

Cambridgeshire County Council Record of Decision

Decision taken by an officer of the Council

Title of decision	Covid-19 local support grant – summer holiday support – Procurement of Voucher Scheme
Date decision taken	14th July 2021
Decision maker	Chief Executive <i>(ordinarily it would be Children and Young People Committee)</i>
Details of decision taken	<p>On the 21st June, the Department for Work and Pensions wrote to all Local Authorities to outline an extension to the Covid Local Support Grant for the period from the 21st June to the 30th September. Throughout the pandemic, the council has made available to vulnerable families and offer of supermarket vouchers and wider support with food, clothing etc using this grant.</p> <p>Owing to the timescales involved, it is necessary to seek a contract exemption up to £1.58m to provide supermarket vouchers in time for the first voucher to be distributed on the 23rd July. The contract would be with our existing voucher supplier, Wonde (Furlong House, 2 Kings Court, Newmarket, CB8 7SG), and would cover the period 17th July to 1st October. Vouchers will be bought at less than face value – we will be paying 99p in the £1 for the vouchers covering 8 supermarket based upon parents choice.</p>

<p>Reasons for taking decision</p>	<p>If this exemption is not agreed, we would not be able to meet the deadline of allocating parents a voucher for the 1st week of the summer holidays. There would also be a significant administrative burden on the council that is not resourced and potential could lead to errors in allocations or undue delay in allocating resources.</p> <p>The approach to operating the scheme was agreed at the following meetings - CYP committee – 29th June S&R committee – 6th July</p>
<p>Options considered</p>	<p>In December 2020, we engaged with three suppliers who can distribute vouchers through their system once data from schools has been provided and uploaded into their system. A number of providers offer this service and do not charge an administrative fee. We have also reviewed a new Crown Procurement Framework RM6255 Voucher Scheme; this framework is designed to be used for Voucher Schemes, but due to the short notice of the grant and urgent nature of the issuing of the funds to enable the conditions of the grant to be satisfied it was not possible to use the framework, however given the value for money that can be demonstrated from previously using Wonde coupled with the removing the risk for any potential disruption of service by setting up a new supplier. We considered the breadth of their service, how we could use existing data to run the scheme and the administrative burden on schools and the LA of using their service. As a result, we have decided to proceed with our existing provider called Wonde for the following reasons -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wonde has successfully been used by all our schools, considerably reducing the administrative burden on them to lawfully collate their eligible pupil data and provide it to us to then distribute FSM vouchers. • Wonde have an effective system that allows us to make payments to families who are not accessing schools (in early years settings) through securely uploading data into their system. This will ensure accuracy and a timely response to ensure the vouchers are with families in the rounds to date. • The need to share substantial amounts of personal data create GDPR issues but with Wonde already being able to access the majority of this data, in a secure manner, again, the burden to install protective security measures to supply the data to the council is substantially reduced. The system they operate integrates with schools' management information systems which means less data handling for the Council. <p>We have reached this decision as this substantially reduces the administrative burden and associated cost on both the Local Authority and our schools, which means more resources can be allocated for families (there is provision in the Grant to charge administrative costs but we are fully committed in our funding).</p>

Details of any conflict of interests declared	None
Details of any disclosable pecuniary interest or non-statutory disclosable interest declared	None

Signature of decision maker (if appropriate)


Chief Executive

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