATTACHED:</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:</b></p>	<p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Alec Milner, Policy Officer</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3905</p> <p> e-mail: <a href="mailto:alec.milner@tameside.gov.uk">alec.milner@tameside.gov.uk</a></p>



  
 Signed..... Dated 1 December 2021  
 Councillor Brenda Warrington - Executive Leader

  
 Signed..... Dated 1 December 2021  
 Councillor Oliver Ryan - Executive Member for Finance & Economic Growth

  
 Signed..... Dated 1 December 2021  
 Councillor Leanne Feeley - Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage

## EXECUTIVE DECISION REPORT

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	Governance and Pensions
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	Approve spending plan for Household Support Fund (Free School Meals Component)
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	1 December 2021
<b>DECISION TAKER</b>	Councillor Brenda Warrington - Executive Leader Councillor Oliver Ryan - Executive Member for Finance & Economic Growth Councillor Leanne Feeley - Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Sarah Threlfall
<b>REPORT SUMMARY:</b>	<p>It is proposed that a spending plan for the Household Support Fund (HSF) splits the funding award across four support schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding for Free School Meals (Free School Meals)</li> <li>- An open support programme into which all residents can apply, offering vouchers or payments for food, essentials, and energy;</li> <li>- A targeted support offer for residents with whom we're already working through existing welfare services, largely to support food, essentials, and energy costs, with a small portion able to be used for housing cost in exceptional circumstances;</li> <li>- Support offered through third sector partners in the form of vouchers to distribute or direct awards to be used for agreed purposes.</li> </ul> <p>This report concerns the Free School Meals element of the funding.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	That the proposed approach for utilising £1.4 million from the Household Support Fund for Free School Meals be agreed.
<b>JUSTIFICATION FOR DECISION:</b>	<p>Supporting low income households, particularly low income families with children links to all of the priorities within the Corporate Plan, which are impacted upon by Covid-19.</p> <p>The proposed spending framework fits with the Council's key policies around supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.</p>
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</b>	The alternative would be wither not to undertake these options and find alternatives or not to spend the Funding at all. We believe not to find appropriate solutions to the impact of covid and increased poverty would be a dereliction of our duty to reduce health inequalities. Any unspent funding would be returned to Government and the options proposed are tried and tested and have maximum impact.
<b>CONSULTEES:</b>	Executive Board
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)	On 30 September the DWP announced a new Household Support Fund to support vulnerable households and individuals during winter 2021/22. The fund is to be administered by Local Authorities and Tameside has been allocated £2.224m. The grant must be claimed in arrears based on actual expenditure incurred up to 31 March 2022.

	<p>Plans will need to be put in place to ensure the maximum grant amount is utilised and claimed within the eligible claim period.</p> <p>The grant is expected to be targeted at the most vulnerable and those in need to support essential living costs, particularly food, energy costs, water and other essentials. At least 50% of the grant must be used to support families with children. The proposals set out in this report will result in £1.4m of grant being allocated for the provision of supermarket vouchers to families with children eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>The utilisation remaining £0.8m is to be subject to a separate report.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</p>	<p>As set out in the main body of the report, the funding specifies how this money should be spent. This proposal sits within those specifications being food related.</p> <p>The proposal is to continue the voucher scheme, which has already been established by the council.</p> <p>It remains essential for the scheme to be robustly managed to ensure that vouchers are not provided either in error or as a result of fraud and a robust system of recovery should be in place to ensure that this funding is being used as intended for the benefit of Tameside residents.</p>
<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT:</b></p>	<p>The challenges posed by Covid-19 present significant risks to the Council and the plans for supporting the vulnerable are a mechanism via which we will mitigate the risk posed to vulnerable people in the borough. These plans outline the functions and structures that have been put in place to support the most vulnerable.</p>
<p><b>LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN:</b></p>	<p>Provision of free school plan links to the Corporate plan and the priorities around children and young people.</p>
<p><b>REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:</b></p>	<p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Alec Milner, Policy Officer</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 3905</p> <p> e-mail: <a href="mailto:alec.milner@tameside.gov.uk">alec.milner@tameside.gov.uk</a></p>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has awarded Tameside MBC approximately £2.2 million as part of their Household Support Fund (HSF), a £500 million grant package running from 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. Funding is to be provided in arrears subject to two management information returns due on 21 January 2022 and 22 April 2022 respectively.
- 1.2 DWP have set specific requirements for what is and is not appropriate usage of this grant funding. Monies should be used to support residents to buy food and basic essentials, along with support for energy bills and other essential costs like necessary phone and internet access. Cover for housing costs is permitted only in 'exceptional circumstances', i.e. only in cases where every other potential avenue has been exhausted to no avail, and not to maintain 'unsustainable tenancies'. Because of the fixed time window for spending the grant funding, DWP have made clear that the funding is not intended to be used for long-term support to any one resident or household, but residents can receive help through this scheme multiple times.
- 1.3 Similarly to the previous Covid Support Fund grants from DWP, at least 50% of the funding must be spent on families with children, and additionally at least 50% should be spent on food costs- this is lower than the 80% requirement from previous funding packages, which reflects the changing situation and the wider vulnerabilities experienced by families during Winter.

## **2. PROPOSED PLAN FOR SPEND**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the funding be utilised for the provision of Free School Meals vouchers to cover school breaks during the grant period immediately succeeding the end of the grant period. It is also proposed that the value of each voucher be increased from £15 to £20 over the Christmas break to reflect the increased living costs associated with the holiday season. Further that Free School Meals vouchers are purchased before the expiry of the Grant period to enable voucher provision to continue for the Easter holiday 2022. It is expected that this stream would cost around £1.4 million. This stream will satisfy the requirements for 50% of the funding to be spent on families with children and for 50% to be spent on food.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 As set out on the front of the report.