

Motions Submitted to Council

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor J Kent

Thurrock Council believes that no child should go hungry and recognises the fantastic effort of many local businesses and organisations for helping prevent many local children being hungry during the October half term holiday. Council calls on cabinet to ensure that every Thurrock child, who qualifies for Free School Meals, has their FSM entitlement fulfilled during the school holidays as well as term time - beginning with the 2020 Christmas holiday.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

Should the motion be approved this would be a request to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will need to consider all material factors relating to the mechanisms for delivering the requested support and the financial implications of this. The provision of such support could be undertaken within the discretionary powers of the Council.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

On Sunday 8 November 2020, the Government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The Winter Grant Scheme, which will be made available in the next month, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs) to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. The Council allocation is £523,004.

The Council will use part of this funding to ensure free school meals are provided to those who are entitled in the Christmas and Spring half-term holiday period. This scheme is part of a wider winter support package for families and children, including:

- The significant expansion of the Department for Education's (DfE's) Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children, across England next year. This will ensure provision is in place for Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021.
- An increased value of the Department for Health and Social Care's Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 from April 2021. Healthy Start supports lower-income pregnant women and families with children under four to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula, providing an important nutritional safety net.
- DEFRA will provide further funding for local charities through established networks to provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities, including food banks, who are supporting those most vulnerable due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

While detail is awaited on the wider package of support the expectation is that this will ensure there is sufficient funding for the Council to deliver free school meals to those entitled to them in the holiday periods.

Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?

Yes