

Public Document Pack

Officer Decisions

Thursday, 7th May, 2020

AGENDA

- 1. Food and Essential Supplies for the Blackburn with Darwen Resident Help Hub**
Part 1 - Food and Essential supplies **2 - 10**
Part 2 - Food and Essential supplies

Date Published: 7th May 2020
Denise Park, Chief Executive

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16



**DELEGATED
OFFICER DECISION** Chief Executive
TAKEN BY:
PORTFOLIO
AREA: ALL

SUBJECT:

Food and Essential Supplies for the Blackburn with Darwen Resident Help Hub

1. DECISION

The Chief Executive in accordance with the Blackburn with Darwen Constitution Section 16, under powers delegated to her, to take any action, including incurring expenditure, in connection with an emergency or disaster to the district agrees:

- To approve ongoing orders and place advance orders with food suppliers in order to secure volume supply of ambient food for the Blackburn with Darwen Resident Help Hub.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure resilience in our Hub operation that supplies the most vulnerable and those required to shield due to underlying health conditions.

- To be able to mitigate potential risks of supply chain disruption.
- To ensure we take a planned strategic approach and not a reactive approach.

3. BACKGROUND

The Government's social distancing measures and lockdown including suspension of non-essential travel, business and trade were introduced to implement a strategy to protect the most vulnerable from Covid-19 and to slow the community spread of the disease. Slowing the spread would also help keep the NHS resilient and thus save lives.

Nationally, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) required all local authorities to set up community support hubs for the most vulnerable residents which included the provision of food and essential supplies to those who were in most need, including those who are shielding or self-isolating with no other means of support.

In an earlier report approval was given for the establishment of food emergency supplies to support residents across Lancashire co-ordinated by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). These supplies have been secured and are available in the event of urgent need, i.e. breakdown in the supply chain to Councils including Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in accessing food for their Hubs.

Meanwhile plans were executed for the establishment of the Blackburn with Darwen Help Hub and supply routes/chains established. These have to date been resilient however it is important to continue to assure stock and supplies, especially those which are more time-limited (shelf life) in nature.

The Government's intention in respect of Hubs is to help the NHS by supporting the vulnerable and those required to shield due to underlying health conditions. It is recognised that many households and individuals are also experiencing severe financial hardship.

People and households making applications to the Department for Work and Pensions for universal credit have also experienced significant delays at times and therefore the food hub has become a point of support for food and essentials. The volumes of people needing support in all these circumstances could not have been supported by food banks as they too have been meeting additional demand.

As demand for food and essentials parcels from the hub has grown there remain potential risks with supply chain resilience and therefore there is a need to order sufficiently ahead of demand to ensure resilient supplies.

Whilst comments have been made by Government that the management of COVID-19 could be a long term operation ranging from 12 to 18 months we are at this stage working on a projection to support the initial 12 week period for those who are shielding, prior to any potential relaxation by Government of elements of the `lockdown`.

Overall we can be proud of the work done to set up the Help Hub and the triage and co-ordination with our Communities and partners in the VCFS (voluntary, community and faith sector). This whole operation is strength and asset based and will have gone some way to safeguard our NHS and to protect our communities in need, including the most vulnerable in enabling people to remain isolated and shielded in their own homes.

Over the full period of 12 weeks it is estimated that up to 42,000 boxes may need to be distributed.

However, the Hub is primarily temporary in nature and step down options will need to align with the easing of social distancing and business operational restrictions, as well as any changes in eligibility criteria in the coming weeks. Every effort will be made to ensure that during the step down period the most vulnerable continue to receive appropriate support and assistance.

Monitoring Officer & Legal Implications and Comments

The Chief Executive (who also undertakes the statutory Head of Paid Service role) has delegated powers under the Officer Scheme of Delegation "To take any action, including incurring expenditure, in connection with an emergency or disaster in a district". In addition, all local authority chief executive officers are responsible for ensuring their local authority complies with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and that the local authority continues to perform its functions. In relation to the current situation, the Council must also have regard to Article 2 of the ECHR, as the ultimate aim of expenditure is to protect individual's right to life.

Contracts with suppliers have been awarded pursuant to a negotiated procedure without prior publication, as permitted by Regulation 32 (2c) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Section 151 Officer & Finance Implications and Comments

Although for the reasons outlined above, it is not possible to state a firm total cost for the provision of this food, governance and financial procedures are in place to ensure that this is procured from a range of suppliers and in advance of orders being placed, the costs are identified and agreed with them and payment arrangements are determined.

The costs of the supply will be funded from the Council's share of the £3.2 billion that the Government has announced to support local authorities in meeting the demands (particularly in social care), cost

pressures and income losses suffered as a result of the Pandemic; Blackburn with Darwen's share of this is £9.3million.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The council did explore the potential for supermarket partnerships at the outset. However supermarkets themselves were not prepared for the increased demand arising from COVID-19 and delivery/click and collect services were not able to meet this initial demand.


Food Banks were considered with different options around funding for food supply. Other voluntary and commercial options were also explored where the council paid for parcels to be made and delivered.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and that of any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below.

There are no conflicts of interest to note.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER:	Sayyed Osman
DATE:	24.04.20
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	
Signed: 	
Director: Sayyed Osman	Date: 24.04.20

Signed:



**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Monitoring Officer to confirm decision in
accordance with Council Constitution
Delegated Powers**

Date: 01.05.2020

Signed:



**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Section 151 Officer to confirm decision in
accordance with Council Financial
Regulations**

Date: 01.05.2020

I am making the decision as set out above in this report:

Signed:



**Chief Executive, Blackburn with Darwen
Borough Council**

Date: 01.05.2020

I have noted the decision as set out above in this report. I acknowledge and support the decision made in these extreme circumstances.

Signed:



**Leader, Blackburn with Darwen Borough
Council**

Date: 01.05.2020

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted