

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Adult Social Care
Date:	22 February 2013
Title:	Local Welfare Provision
Reference:	4657
Report From:	Director of Adult Services

Contact name: Dan Stoneman

Tel: 01962 847218

Email: Dan.stoneman@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to outline proposals as to how funding allocated to develop Local Welfare Provision (LWP) for Hampshire will be spent from April 2013 to support the approach to LWP.

1.2. This paper seeks the approval of three recommendations;

- To transfer through the General Power of Competence £110,000 to the 11 District and Borough Housing Authorities
- To award grant funding to Hampshire Advice Network (HAN) of £5,000
- That up to £35,000 be allocated as future grant funding to develop food banks within Hampshire

1.3. In addition, this paper details planned future spending, internal allocations and potential variations to existing contracts to support the previously reported objectives (please see section 4).

1.4. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have confirmed that funding for 2013–14 will be that which was outlined in the previous settlement letter received in August 2012.

- The totality of programme funding and administration funding provides a fund of £1,596,296 for 2013-2014 and £1,573,074 (indicative) for 2014-2015.
- Figures for 2013-2014 have been confirmed but figures for 2014-2015 are still indicative. It is likely that these figures will reflect activity levels for administering the Social Fund for 2012-2013 but we await clarity from the DWP on this matter.

2. Contextual information

2.1. From April 2013 the Government welfare reforms will be coming into effect. These reforms will have a significant impact upon individuals and

families in terms of access to benefits, benefit award amounts and the process by which benefits are paid.

- 2.2. The overall significance of these changes for local authorities in terms of the impact or draw upon existing or new services is not yet clear. It is likely that more individuals and families will face periods of financial hardship, will be at risk of not keeping up repayments on their homes and will inevitably face times of crisis as a result, therefore any new local authority welfare provision is not happening in isolation.
- 2.3. The clear driver for DWP for the development of Local Welfare Provision is the abolition of aspects of the current Social Fund (Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans). Administration of these funds is based on a loans, goods and cash exchange process. This approach has seen applications outstrip the levels of funding available to deliver outcomes. Reports indicate that many current users may not be those for whom the fund was initially established.
- 2.4. Whilst there is no direct correlation between aspects of the Social Fund and the development of Local Welfare Provision (i.e. it is not a transfer of responsibilities) it is inevitable, in the first instance at least, that some will regard it as a move of responsibilities from DWP to local authorities. It is important, therefore, for the authority to be aware of current expectations of individuals in relation to the Social Fund in order to communicate the nature of the new provision more effectively and mitigate associated risk.
- 2.5. It is pertinent to note that with each local authority delivering this locally and independently, Local Welfare Provision delivering support and provision for individuals will vary considerably across the Country. We are therefore in conversations with neighbouring authorities to try to reduce instances of displacement and migration of potential users of the provision across local authority boundaries.
- 2.6. Due to the time frame within which a new system has to be operational it is clear that processes and outcomes from the Local Welfare Provision will need to be fluid, responsive and developed over a period of time as demand becomes clearer. Significant here is regular review and auditing of processes, outcomes and operational administration of the provision.
- 2.7. It is significant to note that Local Welfare Provision is viewed as part of a wider 'Hampshire Offer' that sees departments across the County Council looking at ways in which they can support individuals, families and communities within Hampshire to cope with the increasing demands and challenges of day to day living.

3. Proposal for Local Welfare Provision

- 3.1. Following the Commission on Personalisation in 2008 Hampshire County Council has prioritised the development of the Universal Offer, delivering that little bit of help to ensure people within Hampshire can access assistance or are armed with the capability to resolve issues for themselves when they need to. This proposal builds on this approach.
- 3.2. In the current economic climate it is inevitable that some individuals and families will find it difficult to cope with the financial demands of everyday

living and in some cases will face real and immediate points of crisis. DWP have given local authorities the freedom to develop Local Welfare Provision (LWP) in a way that is appropriate to their communities. It has become clear, through consideration of the options available to the council, that a monolithic service based approach would not achieve our objective of helping people cope; the level of funding alone would limit our ability to do this within a large county such as Hampshire. The approach outlined below, therefore, is to use the funding allocated for LWP to provide and support a network of existing services and support organisations to deliver practical responses to the difficulties people may face, such as providing information to enable people to manage difficult periods more effectively, mechanisms to provide access to goods and services and access to support to help people resolve on-going difficulties. Crucially this will draw on the wealth of activity already provided by the voluntary, community and statutory sectors in Hampshire, delivering added value whilst providing significant additional resources.

- 3.3. There are three core elements to our approach;
- Providing more comprehensive information and advice to support a range of crisis situations and to provide individuals with ways to cope and manage with challenging times.
 - Develop access to, and opportunities for, individuals to receive support from existing services. This will be achieved through enabling better signposting and inter agency referrals. Also by supporting the capacity of these services to intervene, respond to and work with individuals and families at times of crisis.
 - Provide existing and new services with access to goods and cash to support individuals and families in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4. Appendix 1 provides further detail relating to Hampshire's approach to delivering Local Welfare Provision.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The DWP confirmation outlining the amount of funding for delivering the new local provision for the next year again reiterated that there is no expectation that local authorities should replicate the existing system in whole or in part and that while there is no statutory duty it is expected that the funding is used to help those in genuine need.
- 4.2. The programme funding is stated as £1,317,829 for each of the initial two years. Programme funding for 2013-14 have now been confirmed but figures for 2014-2015 are still indicative. It is likely that these figures will reflect activity levels for administering the Social Fund for 2012-2013 but we await clarity from the DWP on this matter. The administration costs are reduced by approximately 8.5% in the second year from £278,467 to £255,245. Allocations to local authorities for 2014-15 are being calculated against social fund spend for the 2011-12 period. This figure will constitute a significantly lower amount than expected as the DWP have been actively trying to drive down demand on the current systems.

- 4.3. In summary, the totality of spend for Local Welfare Provision will be £1,596,296 for April 2013 - March 2014 and £1,573,074 for April 2014 – March 2015.
- 4.4. Set-up funding of £13,178 has been allocated as a one off payment to get the new provision / systems up and running in 2012-2013 budgets and has been used to support preparation. It is unclear what and how funding will be provided for delivering Local Welfare Provision beyond 2015.
- 4.5. These finances are not ring fenced but as stated within the settlement letter there is an expectation from Government that this funding will be used for Local Welfare Provision. Set-up costs have been challenged by local authorities as being insufficient and not provided in time to impact significantly upon developing and setting up a new system for April 2013.
- 4.6. The significance of only having 2 years funding is that any contractual arrangement in terms of commissioning, employment or service development will need to reflect this uncertainty to mitigate against risk around ongoing costs being a burden on local authority spending in the future.
- 4.7. Due to the adoption of a networked approach to supporting individuals and families to cope and therefore the potential to devolve funds to organisations and services the County Council have to employ a proportional, fair and equitable process for this. To reduce the opportunity for misappropriation of funds the County Council need to maintain auditing and management functions relating to the totality of the fund administration, supporting the need to develop appropriate data collection systems.
- 4.8. Due to the variety of partners involved in the delivery of the new Local Welfare Provision advice has been obtained from Finance and guidance is being produced over the best way to proceed so that value for money can be achieved and flexibility over use can be incorporated alongside robust measures to monitor larger spending;
 - Allocation of funding – options from lump sums, invoicing and / or phased payments
 - Arrangements for monitoring of budgets, process
 - Contractual arrangements, legal
 - Internal financial management process
- 4.9. We are therefore looking at the following allocations;
 - Approval has been obtained from Head of Legal Services for a Single Tender of £470,000 per annum to contract with Civica (Independent Sector Provider) to provide a contact point for the new provision including the fulfilment of vouchers for goods. The contract will be for a maximum of two years – based on one plus one.
 - A total of £110,000 being to District and Borough Housing Authorities to constitute a one off payment to support vulnerable groups not currently covered within existing practice or supported through existing funds such as discretionary housing payments.

- £25,200 to Children's Services Department (CSD) Locality Teams to support children and families to address instances of extreme crisis and / or potential instances of safeguarding where existing support or resolution services are not available.
 - £19,200 to Community Independence Teams (CIT) to support older persons with instances of crisis where existing support or resolution services are not available.
 - £62,000 to Supporting People (SP) floating support, as a variation to current contracts within the 10% threshold, to support socially excluded and long term disabled to address instances of extreme crisis and / or potential instances of safeguarding where existing support or resolution services are not available.
- 4.10. Developmental spending - indicative funding allocated for identified future needs and provision subject to further Departmental Management Team or Executive Member decision where necessary.
- £35,000, to grant fund new Food Bank provision across the county and to award a contract for sustainable provision of food and goods to support this activity if necessary
- 4.11. £350,000 to develop a county wide approach to collecting and distributing furniture re-use goods (including white goods) - figure taken from a comparative Local Authority who are delivering this solution from April 2013.
- 4.12. Response funds – available to respond to evidenced demand through the life of the project
- £519,896 for development of future provision based on analysis of where gaps in present provision and services could be supported through strategic investment.
- 4.13. Please see Appendix 2 for a tabled breakdown of finances.

