

COMMUNITY BUDGETS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper presents a briefing on the purpose of Community Budgets and provides areas to consider when deciding next steps in relation to implementing a Community Budget approach. The Children's Trust is asked to consider and agree the actions as outlined in 4.1.

2.0 Background to Community Budgets

2.1 In the 2010 Spending Review there was a reference to local authorities implementing a community budget approach by April 2013. The purpose of Community Budgets is to provide multi agency support to families with complex or multiple needs and to address those needs and make a positive difference to the families involved. This is regarded as requiring a multi agency and cross council approach and the agreed solutions may involve:

- Local service redesign.
- Freedom and Flexibilities.
- Simplified funding streams.
- Whitehall and expert support.

2.2 There are three types Community Budgets:

1. Community Budgets for families with complex and multiple needs.
2. Neighbourhood level Community Budgets – locality based for an area of between 5000 and 25,000 people.
3. Whole Place Community Budgets – Unitary or two tiered Council.

Wirral has expressed an interest in being involved in the Community Budgets programme for families with complex and multiple needs.

3.0 Implementation of Community Budgets

3.1 The first phase of Community Budgets started in April 2011 with 28 local authorities taking part. The second phase will commence in April 2012 with an expected 74 local authorities and the final phase will start in April 2013.

Wirral was represented at a briefing in London on 23 September and following that has indicated that it wishes to be involved in the second phase roll out from 2012.

3.2 What has been consistently stressed is that Community Budgets are regarded as a key strategy in the area of family support. The Prime Minister has stated that he wants to lift 117,000 families from complex and multiple needs by the end of this Parliament in 2015.

There is no additional funding available other than £20,000 for support during to develop the plan and the possibility of up to £50,000 available for technical support in preparing a Community Budget implementation plan for April 2012. There is a

focus on service re-design and securing additional support from other partners who may have a stake in improving the circumstances of the families involved.

3.3 Wirral's expression of interest reflected much of the progress made over recent years to address the needs of vulnerable families. Developments in the area of family support have included:

- Multi-agency co-located teams.
- Partnership working with Social landlords.
- Intelligence gathering from the Common Assessment Framework analysis.
- Multi-systemic Therapy programme.
- Social Work Remodelling pilot.
- Risk governance Group.
- Youth Offending service.
- Family nurse partnership programme.
- Children's Centres.
- Early Intervention Grant commissioned targeted and universal support for children, young people and families.
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Family Intervention Projects.

3.4 These developments have provided enabled families to access support in a number of areas including:

- Behaviour in children, young people and families.
- Substance and alcohol misuse.
- Child development.
- Anti social behaviour.
- School attendance.
- Parenting support.
- Diet.
- Lifestyle.
- Health and Wellbeing.

3.5 It is clear that much progress has been made and further change will be the measure of success from a Community Budget approach. While there is no additional funding other than what was mentioned in paragraph 3.2, nationally £129 billion was spent by local authorities on family support. This does not include funding from health, police, Department of Work and pensions. There is a significant resource in terms of staff, knowledge, skills working with families with complex and multiple needs but all are working to improve outcomes in respect of their organisation's policy requirements. The message from the phase one authorities was that organisations had to work together and if not pool budgets, then align budgets and staff.

3.6 There are other issues to be addressed if we are to make a difference to families with complex and multiple needs. Child poverty and worklessness are challenges facing the families who are to be supported through the application of Community Budgets. Both of these issues are high on national and local policy agendas. The pan Merseyside Child Poverty Strategy is being implemented on Wirral through the Roots and Wings strategy. This coupled with this the ESF/ DWP programme to help families with multiple problems to be work ready, can provide the drivers to promote multi-agency support at local level.

- 3.7 If a Community Budget approach is to be successful it will have to be driven by a vision relevant to all stakeholders especially the families. A number of agencies will have a role in delivering the programme but it will not work if families are not on board and contributing to the solution.
- 3.8 In addition to recent experience in improving outcomes for families, Wirral can also draw on the experience of Phase One authorities. As part of an evaluation, Phase One authorities identified the following factors as key to a successful Community Budgets approach:
- Families: Build a local business and evidence case.
 - Political and strategic Governance: High levels strategic buy in is imperative.
 - Partnership: Build on the engagement of front line staff.
 - Resources: secure data sharing mechanisms, pool money/ resources in kind.
 - Service Offer: Outcomes and Success measures.
 - Timetable and Project Management: Plan appropriately, secure partners in programme management.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Wirral has agreed to have a Plan for Community Budgets on its website by 1st April 2012. This is a process in two parts, agreeing on the vision and then developing the plan. On the 3rd November a meeting was held with the regional support consultant and at this meeting this government policy requirements were made clear. On the 9th November, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) advised local authorities that the offer of Technical Support and funding for the development of Dissemination Hubs would be suspended until the new Troubled Families Unit was established. It is still the Governments intention to implement Community Budgets and £20,000 will be included in the next payment of the Early Intervention Grant to fund some of the additional development costs. Further funding might also be made available when the Troubled Families Unit is fully established. There are some tasks that can be carried out as part of the preparation for Community Budgets. Included in this is work with families to develop a shared vision for Community Budgets which will also shape the strategy to deliver the necessary changes. A key message from this paper is that future commissioning and service delivery plans will be expected to demonstrate the centrality of families with complex and multiple needs in service needs analysis.

In terms of practical steps these are proposed as follows:

- i. Arrange for briefings on implications of Community Budgets for politicians and chief officers from Wirral and partner organisations.
- ii Identify a Community Budgets steering group to oversee delivery of the programme.
- lii Identify members for a multi agency focus group to advise on the process, and the deployment of resources and staff to address identified needs.
- iv Using developed links engage with families to identify the challenges which compounds their situation.

- v Agree an initial project plan with key milestones to cover work between November 2011 and March 2012.
- vi Start a process of early analysis to identify the numbers of families on Wirral regarded as having complex and multiple needs.
- vii. Use the early analysis returns to identify the most appropriate area for the Community Budget programme.

5.0 Recommendations:

Wirral Children's Trust Board notes the report and agrees with the actions outlined in Section 4.1.

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