

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2016

33 LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources which set out the changes to the operation of Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance scheme and associated financial position to date, following the implementation of a number of the recommendations made by Cabinet on 29 June 2015 (minute 14 refers) following the Scrutiny Review.

Responding to comments from Members, Nicky Dixon's, Senior Benefits Manager, and Lisa Jamieson's, Transaction Centre Senior Manager, comments included, there were now far fewer applications for multiple items and the award of 'white goods' had reduced considerably. The projected residual funding of £414,820 might come in a little short of the projected spend, with one option being to review the scheme further and tighten up on awards. With regard to the Wirral Foodbank the possible donation of £65,000 was very much an estimate which would cover 3 days of food for 9,500 awards, with this being a one off donation. They explained the scheme administration costs and the reasons why payment cards for banks were more costly to use than card transactions.

The Chair suggested that the Task and Finish Group should be reconvened in the next six months to look beyond April 2017 when the current funding was expected to run out and to look at alternative strategies that might be put in place.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee acknowledges the progress made and recommends to Cabinet that the actions introduced in respect of 2015/2016 are continued and that Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme is therefore maintained, albeit on a moderated basis during 2016/2017 utilising the projected residual funding of £414,820.**
- (2) That the Task and Finish Group be reconvened in the next six months to look beyond April 2017 at alternative strategies that might be put in place when the current funding was expected to run out.**