

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for agenda item 4 Winter Grants Scheme)
Date	3 December 2020
Present	Councillors Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance and Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods)

39. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Members confirmed they had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

40. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 5 November 2020 be approved, to be signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

41. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak on under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

42. Winter Grants Scheme

The Executive Members considered a report that detailed the Winter Grants scheme for approval. The Assistant Director Customer and Digital Services and Head of Customer & Exchequer Services were in attendance to present the report. They reported that the Winter Grant funding would be provided in instalments of 50% up front (which had already been received), 25% after initial management information (in February 2021), then based upon spend a final balancing payment of up to 25%. With regard to free school meals (FSM) York, along with many other authorities receiving the

grant would looked to allocate an element of the budget for this purpose as no further similar funding is due from the DfE until April 2021. The noted that the estimated weekly cost of FSM in York was approximately £50k and the required budget through to and including the first week of the Easter holidays 2021 is up to £200k for which it was recommended that the money was top sliced from the budget. They added that an officer decision was made on 23 October to support FSM during the October Half Term from the extended welfare fund. The value of the decision was £42,750 but the actual costs were £46,560 and the Executive Member was asked to approve the additional spend of £3,810. The Winter Grants Scheme was outlined and it was noted that the application for the scheme would be available the following week.

The Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods welcomed the scheme, particularly in relation to FSM. She commented that it would have been better for the government to provide funding for FSM directly through all of the school holidays. She thanked council staff for their work in getting the scheme in place and she urged residents that may be struggling to get in touch with the council for advice on support even if they did not believe they would be eligible. She acknowledged the need to ensure that communication regarding the scheme was up and running and noted that it was an open scheme for residents to apply for.

Both Executive Members noted that the council had funded FSM through the school holidays and they commended the work of Marcus Rashford. It was then

Resolved: That approval be given to;

- a) The top slicing of the Winter Grant Government allocation in the sum of £200k for Free School Meals in respect of Christmas, February Half Term and the start of the Easter Holidays 2021.
- b) The Winter Grant scheme at Annex A to support families with or without children with Food and Utility bills through to 31st March 2021.
- c) The additional spend of £3,810 for October Half Term Free School Meals as set out at Paragraph 9 of the report.
- d) The delegation for any future changes resulting from Government guidance in relation to this scheme to the Chief Finance Officer (s151) in consultation with the Executive Member Finance and Performance.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's most financially vulnerable residents through the ongoing covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr N Ayre (Executive Member)

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.15 am].