

To: Executive
16 November 2021

**Strategic Procurement Plan – Supermarket Vouchers
Assistant Director of Early Help and Communities**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To brief the Executive on the proposed expenditure of the £555,468 Household Support Fund from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and seek endorsement on the spending.
- 1.2 To brief the Executive on the procurement process being used to award a new contract for supermarket vouchers in order to disburse the about grant plus potential future grants over a maximum period of three years.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Executive agrees the proposed routes to spend the Household Support Fund by the end of March 2022.**
- 2.2 **That the Executive approves the Strategic Procurement Plan for purchasing supermarket vouchers.**

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is required for the local authority to create a local eligibility framework to disburse the funding that has been received from the Department of Work and Pensions. The distribution as set out in the Strategic Procurement Plan provides the basis for this framework.
- 3.2 Supermarket vouchers have been recommended as the primary use for the fund as this has previously proved successful with supporting children eligible for free school meals with the cost of food during the school holidays. The vouchers are to be distributed to low-income households within Bracknell Forest to help alleviate the increased financial pressures related to the pandemic and the winter months as well as offsetting the increase in household bills.
- 3.3 The funding from the DWP must be distributed by the end of March 2022. In order to maximise the fund and directly support residents, a procurement exercise is required to appoint a supplier of supermarket vouchers.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The financial hardship officers group considered other options for spending the household support funding, but it was concluded that these would not be as effective as those recommended in terms of efficiently disbursing funds to those most in need. A number of other options have been considered but these are more complex and labour intensive. The proposals follow agreed practice in distributing previous tranches of this funding.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Household Support Fund from the DWP provides a vital opportunity to directly support households in the community who are facing financial hardship. It is

therefore a priority to distribute the money to priority groups using existing mechanisms and networks where these are in place.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The relevant legal advice included in the strategic procurement plan.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 The relevant financial information is included in the strategic procurement plan.

Other Consultation Responses (Head of Procurement)

- 6.3 Procurement considerations are covered within the Strategic Procurement Plan.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 An Initial Equalities Screening Record Form has been completed for this requirement. Please see attached as Appendix A.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 None identified

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are not anticipated to have any environmental or climate implications. Vouchers purchased will be e vouchers and therefore the majority will not require any printing or paper.

Background Papers

Strategic Procurement Plan – Supermarket Vouchers

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