5. Performance Implications

- 5.1. Part of the new model focuses on signposting to, and in some instances increasing the capacity of, existing services. This will need to be carefully managed to ensure capacity exists, there is equity in terms of access to services and that this is sustainable financially and practically. In order to support this a series of workshops will be held in each district to identify networked support and appropriate responses that meet needs of local people and communities with the aim of mitigating the new service representing a 'post code lottery'.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1. A full equalities impact assessment can be found by following this link [Equality Impact Assessment EQ100813](#)
- 6.2. Due to Hampshire's approach to provide better generic information and advice services, removing any eligibility or entitlement criteria and aiming

to respond to any crisis in a proportional manner it is deemed that the project does not favour any particular groups or individuals above others.

- 6.3. Inevitably the EIA has highlighted some groups that may be potentially more at risk of struggling to cope or seek resolution to potential crisis through means, circumstances and faith as examples and therefore this will be monitored and reviewed at regular interviews using population and demographic data available including support from Community Development Officers.
- 6.4. Due to the nature of the chosen implementation approach taken for developing LWP in Hampshire it has been identified that there is a need to undertake a further equalities impact assessment in June / July. This will inform the approach outlined in this paper to analyse where there are gaps in current support and provision based upon collected activity data and evidenced demand.
- 6.5. Through this process it has been identified that individuals with Mental Health needs have to be considered carefully within future development and access. While it is envisaged that the current approach will support individuals with Mental Health needs in the same way as other potentially vulnerable groups, links with Mental Health teams and Wellbeing Centres are being strengthened not only to support resolutions for individuals already experiencing mental health problems but enabling access to support and services for those who may experience future mental health problems as a result of challenging times and potential crisis.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Where relevant power is not provided under Section 65 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968, the General Power of Competence provided in the Localism Act 2011 enables local authorities to do anything that individuals of full legal capacity may do.
- 7.2. In exercising its functions an authority must have due regard to the need to: Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct Prohibited under the Equality Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.3. A Single Tender Approval (STA) for the contact point function was sought for the following reasons:
 - Limited timescales due to DWP timetable
 - Market testing and service specification
 - Individual components of the contact point, information and advice provision, gate keeping and fulfilment function could be undertaken by different organisations but Civica offers the only identifiable seamless process from first contact to fulfilment at this point.

8. Recommendations

That approval be given by the Executive Member for Adult Social Care for the following actions to be undertaken for the period of April 2013 – March 2014;

- 8.1. The transfer of £110,000 to the 11 District and Borough Housing Authorities (£10,000 per authority) to support under supported groups such as offenders and single people
- 8.2. Award grant funding of £5,000 to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to enable the maintenance of the Hampshire Advice Network (HAN) and facilitate regular meetings of this network
- 8.3. That the Executive Member for Adult Social Care approves a grant of up to £35,000 to food banks within Hampshire and delegates authority to the Director of Adult Services to determine the allocation to individual food banks. Decisions will be made in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Social care.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Government response to Local support to replace Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses in England	2012
Local authority fieldwork summary report	2012
Local support to replace Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses – a call for evidence	2012
Welfare Reform Act 2012 and supporting products	2012

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. A full equalities impact assessment can be found by following this link [Equality Impact Assessment EQI00813](#)
- 1.2. Due to Hampshire's approach to provide better generic information and advice services, removing any eligibility or entitlement criteria and aiming to respond to any crisis in a proportional manner it is deemed that the project does not favour any particular groups or individuals above others.
- 1.3. Inevitably the EIA has highlighted some groups that may be potentially more at risk of struggling to cope or seek resolution to potential crisis through means, circumstances and faith as examples and therefore this will be monitored and reviewed at regular interviews using population and demographic data available including support from Community Development Officers.
- 1.4. Due to the nature of the chosen implementation approach taken for developing LWP in Hampshire it has been identified that there is a need to undertake a further equalities impact assessment in June / July. This will inform the approach outlined in this paper to analyse where there are gaps in current support and provision based upon collected activity data and evidenced demand.
- 1.5. Through this process it has been identified that individuals with Mental Health needs have to be considered carefully within future development and access. While it is envisaged that the current approach will support individuals with Mental Health needs in the same way as other potentially vulnerable groups, links with Mental Health teams and Wellbeing Centres are being strengthened not only to support resolutions for individuals already experiencing mental health problems but enabling access to support and services for those who may experience future mental health problems as a result of challenging times and potential crisis.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. The County Council has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all decisions it makes on the prevention of crime.
- 2.2. By supporting individuals to cope and to resolve crisis through appropriate solutions and support it is envisaged that this will contribute to the wider County Council aims to reduce and / or prevent crime related to aspects of vulnerability.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

- Through developing better relationships with furniture re-use services and waste management this project will reduce landfill and energy costs in terms of waste disposal.
 - By providing greater access to food banks and developing better distribution networks and provision this should again reduce waste in terms of food waste and disposal.
- b)** How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?
- This project recognises the impact climate change may have upon instances of crisis and / or need and will develop a longer term strategy to overcome this through ongoing review and analysis.