

Budget Proposals 2012/13: Major Decision: Business Unit : Childrens Services (Payments to parents)

Combined Impact Assessment: Full assessment (Part 2)

The council and its partners are facing a significant challenge in the savings it needs to make over the next couple of years. This Full Impact Assessment has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of proposed major decisions on the community. As a council we need to ensure that we are able to deliver the savings that we need to make from the 1st April and be able to justify our decisions through any legal challenge.

This full assessment, combined with the initial review, will evidence that you have fully considered the impact of your proposed changes and carried out appropriate consultation on those changes with the key stakeholders. The Combined Impact Assessment will allow Councillors to make informed decisions as part of the decision-making process regarding the council's budget.

Name: Richard Williams

Position: Director of Children's Services

Business Unit: Children's Services

Department:

Date: 9th January 2012

Please see agenda item 5 – page 6, 2nd proposal

Summary from Overall Proposal (Updated as required)

Proposals – Outline	Savings 2012/13		Implementation Cost Include brief outline + year incurred	Delivery In place 01/04/12 If earlier or later state date	Risks / impact of proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential risks Impact on community Knock on impact to other agencies 	Type of decision*		
	Income £ 000's	Budget reduction £ 000's				Internal	Minor	Major
<p>Increase in thresholds and improvements to signposting to enable users to maximise their welfare benefit entitlements and reduce dependency on the local authority.</p> <p>Will be achieved through better business controls and decision making in relation to Section 17 payments</p>	0	50	None	X	<p>Potential risk to future changes in government benefits.</p> <p>Other agencies may see an increase in demand for support.</p> <p>May be unpopular with some service users.</p>		X	

Stage 1: Purpose of the proposal

No	Question	Details
1.	Clearly set out the purpose of the proposal	This proposal covers the financial assistance to parents which can only be provided in exceptional circumstances under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989. The proposal is to ensure robust adherence to the criteria for issuing payments to parents and to provide information to parents to allow them to take up their full benefit entitlement.
2.	Who will this proposal affect?	The proposals will affect parents who use this facility.
3.	What is the intended	The outcome is to ensure that parents are taking their full benefit entitlement rather than relying on regular payments under this

No	Question	Details
	outcome?	scheme.

Stage 2: Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

No	Question	Details
4.	Have you considered the available evidence?	During this financial year, 2423 payments have been made relating to Section 17. A recent audit of Section 17 payments has been undertaken by Internal Audit which has highlighted that in comparison to other neighbouring Local Authorities Torbay's spend in this area is significantly greater despite having a smaller population. Parents who access this service fall within the more vulnerable groups, however this proposal will ensure that the most vulnerable families still have access to this service but are also better signposted to other agencies to ensure that they are maximising their full benefit entitlement thus reducing the financial burden on the Local Authority. The Audit report highlighted the need to review the current Section 17 policy to bring it in line with other Local Authorities.
5.	How have you consulted on the proposal?	Consultation on this proposal has been carried out via the general budget consultation. This has included surveys for the public and public meetings
6.	Who have you consulted with?	<p>General public –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viewpoint panel questionnaires and public questionnaires have been completed (online & paper) ▪ Public “budget consultation” meetings have taken place (Focus Groups) <p>Service users have not been consulted with directly as this proposal will not impact on individual circumstances as service users will receive better signposting to enable them to maximise their benefit take up.</p>
7.	How many people responded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approx 300 responses to questionnaires (Viewpoint questionnaires and general public questionnaires) ▪ 100 people attended public budget consultation events
8.	Outline the key findings?	

