



RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision ✓

SUBJECT: THE COMMUNITIES FIRST PROGRAMME

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Service Director for Public Health and Protection.


The purpose of this report is to set out the current position in relation to Communities First Funding and seek the authority to implement transitional arrangements to achieve the required budget reduction for 2017/18 and the withdrawal of the Communities First programme by April 2018.

DELEGATED DECISION:

It was **AGREED:**

To apply a phased and project specific approach to achieve the required budget reductions for 2017/18 and the withdrawal of the Communities First programme post April 2018.

To authorise the Service Director for Public Health and Protection to commence the development of proposals post March 2018 for both a 'Legacy fund' programme of activities and interventions and a future 'Employability Support programme' in line with Welsh Government guidance.


Chief Officer Signature

PAUL MEE
Print Name

15/03/17
Date

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution



CONSULTATION

A. Morgan

15/3/17

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (if required)

DATE

CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YES ✓

Reason for urgency: To allow sufficient time to communicate with staff and implement transitional arrangements to achieve a phased approach to the withdrawal of the Communities First programme by April 2018.

If deemed urgent - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:


(Mayor)

15/03/2017
(Dated)

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.



FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

PUBLICATION

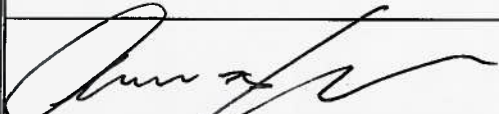
Publication on the Councils Website:- 15/3/17

DATE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 5 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be _____
DATE



Secretary to the Cabinet Signature

CHRISTIAN JS HAWAGAN
Print Name

15/3/17
Date



Further Information

Directorate:	Public Health & Protection
Contact Name:	Derek James
Designation:	Head of Communities & Prosperity
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DELEGATED DECISION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

15TH MARCH 2017

THE COMMUNITIES FIRST PROGRAMME

AUTHOR: Derek James, Head of Communities and Prosperity

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation this report has been prepared to accompany the decision of the Service Director for Public Health and Protection as described below.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to set out the current position in relation to Communities First Funding and seek the authority to implement transitional arrangements to achieve the required budget reduction for 2017/18 and the withdrawal of the Communities First programme by April 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- 2.1 To apply a phased and project specific approach to achieve the required budget reductions for 2017/18 and the withdrawal of the Communities First programme post April 2018.
- 2.2 To authorise the Service Director for Public Health and Protection to commence the development of proposals post March 2018 for both a 'Legacy fund' programme of activities and interventions and a future 'Employability Support programme' in line with Welsh Government guidance.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To approve the phased approach outlined in this report allowing officers to implement the changes required to realise the required 30% savings during 2017-18.
- 3.2 To ensure the Communities First programme is phased out effectively by the end of March 2018 and to minimise the impact and risk to the Council and

commissioned voluntary sector organisations of any potential claw back through the end of year Wales Audit review process.

- 3.3 To aid the phasing out of Communities First activities that are not in line with Welsh Government's future direction by the end of March 2018.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 On the 14th February 2017, following a period of engagement with communities and stakeholders, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children's announced that the Communities First programme should be phased out whilst moving ahead with a new approach to building resilient communities, focusing on employability, the early years and empowerment.

4.2 To support with the impact of phasing out the programme, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will be allocated funding of 70% of the 2016/17 level for 2017/18. This represents a **£1.4M reduction** (30%) in funding from 2016/17. It must further be noted that due to Local Government Pay Award there is an anticipated 1% salary increase and changes to pension contributions for existing Council employed Communities First staff for 2017/18. This has been factored into the savings identified within this report.

4.3 In addition to this, and post April 2018, the Cabinet Secretary announced:

- The establishment of a **£6M Legacy Fund Grant** to be distributed across current Communities First local authorities. This funding is available to maintain some of the most effective community interventions and projects beyond 2018.
- An additional **£4M of capital funding** via the Community Facilities Programme. Bids will be considered that help protect valuable community assets where renovations, alterations and/or conversions can enable a sustainable future to be secured.
- Funding of nearly **£12M** to enable **all local authorities in Wales**, including those not currently in receipt of Communities First funding, to develop and expand **employment support** for those furthest from the labour market. The grant is principally to provide additional infrastructure to support the wider development of the Communities for Work and Lift programme. It will also have the flexibility to work beyond traditional CF boundaries.

4.4 The funding arrangements/allocation to enable this to happen post April 2018 is still unclear.

CURRENT SERVICE

4.5 In 2015/16 Rhondda Cynon Taf's Communities First programme was restructured in line with the findings and recommendations following a strategic review into the Council's approach to Tackling Poverty.

4.6 The new Communities First model was restructured based on three key elements:

1. **A targeted local community engagement approach** to support early intervention and prevention for those identified as being most at risk and in need of support.
2. The engagement and involvement of individuals within their communities via the delivery of a range of **universal engagement activities**.
3. **A strategically commissioned core offer of intervention** delivered across all eight clusters.

4.7 To deliver this new Communities First programme the Council received a grant of **£4,849,748** for 2016/17 from Welsh Government.

4.8 This approach has proved successful with good outcomes being achieved since the programme became fully operational. Due to this success, this model has also informed the development of Cwm Taf's Public Service Boards approach to Building Resilient Communities and Tackling Poverty.

5. **PRINCIPLES**

5.1 Notwithstanding the significant budget reductions, based on the success of RCT's new Communities First programme the report looks to maintain the three key elements outlined in paragraph 4.6.

5.2 In addition to this, in order to assist in achieving the budget reductions for 2017/18 the following guiding principles have been applied to the budget review:

- Any under spend to be highlighted and utilised to offset the budget deficit.
- Where possible and appropriate, alternative funding streams to be identified and explored.
- Safeguard front line service delivery for those projects that demonstrate best outcomes for service users where possible.
- Strategic fit with Welsh Governments new focus on employability support.
- Minimise the impact on commissioned voluntary sector organisations as far as possible in 2017/18.

5.3 It has therefore been decided to implement a project specific approach to budget reductions. In implementing this approach, each Communities First budget line has been reviewed in line with the review principles set out under paragraph 5.2.

5.4 Furthermore, to support implementation, it is recommended that a phased approach is taken to budget reductions:

- **Phase 1** is focused on budget reductions that can be implemented with immediate effect i.e. as of April 1st 2017.
- **Phase 2** is focused on developing savings to be implemented during the 2017/18 financial year. In addition to this, phase 2 will also include the



development of proposals for a new employability support programme to be implemented by April 2018.

- **Phase 3** is focused on closing the existing Communities First programme and implementing the agreed approach to the new legacy and employability support programme as of April 2018.

PHASE 1 - PROPOSALS

5.5 Phase 1 is focused on budget reductions that can be implemented with immediate effect i.e. as of April 1st 2017. To achieve this, the following key areas have been considered:

5.6 Core Council related costs

5.7 Of the 52 post currently employed by the Council, the programme has 7 Community Engagement Work posts that are vacant; currently 4 of these posts are filled by agency staff. It is therefore proposed to end all agency staff contracts by the 31st March 2017 and keep the 7 posts vacant going into the new financial year.

5.8 This proposal will realise savings of £444,014, this figure also includes costs associated with these roles.

5.9 Strategic Commissioning and Core Offer of provision

5.10 Following the restructure of the programme in 2016/17, a consistent core offer of provision was developed and delivered across all 8 clusters. Following a review of each project it has been possible to identify a further saving of £435,762. The savings generated are in line with the principles set out in paragraph 5.2 and includes under spend generated during 2016/17 and the identification of alternative funding streams to safeguard service delivery.

5.11 Community Involvement

5.12 The Community Involvement budget supports the engagement and involvement of individuals within their communities via the delivery of a range of universal activities. This includes group support, low level community activity as part of a pathway onto more specialised services, informal learning, family activities, volunteering, marketing and promotional materials and any costs associated with 1 to 1 support.

5.13 Currently each cluster is allocated £25,000 to develop this area of the programme (£200,000 across all clusters). Due to the proposed reduction in core offer activities and based on actual costs incurred in 2016/17, it is anticipated a saving of £10,000 per cluster could be realised. Total anticipated budget allocation for 2017/18 would be £120,000 (15K per cluster) with a saving of £80,000 being achieved.



5.14 **Service Level Agreements and Venue Hire Agreements**

5.15 Currently **£1,583,594** is allocated to voluntary sector providers through service level agreements and venue hire agreements to deliver a wide range of provision across the Communities First programme.

5.16 To minimise the impact on our voluntary sector providers an initial 10% reduction to all budget allocations is proposed. Discussions will take place with providers and support will be provided to achieve this initial 10% reduction in budget to ensure proposals are in line with the agreed principles set out in paragraph 5.2.

5.17 This proposal will realise savings of **£158,359**.

5.18 **Phase 1 Conclusion**

5.19 The changes suggested above will achieve an estimated **£1,118,135** in savings if implemented by 1st April 2017 for the 2017/18 financial year.

PHASE 2

5.20 Phase 2 is focused on developing savings to be implemented during the 2017/18 financial year. In addition to this, phase 2 will also include the development of proposals for a new employability support programme and legacy fund to be implemented by April 2018.

5.21 As a result of the savings made under phase 1, further savings of **£281,865** is required post 1st April 2017. Following further information and guidance from Welsh Government in relation to the “Legacy Fund Grant” and the “Employability Support Grant”, additional options will be considered during the early stages of 2017/18 to achieve the remaining savings.

PHASE 3

5.22 Phase 3 is focused on closing the existing Communities First programme and implementing the agreed approach to the new legacy and employability support programme as of April 2018.

5.23 To support this process a detailed transitional plan will be developed that sets out the key steps to be taken to support the transition from the existing Communities First programme into the new employability support programme. During this phase a full Equality Impact Assessment will be considered.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 To support the implementation of phase 1 as set out in this report, an EIA screening form has been prepared. In light of Welsh Governments full Equality Impact Assessment on the complete withdrawal of the Communities First programme in April 2018, of which Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC was a key contributor, and with no significant impact identified during the screening process if phase 1 proposals are implemented, it has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

6.2 However, as set out in the report, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be considered as part of phase 3 which is focused on closing the existing Communities First programme and implementing the agreed approach to the new legacy and employability support programme as of April 2018.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 In developing this report, all organisations and Council departments in receipt of Communities First funding have been consulted and involved in the development of proposals to achieve the required savings outlined under phase 1 of this approach.

7.2 In addition to this, further consultation will take with the Public Service Board, communities (through Communities First local engagement forums) and other partners to develop the new employability support programme under phase 2 of this approach.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 As outlined in paragraph 5.19 of this report, the implementation of phase proposals will deliver an estimated **£1,118,135** in savings if implemented by 1st April 2017 for the 2017/18 financial year.

8.2 As a result of the savings made under phase 1, further savings of £281,865 is required post 1st April 2017 to achieve the 30% cut in grant funding. Following further information and guidance from Welsh Government in relation to the "Legacy Fund Grant" and the "Employability Support Grant", additional options will be considered during the early stages of 2017/18 to achieve the remaining savings.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from these proposals; however it will be necessary to consult with Welsh Government and ensure that any changes to the programme will be in accordance with the conditions attached to the offer of funding for 2017/18.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.

10.1 The proposals outlined in this report look to maintain the delivery of the 3 key elements outlined in paragraph 4.6, developed following a review into Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC approach to tackling poverty.

10.2 This ensures that during 2017/18 the Communities First programme contributes significantly to:

- Achieving a healthy, well educated, safe and skilled population.
- The preventative and early intervention action taken to reduce the number of people entering statutory services.
- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and its fundamental principle of promoting people's independence to give them stronger voice and control.
- The Local Service Boards area based approach to partnership working.
- The Sustainable Development Principle, specifically in relation to involving people, collaboration and prevention.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the current position in relation to Communities First funding and seeks the authority to implement transitional arrangements to achieve the required budget reduction for 2017/18 and a phased approach to the withdrawal of the Communities First programme by April 2018.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF SERVICE DIRECTOR,
PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION**

THE COMMUNITIES FIRST PROGRAMME

Officer to contact: Derek James, Head of Communities & Prosperity