

# WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## RECORD OF OFFICER EXECUTIVE DECISION

Item	Outcome
<b>Date of Decision</b>	15 April 2020 (1), During April 2020 and ongoing per evolving DfE guidance (2), 19 April 2020 (3)
<b>Decision Maker</b>	Catherine Driscoll, Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children First
<b>Brief Description of Decision</b>	<p>The report outlines the record of additional expenditure incurred as part of the Council's response to Covid-19 virus. The approach agreed was that any direct expenditure incurred for Children's Services be charged directly to the Covid-19 budget held by the council. Expenditure that could not be charged direct, for example additional staffing costs, would be logged as a commitment against the Covid-19 budget and invoiced by WCF at a later date. All costs being incurred are in accordance with the delegated authority from Cabinet on 26 March 2020.</p> <p>To incur additional one-off expenditure as part of our response to Covid-19 as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In house foster carers to be provided a one-off additional allowance of £15 per week (in line with free school meals vouchers amount) for 6 weeks to support carers with additional costs during the initial lockdown period. (15 April 2020)- £33k</li> <li>2. Early Year providers- in line with DfE guidance and the use of free early education funding during Covid-19, to pay full early years funding to providers whether open, partially open or closed.</li> <li>3. Our priority for the early years sector during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is first and foremost to ensure enough childcare for vulnerable children and children of critical workers who cannot be looked after at home. We have successfully ensured childcare places are available throughout Worcestershire through positive relationships with providers. However, ensuring provision is available for children who need it has not been straightforward. In Worcestershire there are over 527 settings with 49% open.</li> </ol> <p>We have confirmed to providers they will receive their full early years funding whether they are closed, partially open, or open as normal, until further notice as per the DfE guidance,</p>

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	<p>through payments from the DSG. We have explained new arrangements for redistribution of early years funding should this be required, to secure childcare places for children of keyworkers or vulnerable children and shared clear information about the government financial support arrangements. Given the complexity of this area, some providers will need additional financial support in addition to the ranges of assistance available. Some providers are incurring additional costs while staying open which affects their sustainability, but this is also likely to vary considerably from provider to provider.</p> <p>A process has been agreed to consider additional reimbursements for providers who apply to the council for further financial assistance. Providers who approach the council will be asked to complete a template that evidences the cost of financial impact of staying open which in some cases is actually costing them more than being closed. This will be reviewed by Babcock colleagues and in Finance on a case by case basis and payments made where costs are deemed reasonable and directly related to COVID-19. The estimated total costs are in excess of £500k. Further analysis is being undertaken to assess the impact locally and we have developed a survey to all County Councils through the Society of County Treasurers. The cost in 2020/21 to Early Year providers is £35m per annum which is paid by via the DSG.</p> <p>4. Children's Social Care - additional costs to respond to Covid-19 in the form of (a) additional temporary staffing to cover minor staffing gaps, estimated to be £55k and (b) Temporary opening of Oak House to accommodate placements of looked after Children £138k</p>
<p><b>Reason(s) For Decision</b></p>	<p>To ensure the continued strategic planning and management of the Council's budgetary and financial arrangements as set out in the report to Cabinet on 26 March 2020, including the additional information regarding the Coronavirus and the Council's response. The emergency allocations of Government Grant which is £25.4m for the first two tranches, is being used to fund the additional costs.</p>
<p><b>Alternative Options Considered And Rejected</b></p>	<p>None other than as set out in the report.</p>
<p><b>Any Conflict of Interest declared by a consulted Cabinet Member/ any dispensation granted</b></p>	<p>None</p>

March 2013  
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