

Business Change Mandate (Including Budget Mandates) Proposal Number: B21

Title: Local Fund – Town and Community Councils

All information requested must be completed on the proposed mandate to enable the Cabinet to decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

Mandate Completed by	Kellie Beirne (1 st draft), Roger Hoggins (2 nd draft)
Date	14.09.15 (1 st draft), 09/12/15 (2 nd draft)

How much savings will it generate and over what period?

The contribution level target over the 12 month period is £500k.

The budget assumption has now been revised to £400. To some degree the budget value is governed by the actions of the town and community council. It is possible that the value will be revised further according to feedback from town and community councils as they set their budgets/precepts.

Directorate & Service Area responsible

This is a whole-authority mandate but specifically relates the Council's priority around 'maintaining locally accessible services'. Since the majority of these mainly discretionary services relate to Enterprise and Operations, this mandate will be jointly led by Kellie Beirne and Roger Hoggins.

Mandate lead(s)

Kellie Beirne & Roger Hoggins

Final mandate approved by Cabinet	Date:
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1. Vision and Outcomes of the Mandate

Give a business context for the mandate. This must pick up on the vision and what the new / improved / reduced service will look like in the future including the anticipated experience of users. It must also consider any impact on the Council's key priorities and strategic outcomes. Similarly does it impact on service performance within the immediate service area or any impact on other services provided by the authority / any other providers. In doing so, the mandate must be tested against the equality impact assessment and sustainable development impact assessment and must consider impact in relation to the new Future Generations Bill.

What is the issue that the proposal is seeking to address?

The problem is that at a time when funding for discretionary local services, is at its lowest, demand and public reliance for services is at its highest. Local services are valued tremendously in a rural county, where over 50% of residents live in population groups of less than 1,500 and meaning that social isolation and access to service deprivation is acutely felt. The Council has recently added to its three priorities around education, vulnerable people and enterprise with a focus on sustaining locally accessible services. This places a great weight of emphasis on new ways of working, Council-community collaboration and identifying more locally-focussed ways to help sustainably fund the gaps in provision so as to continue adding value to our towns, villages and settlements. The proposal also seeks to address more forcibly and visibly, the sentiment that decisions regarding local services and functions are best made and provided at the local level, in line with 'whole place' principles. This proposal thus helps to further the Council's objectives around devolution of greater freedoms and powers to local communities – in order they are able to act in accordance with 'what matters' to their localities.

What evidence have you got that this needs to be addressed?

The evidence base from the MTFP over the last few years demonstrates the high level of efficiency savings and income generation made in areas such as leisure, cultural services, libraries and One Stop Shops ('Hubs'), Tourist Information Centres and Street Scene services, public conveniences and landscaping/ green spaces management. It is becoming difficult to envisage how much leaner these services can be, and in their current formats, how much more income they could sustainably generate. Given the level of targeted reductions in these areas in future years – 'business as usual' is threatened and the current way of working is no longer sustainable. Continued reductions on the same basis will mean that many of these services will be wiped out unless new contributions and resource opportunities are identified.

In relation to devolution of power, the sentiments outlined in this proposal resonate with the Localism Bill and the principles of greater devolution of power to local communities in order that they play a greater role in shaping their own futures. This is a central principle to the whole place agenda the Council has been running for in excess of two years and the conversations, plans, frameworks and actions that have sought to build local understandings and capacity in preparedness for greater local involvement and empowerment.

How will this proposal address this issue

The proposal seeks to develop a 'Local Fund' across the county into which Town and Community Councils can make a contribution to sustaining the services they feel are most important to the wellbeing of their towns. The options include working with Town and Community Councils to inform precept setting in order to engage communities about the services that matter most to them and targeting local rate increases as a means of helping the Council sustain them and; considering how current precepts are invested now and how that might be adjusted in the future to take into account the need to contribute to sustaining certain core local services. This does not seek to shift the responsibility of local service provision wholly to town and community councils – but instead relies upon more of a partnership and collaborative approach to maintaining important local services.

What will it look like when you have implemented the proposal

Fully implemented, a Local Fund will be established that will see participant Town Councils and potentially, Community Councils, invest x amount of money in supporting the Council to maintain the local services each area feels to be of greatest importance. The amount contributed by each local Council will vary according to the local priorities. In cases where contributions cannot be agreed – the impact will be that key local services will have to cut their cloth accordingly which could mean curtailing opening hours, reduction in service provision levels and in some cases withdrawals of services altogether.

Expected positive impacts

- Greater meaningful engagement across the County and Town and Community councils
- Reinvigoration of the Charter with Town and Community Councils with specific local area agreements that set out the nature and scale of relationships between the Council and community
- Increased local delivery and accountability
- Sustaining locally accessible services
- Developing service models that are more self-reliant and resilient and reflective of local needs as opposed to 'one size fits all' priorities
- Greater local understanding of the budget pressures facing the Council and harnessing a sense of shared responsibility in terms of how the challenges are managed at the local level
- Reinforcement of 'one size does not fit all'
- Could advance strategic 'cluster' conversations – eg. Bryn-y-cwm, Lower Wye, Severnside and Central Mon discussions as opposed to town-centric or individual community council dialogue

Expected negative impacts

- Perception of double whammy at community level
- Potential for inconsistent levels of engagement and arguments for proportionate town splits as opposed to investing in what matters

locally – even if that means varying levels of investment/ contributions across towns and communities

- Inability to make progress because of differing views about roles and purpose of town and community councils
- Potential reduction or loss of certain services if local support cannot be secured

2. Savings proposed

Show how the budget mandate will make savings against the current service budget. This must cover each year implicated. This section must also cover any other efficiency that will arise from the mandate.

What savings and efficiencies are expected to be achieved?								
Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Savings £	Proposed non cash efficiencies – non £	Target year				Total Savings proposed
				16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	
Enterprise	c£4m on discretionary local services	200k across the county		200k				200k
Operations	c£10m on discretionary local services	200k across county		200k				200k

3. Options

Prior to the mandate being written, an options appraisal will have taken place. Summarise here the outcome of the Options considered and detail the rationale on why they were disregarded. (see options appraisal guide for further information)

Options	Reason why Option was not progressed	Decision Maker
Cut and shut services	Council commitment to sustaining local services means other options and collaborations must be explored	Cabinet

4. Consultation

Have you undertaken any initial consultation on the idea(s)?		
Name Town & Community Councils/ Programme Boards	Organisation/ department: Enterprise/ Operations	Date: over period of last 12 months
<i>In recent years a great deal of work has been done with TC's and some CC's to either transfer services or gain support to sustain services. So far this has largely been based around the provision of public conveniences and street sweeping</i>		<i>Services have transferred over the last three years.</i>

Has the specific budget mandate been consulted on?		
Function	Date	Details of any changes made?
Department Management Team		
Other Service Contributing to / impacted		
Senior leadership team	July/ September	Local Fund idea
Select Committee	November cycle	<i>Strong Communities select committee support the concept but appreciate that there will be service cuts should the TC's and CC's not contribute. The committee sought further detail about which services are at risk.</i>
Public or other stakeholders	October/November	<i>Overall the majority are in support of more localised service delivery but also recognised that issues surrounding capacity within local councils and funding issues would vary dramatically between councils. At a recent meeting with town and community councils it became apparent that the capacity of councils to engage with the initiative varied significantly and that further work to explore what may work was required to allow councils to understand and engage with the process.</i>

Cabinet (sign off to proceed)		
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Will any further consultation be needed?		
Name	Organisation/ department	Date
Community occupiers & groups	Town and Community Councils and Programmes Boards <i>Work between MCC and the TC's and CC's on the detail of how closer working arrangements might operate and in particular how cluster arrangements might work will be required in the coming months.</i>	Ongoing over next 3-5 months

5. Actions to deliver the mandate

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to deliver the mandates and the action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services. Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the mandate.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale
Continued engagement with Town and Community Councils	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	September 15 – January 16
Identification of priority core services to which contributions can be directed	Kellie Beirne/Roger Hoggins	As above
Develop procedure around the role of Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) in supporting Town and Community Councils to contribute to local services	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	As above
If agreements cannot be reached identification of the services that will have to be cut/ shut/ curtailed as a result	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	As above
Establishing principles and operation of the Local Fund – with Finance support and input	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	January-February 2016
Development of Local Area Agreements that govern use of the fund and re-set local relationships and dialogue between Council and Town and Community Councils	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	February-March 2016
Ensure all changes and new arrangements tie in with revised area governance arrangements	Kellie Beirne/ Roger Hoggins	November 2015

6. Additional resource/ business needs

Describe any additional finance, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposed mandate successfully. For example new funding, expertise e.g. marketing and knowledge etc..

Any additional investment required	Where will the investment come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
No additional investment required to progress the work described above at this stage		

7. Measuring performance on the mandate

How do you intend to measure the impact of the mandate? This could include: speed of service; quality of service; customer satisfaction; unit cost; overall cost. For advice on developing performance measures you can contact Policy and Performance Team, for advice on unit costs speak with your directorate accountant.

Focus- Budget / Process / Staff / Customer	Indicator	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Target 2016/17	Target 2017/18	Target 2018/19	Target 2019/20
Budget	Level of contribution secured towards running costs of services identified and prioritised by Town and Community Councils	400,000							

8. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the mandate, including any negative impacts identified in section 1 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these. The risks should be scored in accordance with the [council's policy](#).

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Assessment			Mitigating Actions	Post mitigation risk level
			Likelihood	Impact	Overall Level		
Town and Community Councils do not wish to engage and decide to not support the proposal	Strategic and operational	Conversations have been ongoing and there is a different view in the different areas on this matter. Some Town and Community Councils contribute already to some service – either through contributions to running costs or to running services directly.	High	High	High	Work closely with Town and Community Councils on demonstrating the actual costs of services; understanding the impacts if contributions cannot be made and sustained and identifying the actual loss of service that may result. Work will also include any financial support and help around business plans and community engagement.	High
Contributions will not be secured and local services will accordingly be reduced, cut or closed	Strategic and operational	As above	High	High	High	Ascertain any outstanding repairs & maintenance and undertake prior to transfer – not improvements	Med
We fall short on our aim to sustaining locally accessible services	Strategic	As above.	High	High	High	The Council's fourth priority is to create the conditions in which local services can be sustained. This does not mean the job of the Council is to provide them – it means it is the job of the Council to explore all relevant options, partnerships and mechanisms through which to sustain them.	High

9. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker
If contributions cannot be sought and secured – service levels will be cut/reduced/ curtailed	Because the funds do not exist to continue to support local services, to the same levels as currently afforded	Town and Community Councils
	<i>A schedule of services at risk of reduction/withdrawal has been provided to the town councils. This is attached as appendix ?. The proposals vary between towns but major issues are closure of public conveniences, reduction in street sweeping, reduced opening hours for museums and Hubs. Community councils have been provided with schedules of service costs which are at risk. These include gulley emptying, verge cutting, highway sweeping but are not explicit to each council. MCC is seeking support to retain service levels and for each council to agree its priorities and contribute accordingly or seek direct service provision by suitably qualified operators. IT IS EMPHASISED THAT SERVICE REDUCTIONS WILL PROCEED IF SUPPORT IS NOT FORTHCOMING.</i>	

10. Monitoring the budget mandate

The budget mandates must be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the budget mandate, including the savings being achieved and the level of impact.

11. Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the impact of the mandate once it has been fully delivered to know whether it has successfully achieved what it set out to do and to ensure that findings can be used to inform future work.

Planned Evaluation Date	Who will complete the evaluation?
May 2016, Sept 2016, Dec 2016 and February 2017	Kellie Beirne and Roger Hoggins with Town and Community Councils via the Local Area Agreement