

Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E2525

Social Fund Abolition – Policy Options

Decision maker/s	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council Cllr David Bellotti, Cabinet Member for Resources
The Issue	With effect from the 1st April 2013 the Government is abolishing elements of the Social Fund currently administered by the Department for Work & Pensions and allocating funding to Councils based on their estimated awards for Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans
Decision Date	13 th March 2013
The decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The option for providing local welfare support as set out in Appendix 3 of the report is adopted and implemented with effect from the 1st April 2013• That research is carried out across the Council in order to bring together a co-ordinated gateway for customers needing to access discretionary funds delivering Welfare Provision by the end of March 2014
Rationale for decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The preferred option is recommended as it takes account of the advice of relevant stakeholders and members, it seeks to minimise the alleged abuse of the existing system operated by the Department For Works and Pensions on the basis that it will be a non-cash award and it will enable a vital gateway for those most in need to access the right services.
Financial and budget implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The funding for each Local Authority has been awarded based on DWP estimates and is confirmed for the next two years.• In Bath & North East Somerset we have been awarded set up funding of £2,493; Programme funding of £249,260 per annum and Administration funding of £52,670 per annum.• There are no prescribed rules for using this funding although it is allocated for the purpose of Local Welfare Provision.• The admin funds and programme funds are cash limited and the scheme will need to be provided within these limits and within the use of existing resources

Issues considered	Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations
Consultation undertaken	Cabinet colleagues; Trades Unions; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer
How consultation was carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales for the determination and implementation of a new scheme have been short but consultation has been on-going for the last six months, with one officer devoting time to this project to attend meetings with a wide range of stake holders, internal and external colleagues and potential suppliers. • Updates have been given at various workshops and as part of the budget setting process. • Draft options were circulated to Strategic Management Team and the Executive Member for Resources for comment and detailed impacts of the wider Welfare Reforms to Senior Management and other Groups have highlighted the potential introduction and use of these funds to offset impacts for our most vulnerable.
Other options considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of various options have been considered, including a “do nothing” scenario. It is thought that the preferred option delivers the most appropriate solution for stakeholders and customers at this time and within the timescales available. It also enables for some of the other options to be built in to further evaluation and improvements. • These developments should include the removal of duplication in other discretionary funded schemes. The most appropriate provision of Commissioned support and the wider scope of third party referrals.

Signatures of Decision Makers	
Date of Signature	
Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision	