

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
Description of Proposal:							
Proposal to withdraw Social Fund would lead to the withdrawal of two elements of support.							
<u>Crisis Support and Community Support.</u>							
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 If the full social fund budget was withdrawn in total this would leave no safety net for individuals or families and is likely to lead to an increase in rough sleepers, increase cases for child protection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.							
<u>Community Support</u>							
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	0						
Estimated Redundancy costs							

	Financial Summary				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Estimated reduction to budget					
Crisis Fund	12,500	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Community Fund	58,583	148,765	150,365	151,965	151,965
Redundancy Costs					
Asset Implication					
Decommissioning Costs					
Known Cost Shunting					
Overheads	2,321	5,594	5,573	5,582	5,582
NET Budget Reduction	73,404	179,359	180,938	182,547	182,547

Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the proposal's relevance to Darlington Borough Council's Public Sector Equality Duty and full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. A copy of this is available in 3 (b) Appendix 1.