

**CABINET****Monday, 22 July 2019****NEW FERRY £200K ALLOCATION DECISION**

**Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, said:**

“We will never be able to remove the distress, hardship and trauma suffered by the people of New Ferry. The dignity and spirit this community have shown since that terrible night has been nothing short of astounding, and I think the way they have responded to the challenges they have faced is an example to us all. While the recent news of potential Government funding to help rebuild the town is heartening, we must not lose sight of the human impact of this incident. That’s why I am so pleased we are able to agree this hardship fund, which will provide direct help to those people who need it most.”

**REPORT SUMMARY**

On 18 February 2019 budget Cabinet agreed allocate £200,000 to “help and support the residents and businesses of New Ferry”. It was requested that “officers report to Cabinet early in the new municipal year with a proposed methodology for allocating this funding.” (minute 54 refers).

This report outlines the requested proposal for allocation, offering a clear criterion for selecting recipients of financial support and a pragmatic approach to ensuring the distribution can occur as swiftly as possible, following a decision.

The contents of this report relates to the Bromborough ward, more specifically the communities of New Ferry and Port Sunlight.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To approve the proposal for the allocation of £200,000 to help and support the residents and businesses of New Ferry and Port Sunlight affected by the explosion in March 2017 (3.3)

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 As the Cabinet agreed to the allocation of £200,000 in February 2019 it is imperative that the distribution of said funding takes place as quickly and efficiently as possible. The proposal contained within this report (3.3) and the recommendation to agree it will ensure this happens.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Various workshops with elected members of officers took place in order to ensure the proposed approach was both practicable and acceptable for Cabinet, relevant ward members and the communities they represent. The option proposed within this report is the culmination of those workshops and other options were considered and dismissed throughout the process.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In March 2017 a devastating explosion ripped through the communities of New Ferry and Port Sunlight. As a result of this many residents were displaced from their homes and business were forced to close for an extended period of time.
- 3.2 In February 2019 Cabinet agreed set aside £200,000 to help and support businesses of New Ferry and Port Sunlight. Since this agreement a number of workshops have occurred to develop a methodology that would return to Cabinet for consideration, as soon as possible in the new municipal year (2019/20).
- 3.3 The following proposal and the associated table (table one) detail a methodology for allocating this funding, ensuring swift and efficient distribution, with confidence the funding will reach those it was intended to help and support.
- 3.3.1 Extensive work has been carried out by elected members, officers and community volunteers to ensure a clear picture of those affected by the explosion could be presented within this report. The criteria and associated figures outlined in table one (below) represent a representation of those who were either made homeless for more than one week or experienced loss of earnings due to their business being unavoidably held behind a Police cordon.

Table One:

Category	Ratified Number	Payment Amount	Total Amount
Residents made homeless for more than one week	83	£1,600	£132,800
Locally owned businesses closed behind Police cordon	32	£1,600	£51,200
Community Fund			£16,000 (at least)
		Total Allocated	£200,000

- 3.3.2 Officers are confident that the numbers of affected residents/businesses outlined in table one offers a true reflection of those in need of support. There is also confidence that these recipients can be easily reached, enabling a swift distribution of funds, following a decision. It is important to note that any individual that is eligible under the criteria outlined in table one but who is under investigation for matters relating to the incident will be deemed ineligible until such times as a prosecution is complete and a verdict of not-guilty reached.
- 3.3.3 The allocation outlined in table one shows an allocation of (at least) £16,000 for a 'Community Fund'. This allocated amount comes from the remaining funds following the allocation (of £184,000) to residents and businesses. It is proposed that this 'Community Fund' of at least £16,000 is operated as a grants programme, open to Social Sector Organisations within New Ferry and Port Sunlight. Discussions that took place in the various development workshops suggested this would be assessed via a panel and the process managed by the constituency manager responsible for Bromborough. Full terms and conditions of said fund will be developed (in conjunction with ward members) following a decision.
- 3.3.4 Following a decision it is anticipated that funds for residents and businesses affected could be distributed in under 4 weeks. A very simple form will be produced for eligible recipients to sign off to state they believe they fit within one of the two categories and as such are eligible for support. Those in receipt of said form will be identified based upon existing information the local authority holds from the recovery phase. The community fund element will take longer to deliver as a window for application will be essential and experience shows it is best to avoid the school holidays for any such window. With that in mind it envisaged that this element of the funding will be administered, no later than the end of the 2019 calendar year.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The £200,000 associated with this proposal has already been allocated.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There will be an associated human resource implication to facilitate the allocation of funds to those residents and businesses that meet the criteria. This will include further interrogation of data around those affected, development of an allocation form and making the payments themselves. There is also a human resource issue associated with the proposed community fund element of the funding. This can be picked up by the constituency team who continue to work closely with the community across a number of issues.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Failure to allocate the £200,000 in an expedient manner could lead to reputational damage for Wirral Council.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Extensive engagement has occurred between officers, elected members and the local community (workshops, impact assessments, one to one meetings) in producing the content of this report.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This report has no relevance to equality.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Shaer Halewood**  
Director of Finance and Investment  
telephone: (0151) 0151 691 8688  
email: [shaerhalewood@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:shaerhalewood@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Map of Police Cordon Following Explosion

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Budget Cabinet</b>	<b>18 February 2019</b>

Appendix 1 Map of Police Cordon Following Explosion:

