

Shadow Executive (Cabinet)

Title of Report:	Transitional Arrangements for Community Chest and Locality Budgets	
Report No:	EXC/SA/18/015	
Report to and date:	Shadow Executive (Cabinet)	27 November 2018
Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Members / Portfolio holders:	Robert Everitt SEBC Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 01284 769000 Email: robert.everitt@stedsbc.gov.uk	Councillor Robin Millar FHDC Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 07939 100937 Email: robin.millar@forest-heath.gov.uk
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To consider the recommendations which propose transitional arrangements for managing Locality Budgets for 2019/20 and Community Chest applications for 2020/21.	
Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</p> <p>(1) the transitional arrangements for managing Locality Budgets in 2019/20 and applications for Community Chest for 2020/21, be approved in accordance with the proposals below, that:</p> <p>(a) a full review of the Community Chest grant scheme be undertaken in summer 2019, for 2020/21 and allocation of grant funding for the financial year 2021/22;</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued over....</i></p>	

	<p>(b) the overall Locality Budget funding allocation to remain as the current value of £180,000 for 2019/20, with the fund being divided between 64 Members instead of the present 72; and</p> <p>(c) the Locality Budget guidance regarding the consideration of certain applications located in rural parishes be amended to align the arrangements across the existing Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury district/borough.</p>
<p>Key Decision:</p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><i>The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.</i></p>	
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>Informal consultation has been undertaken with the Shadow Executive Members / Portfolio Holders and other Cabinet Members.</p>
<p>Alternative option(s):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No alternative options were considered regarding the recommendations contained in this covering report as it is considered prudent to the review the transitional arrangements for the Community Chest funding scheme and Locality Budgets as the West Suffolk Council from 1 April 2019. <p>Decisions relating to the future of Locality Budgets, Community Chest and grant funding in general will be the responsibility of the new West Suffolk Council. The transitional arrangements are intended to provide some level of certainty for recipients of funding and for councillors until such a time as the new Council considers and agrees its approach.</p>
<p>Implications:</p>	
<p><i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Transitional arrangements can be put in place within the existing budget.</p>
<p><i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>No – the transitional arrangements will be actioned from existing staff resources.</p>

Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		No	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		No	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		No	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not applicable			
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The following recommendation, suggest transitional arrangements for managing with locality budgets and applications for Community Chest for 2019/20:
- A full review of the Community Chest grant scheme to be undertaken in summer 2019;
 - The overall Locality Budget funding pot remains at the current value of £180,000. The fund would therefore be divided between 64 Members instead of the present 72, resulting in £2,812.50 per councillor per year.
 - A minor amendment to the Locality Budget guidance regarding the consideration of certain applications located in rural parishes would also be made to align the arrangements across Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury district/borough.
- 1.2 Cabinet agreement is sought on the proposed arrangements for community funding during the transition to West Suffolk Council.
- 1.3 In line with the principles of the Single Council Implementation Plan, it is not intended to make significant changes to the approach at this stage. A full review of the funding arrangements, grant process and approach is proposed to be carried out by the relevant Portfolio Holder following the elections in 2019, with a subsequent recommendations report taken to Cabinet.
- 1.4 This report outlines the decisions that need to be made in order to put in place transitional arrangements for the 2020/21 Community Chest grant programme and 2019/20 Locality Budget's allocation.

2. 2020/21 Community Chest grant programme and 2019/20 Locality Budget's allocation.

2.1 2020/21 Community Chest grant programme

- 2.1.1 Given the lead in time needed to run a grant scheme there would be insufficient time for the new Council to carry out a full review of the approach to community grants before the 2020/21 round of community funding opens in July 2019. It is therefore proposed that 2020/21 grants continue on the basis of the current scheme, and are approved by either the Portfolio Holder or a West Suffolk Grants Working Party and West Suffolk Council Cabinet. If Members of the new Council wished to consider any minor changes to the arrangements for 2020/21, these could be made in June 2019, but any significant changes to the scheme would need time for consideration and engagement, as well as approval through the democratic process.
- 2.1.2 Ensuring that a grant process is in place during the transitional period would provide some level of certainty for funding recipients and enable the new Council time to consider and agree its approach for future funding.

2.2 Locality Budgets

- 2.2.1 All councillors have a locality budget of £2,500 each year.

2.2.2 The reduction (eight) in the number of Ward Members following the implementation of single council would lead to an annual reduction of £20,000 in the locality budget funding across West Suffolk. .

2.2.3 However, it is recommended that the £20,000 is redistributed across all councillors to increase the funding available to them (to £2,812.50 per councillor) during the transition period and in advance of a fuller review to be undertaken in 2019.

2.3 Alignment of scheme rules

2.3.1 The Locality Budget guidance is generally aligned across the two Councils, except for a line regarding rural parish applications. Both schemes state that rural parishes should only apply for the budget in exceptional circumstances, but only the Forest Heath guidance defines what is considered 'rural'. It states "For the purposes of this scheme, a rural parish council is considered to be a parish with a population of 1,000 or fewer according to the latest mid-year estimate figures¹".

2.3.2 The definition of the rural parish was removed from the St Edmundsbury guidance on the 13 March 2015 (Report No: CAB/SE/15/028 refers) after consideration at Cabinet following the recommendation of the Grant working Party. The Grant Working Party expressed concern that to define the eligibility of a parish by its population within this part of the scheme was an inappropriate method of determining whether funding should be granted to parish councils in such exceptional cases. It was considered that the Ward Member should be able to use their own discretion as to whether applications fell within these criteria.

2.3.3 Discussions with the two Portfolio Holders have concluded that they both recommend the adoption of the St Edmundsbury guidance for use by the single council, as the budget is only used by parishes in exceptional circumstance. The new West Suffolk Council will consider the future of grant funding and will amend or adopt the funding criteria and guidance as appropriate.

¹ Mid-year estimates are published by the Office for National Statistics and the latest published figures should be used