No	Question	Details																																	
		Change the criteria for emergency cash payments to parents and help them to claim benefits instead. (Potential saving: £50,000) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">Questionnaires</th> <th colspan="2">Focus Groups</th> <th colspan="2">All</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No</td> <td style="text-align: center;">41</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">44</td> <td style="text-align: center;">57%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">85</td> <td style="text-align: center;">24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">232</td> <td style="text-align: center;">85%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">33</td> <td style="text-align: center;">43%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">265</td> <td style="text-align: center;">76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">273</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">77</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">350</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>							Questionnaires		Focus Groups		All		No	41	15%	44	57%	85	24%	Yes	232	85%	33	43%	265	76%	Total	273	100%	77	100%	350	100%
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9.	What amendments may be required as a result of the consultation?	None																																	
10.	How will the results be published?	The results from the public questionnaires and public budget consultation events will be published on the Councils website																																	

Stage 3: Impact Assessment

No	Question	Details	
11.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact
	All groups in society generally	N/A	N/A
	Older or younger people	Children have for stability in their family life as parents will have more steady income through maximising benefit take up.	This proposal could affect a small number of children if parents do not receive payments as they may refuse to take up their benefit entitlement.
	People with caring responsibilities	Parents will be signposted and supported to assist them in taking their maximum benefit take up. The result of this could be that parents receive more steady payments and to do not need to present to the Local Authority as in need of a crisis	Parents will be affected as they may not receive payments which they have been able to receive on a regular basis due to them not taking up other benefit entitlements.

No	Question	Details	
		payment.	
	People with a disability	Parents will be signposted and supported to assist them in taking their maximum benefit take up. The result of this could be that parents receive more steady payments and to do not need to present to the Local Authority as in need of a crisis payment.	No
	Women or men	Parents will be signposted and supported to assist them in taking their maximum benefit take up. The result of this could be that parents receive more steady payments and to do not need to present to the Local Authority as in need of a crisis payment.	No
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	Parents will be signposted and supported to assist them in taking their maximum benefit take up. The result of this could be that parents receive more steady payments and to do not need to present to the Local Authority as in need of a crisis payment.	This proposal could affect a small number of children if parents do not receive payments as they may refuse to take up their benefit entitlement.
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	N/A	N/A
	People who are transgendered	N/A	N/A
	People with particular religion or belief / no belief	N/A	N/A
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	N/A	N/A
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	N/A	N/A
12.	What are the impacts of your proposals to other agencies?	Through this proposal it is intended that parents receive information and signposting to information about the benefits they are entitled to – this could see a greater take up of benefits in Torbay.	
13.	Does your proposal link to other decisions you are making?	None	
14.	Is there scope for your proposal to eliminate discrimination, promote	Parents in need of emergency financial assistance will be able to receive this assistance if they meet the Section 17 criteria. Parents will be provided with better information about how they can access benefits they may be entitled to which may help in them having a more steady income.	

No	Question	Details
	equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations?	

Stage 4: Course of Action

No	Action	Details
15.	State a course of action	Outcome 1: No major change required – The Audit report highlighted the need to review the current Section 17 policy to bring it in line with other Local Authorities.
16.	Identify any plans to alleviate any negative impacts	Where a CIA has indicated potential for negative impacts, consideration should be given to a means of reducing or mitigating the negative effects. Better promotional material will be produced to make the signposting to other agencies more effective and increase the take up of benefits.

Stage 5: Monitoring

No	Action	Details
17.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of proposals	The full impact of decisions will only be known once it is introduced. Identify arrangements for reviewing the actual impact of proposals once they have been implemented. Section 17 spend will continue to be monitored monthly.

COMBINED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PARTS 1 & 2) NEEDS TO BE SENT TO THE BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE. IT WILL THEN BE SENT TO THE FINANCE BOARD AND USED AS PART OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS BY COUNCILLORS.

Notes:

- *The Equality Duty needs to be an integral part of the decision making process. Decision makers must consider what information he/she has and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty.*
- *Commissioned services – No delegation. Public bodies are responsible for ensuring that any third parties which exercise functions on their behalf are capable of complying with the Equality Duty, are required to comply with it and that they do so in practice.*

Action plan / mitigating actions

Please detail below any actions / mitigating actions you need to take: -

No.	Action	Reason for action / mitigating action	Responsibility	Deadline date
1	Implement recommendations from Audit Report	To increase the take up of benefits by parents and reduce the amount of Section 17 payments made.	Principal Business Manager	April 2012
2	Section 17 payments recorded via PARIS	Better monitoring of individual payments to families	Principal Business Manager	April 2012
3	Information available to Parents about benefits	To increase the take up of benefits by parents and reduce the amount of Section 17 payments made.	Principal Business Manager	April 2012
4				
5				
6				