

RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TO: PROVIDE FREE SCHOOL MEALS DURING THE OCTOBER 2020 HALF TERM HOLIDAY

Decision made:

To fund free school meal costs for eligible children during the October 2020 school holiday.

Made by: Terence Herbert, Chief Executive.

Background

1. As the Chief Executive, I am responsible for any matters relating to the provision of free school meals in the County of Wiltshire on behalf of Wiltshire Council.
2. The power to make a decision in respect of this matter is delegated to me pursuant to Wiltshire Council's Constitution.

Reason for decision

3. Government funding for free school meals does not cover school holidays.
4. By not providing free school meals outside of term time, it increases the risk of hardship to children who rely on the school-supplied meal to provide basic nourishment each day.
5. Given the emerging pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, intelligence suggests this will be exacerbated during the Autumn.
6. Supporting vulnerable groups remains a priority for Wiltshire Council. The provision of free school meals during the October school holiday will help alleviate some of the pressure and hardship faced, especially those on lower pay.
7. Following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills, both support the decision.
8. The Section 151 officer and Director of Children's Services are also in support of this decision.

Key decision requirements	The decision is not 'key' as defined under the Constitution and is within the power of the Chief Executive to make.
Views of relevant cabinet member(s), committee chairman, area board(s)	Yes see box below

Consultation with cabinet member(s), the Leader and Scrutiny (for Executive decisions taken under Emergency Powers)	Yes. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills support the decision.
Consultation with local members (as appropriate)	N/A
Consideration of the area boards and delegated decision checklist for officers on the issue of when and how to involve local councillors and area boards in decisions about local services	N/A
Implication of any council policy, initiative, strategy or procedure	Yes. It meets the Council's business plan in that it supports vulnerable groups within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council.
Consultation in accordance with requirements and expectations of consultation with the public	N/A
Range of options available	see above
Staffing, financial and legal implications	Yes there are funds available to cover this decision. There are no staffing implications other than the additional work to implement the decision which would be covered by existing resources.
Evidence of due regard having been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.	This decision provides funding for supporting vulnerable persons who have a protected characteristic (children) and does not have adverse effects on any other protected groups.
Risk assessment	N/A
Involvement of statutory officers and/or directors	Yes
Regional or national guidance from other bodies	Yes
The council's constitution	Yes
Contract is suitable for execution under the e-signature process	N/A

Conflict of Interest

9. Not applicable.

Other options considered

10. To not fund. However, this would leave a significant number of children potentially without access to a nutritious meal during the holiday.

Made by: Terence Herbert

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Date: 26/10/2020