

BUDGET CUT ASSESSMENT FORM

Budget Cut Assessment Form	SOCIAL FUND BUDGET	Ref No S13	Responsible AD	Responsible Finance Manager	Responsible HR Manager	Responsible Lawyer	Responsible EIA Officer
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Description of Proposal:

Proposal to withdraw Social Fund would lead to the withdrawal of two elements of support.

Crisis Support and Community Support.
 Crisis Support aims to prevent immediate deterioration to an applicant's health by providing access to food, heating and limited supplies of clothing and baby consumables. If the full social fund budget was withdrawn in total this would leave no safety net for individuals or families and is likely to lead to an increase in rough sleepers, increase cases for child protection because of neglect, potential increase in acquisitive crime, increased risk to health including mental health. In rare cases travel costs are permitted but only where individuals are fleeing domestic violence or other issues. The Social Fund has been tightly managed by the Housing Revenues and Benefit team and discretion is used as necessary to operate the scheme in a cost effective manner. The Social Fund Policy has recently been reviewed to tighten criteria and to link to prevention measures. The devolved Social Fund has been operating since April 2013 and in 2014/15 1,401 applications were received for the Crisis Fund element of which 20% were granted.

The majority of these claims are for single people and in particular those aged between 20-30 years of age.

Community Support
 Community support aims to help applicants remain in the community or move back into the community after a period in supported or unsettled accommodation including hospital or prison. It provides a basic package of furniture and household goods including bed, bedding, white goods and furniture. This funding provides the mechanisms to reduce demand on other services. Not providing this support would lead to, increased demand for children and young people to be taken into care and increased demand on supported accommodation as people will be unable to afford to move on, increased issues with resettlement of offenders and individuals who have been in long term care settings.
 The Community Care element is largely focussed on those receiving treatment, care or support because they are disabled, seriously ill, homeless, pregnant or have some other support need. Packages are focussed on individual cases and the discretion used by housing benefit staff has been crucial in ensuring that the resource is focussed on those most in need but also focussed to reduce the demand on other services including DBC and those of health.

Human Resources Impacts		Asset Management Impacts	Decommissioning Costs	Cost Shunting
No. of posts to be deleted	2	Detail any released buildings/building space Identify disposal or requisition issues	In addition to HR and Asset costs identify any others e.g. early contract termination costs	Is there any known or potential to increase costs elsewhere within Council budgets Withdrawing this support is likely to increase indebtedness and debts owed to the LA for housing and services. Also higher costs with children and families being taken into care and requiring expensive and complex services including residential or foster placements. Not all costs would be picked up by DBC but some would be picked up by health but they could fine us for bed blocking..
No. of potential redundancies	2			
Estimated Redundancy costs	£38,000			

	Financial Summary				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Estimated reduction to budget					
Crisis Fund	37,500	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Community Fund	133,583	268,765	270,365	271,965	271,965
Redundancy Costs	38,000				
Asset Implication					
Decommissioning Costs					
Known Cost Shunting					
Overheads	5,602	11,104	11,010	10,976	10,976
NET Budget Reduction	138,685	354,869	356,375	357,941	357,941

IMPORTANT:
 NOTE THIS BUDGET CUT IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT SHOULD
 "INVESTING IN DARLINGTON'S FUTURE" PROPOSALS ARE AGREED
 FOLLOWING CONSULTATION SEE PARAGAPH 52 OF THE MAIN
 REPORT

Equality Impacts

Overview is EIA needed?		Protected Characteristics					
Put 'x' in relevant box if the proposal:		'x'	Comments, including any charge across the options. Include the number of people affected, where known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put 'x' in the box in the Impact column if there are positive (P) or negative (N) equality impacts. Leave box blank if there are no potential equality impacts Put L, M, H or ? in relevant column using following descriptions: L = sustainable adjustment in daily routine M = significant reorganisation or change H = life changing or limiting impact on quality of life ? = not known at this stage. 	Explain decision, level of impact and any change across the options	Yes	Brief Details
Affects	Service users						
	Employees		2	P	N	L/M/H/?	Have Cumulative Impacts been identified?

	The wider community	105,600 potential claimants or dependants	Age			N	H	Single young people would have more negative impacts of crisis Fund removal as they have less support available to them and are also most likely to be sanctioned. Older people are more likely to access Community Care Support and to need support when being discharged from hospital back into the community	Have unlawful impacts been identified?		
Significantly affects how services are delivered?		Impact on complex services and on contact centre staff	Race					There is no specific data in relation to demand for the service and we are not aware of any service specific impacts.	Are there opportunities to advance equality?		No opportunity
Have a significant effect on partner organisations?		Potential impacts on health including deterioration in nutritional health, mental health and demand on hospital beds. Police could face increase in acquisitive crime, anti-social behaviour and violent crime.	Sex					There may be particular risks to women needing to flee from domestic abuse and their children if they cannot access support to move and re-locate	Are there opportunities to foster good relations?		No
Affect services known to be important to particular protected groups?		Younger men under 25 years may find themselves particularly hard hit by the removal of crisis fund but Community Care Fund ceasing could affect older people and those with mental health issues more.	Gender Reassignment					No specific impacts	Have any other options been explored and discounted?		This links to proposals for a TECKAL but this will only cover certain elements
Affect different protected groups in different ways?		See above	Disability					Individuals with mental health, learning disability and long term conditions may be disproportionately affected by the removal of Community Care Support. This may reduce their ability to return to the community following admission to hospital or supported accommodation.			
Relate to service areas with known inequalities		Many of the potential service users are at higher risk of ill health because of deprivation and this action would be likely to widen the inequalities gap.	Religion or Belief					There may be limited impact on Muslims who are not permitted to enter into credit agreements and may not be able to access white goods for example through the Credit Union			
			Sexual Orientation					No specific impacts because of this protected characteristic			
			Pregnancy or Maternity					Impacts relating to a lack of crisis fund and for community fund.			
			Marriage/Civil Partnership					No specific protected characteristic related issues			

MTFP – 2016/17 – Equality Screenings. This screening tool is to gather information on potential equality impacts to inform decision making. It is not an equality impact assessment. EIA will be done at a later stage where appropriate. All proposals must have an equality screen document. Decision makers must have equality screening information before any decision is taken. DBC is at risk of legal challenge if decision makers do not have this information.