

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted [*if applicable*]

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Legal and Community

1. **DECISION TAKEN**

The provision of funding of **£2000** to Hitchin Food Provision Team from Hitchin Committee budget. This funding will cover the cost of providing supermarket vouchers to 48 vulnerable families living in Hitchin and surrounding villages for two weeks.

2. **DECISION TAKER**

Executive Member - Community Engagement - Cllr Judi Billing, in consultation with the Service Director: Legal and Community (under section 9.8.2 (h) and 14.6.9(b)(iii) 5 of the Constitution).

3. **DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

29 April 2020

4. **REASON FOR DECISION**

4.1 This grant application has been received in between the next planned round of Committee Meetings and is time sensitive (in response to the Covid-19 outbreak). It cannot be considered at the next meeting taking place in June 2020. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to progress the application via a delegated decision.

4.2 The Chair and the Vice Chair of Hitchin Committee have been consulted and have provided email evidence of their support to provide **£2000** from their Committee budget in order to fund this application.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report.

6. **CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)**

6.1 The Chair and the Vice Chair of Hitchin Committee have been consulted.

6.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external bodies/groups has taken place with regards to this funding proposal via Area Committee Grant Funds.

7. **FORWARD PLAN**

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Applicant: Hitchin Food Provision Team

Hitchin Food Provision Team is a group of local organisations and charities that usually coordinate the Hitchin Christmas Hamper Appeal each year. The group came together at the start of the COVID-19 to provide supermarket vouchers to families who suddenly found themselves in financial difficulty due to the pandemic through loss of employment, significantly reduced hours, furloughed, awaiting Universal Credits etc so that they can buy food.

Families are referred through Hitchin Partnership and schools. As the situation progresses, this may extend to other agencies if there is a need (e.g. Homestart and pre-schools). Please note; families receiving support from Hitchin Food Provision Team are not those already supported by Government and receiving Free School Meals, these are families who are newly vulnerable as a direct result of the pandemic.

The Family Support Team from Hitchin Partnership make weekly phone calls to referred families to ascertain their needs, giving support and signposting where necessary; supermarket vouchers are then allocated where needed.

Vouchers are allocated depending on the size of the household, they vary in value from £20, £40 and £50. The original pricing calculation was based on the cost of lunch packs given out by Letchworth Food Bank during the school holidays and was then increased to cover a family of 2 children. The guide amount for a family of 4 is £40.

The £2,000 being requested would cover the cost of supermarket vouchers being provided to 48 families living in Hitchin and surrounding villages for two weeks.

The group expect there to be a need for this resource until at least September. Therefore, to ensure the project is sustained financially, they have approached Hitchin Youth Trust for another month's funding and have had a grant from HCF of £2k approved which would be added to the group's funds.

The group has also just finalised a fund-raising page which will enable donations from the public to be received.

Previous Support:	None
NHDC Policy met:	Yes
Strategic Objectives met:	Build Thriving and Resilient Communities Respond to challenges to the environment

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in January 2020.

9.2. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything: -

- An individual may generally do
- Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
- For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
- Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present in its area.

- 9.3 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.
- 9.4 The decision taker signing the Decision Notice has delegated authority to take such a decision in accordance with the North Hertfordshire District Council Constitution under section 9.8.2 (h) and 14.6.9(b)(iii) 5 in relation to Community engagement, including financial assistance and grants to external organisations.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The agreed budget for 20/21 financial year is £11,000 for Hitchin Committee.

Hitchin Committee have already allocated £640 of their 20/21 budget leaving £10,360 remaining.

If members agree to allocate this grant of £2,000 to Hitchin Food Provision Group, the remaining amount of their 2020/21 budget will be £8,360.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this decision.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

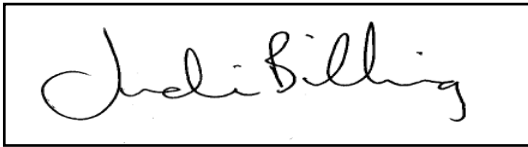
- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Officers have received and approved the grant application, mission statement and accounts.

NOTIFICATION DATE

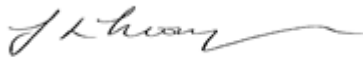
30 April 2020

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judi Billig".

Signature of Executive Member Decision taker

Date 29 April 2020

Signature of Service Director: Legal and Community

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "J. Henry".

Date 29 April 2020

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.