

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Social Fund	To agree the split of the Social Fund Monies.	The Cabinet at its meeting on the 19th February agreed to delegate the split of funding for the Social Fund monies to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation in consultation with the Director of Resources.	26 th March 2013

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 26/03/13
 Signed: 
 Councillor: W. DESMOND
 Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation

Dated: 20 March 2013
 Signed: 
 Director: Director of Resources

Social Fund

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper sets out the split of the money from the Social Fund allocation at Wyre Forest

2. Background

2.1. The DWP currently administer the Social Fund and as part of the Welfare Reform the way in which these payments will be administered will be changing from April 2013.

2.2. The existing Social Fund can be separated into two different areas:

- **Regulated Payments**, this includes the Winter Fuel Allowance and other regulated payments
- **The Discretionary Social Fund (DSF)**. This contains the following element
 - Budgeting Loans;
 - Crisis Loans (CL); and
 - Community Care Grants (CCG).

2.3. The DSF has been abolished as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Regulated Social Fund will still to be administered by the DWP. There will be replacement provision for the DSF which will be split between the DWP and local provision.

2.4. The remaining elements of CL and the CCG will be provided through local welfare provision and will be administered by Local Authorities. In two tier areas the grant will be awarded to the County Council. The money will be provided through a non ring fenced grant and there will be no new duties placed on LAs to provide the assistance.

2.5. The Budgeting Loans and the Community Care Grants are to be replaced by a local scheme, whilst the crisis loans alignment payments will be replaced by a new national scheme of Short Term Advances. This will be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

2.6. A full list of the changes can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.7. The government does not expect Local Authorities to recreate CL and CCGs locally. They will provide the funding and flexibility to re-design the emergency provision for vulnerable groups to reflect local circumstances so that the LAs can decide how best to meet severe hardship.

2.8. The Government expects that LA will want to develop local systems which reflect local circumstances and will want to build upon programmes and services that are already in place. It is also expected that LAs will want to utilise and further develop existing partnership arrangements or develop new ones, e.g. with food banks or furniture reuse services.

3. The Proposed Scheme

3.1. The scheme will initially run for two years as the funding has only been notified for a two year period. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) will receive the funding and then is proposing to delegate this to districts. WCC agreed a report at their Cabinet on the 7th February 2013 to progress the scheme.

4. Funding

4.1. The funding that is expected to be available for Wyre Forest is shown in the table below:

Wyre Forest Funding	2013/14	2014/15
Programme Funding	£198,637	£198,637
Administration Funding	£45,404	£41,521
Total Funding	£244,041	£240,157

4.2. Following further discussions with Officers the proposed allocation of funding is shown below. This funding is proposed to be split between a number of areas that have been considered by CMT and Cabinet.

4.3. Delegation has been given to the Cabinet Member of Resources in consultation with the Director of Resources to agree the split of the money over a number of areas.

Potential Allocation of Funding to Scheme Areas	2013/14	2014/15
Food Banks	20,000	20,000
Furniture	50,000	50,000
Council Tax Support Scheme	25,000	25,000
Housing	30,000	30,000
Utility and Energy Advice	12,000	12,000
Support at the Hub*	25,000	25,000
Homelessness*	82,000	78,000
Total	244,000	240,000

* This will replace existing funding

4.4. These figures have been built into the 2013/14 budget estimates.

4.5. These figures are all estimates at this stage and until the scheme is operational it will not be possible to identify whether the allocations are correct. It is therefore important that tight monitoring of the scheme takes place during the first year.

Recommendation

It is Recommended that the split of funding is agreed.

Appendix 1

Summary of Reforms

Current provision	Provision from April 2013	Administration in GB from 2013
Cold Weather Payments	As now. Universal Credit will become a qualifying benefit.	DWP
Funeral Payments	As now. Universal Credit will become a qualifying benefit.	DWP
Sure Start Maternity Grants	As now. Universal Credit will become a qualifying benefit.	DWP
Winter Fuel Payments	As now.	DWP
Budgeting Loans	As now for existing income-related benefits. Budgeting Advances available to eligible Universal Credit recipients.	DWP
Community Care Grants	Abolished. Replaced with locally-based provision.	English local authorities. Devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales
Crisis Loan Alignment Payments	Replaced with Short Term Advances . The new system will also replace interim payments of benefit so there is a single system of payments.	DWP
Crisis Loans for general living expenses	Abolished. Replaced with locally-based provision.	English local authorities. Devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales