

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 4 March 2013  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Councillor Dr Barclay, Executive Member, Health and Well Being.

### Report Title

Implementation of "Trafford Assist", an innovative model of Local Welfare Assistance in Trafford

### Summary

The purpose of the report is:

- To outline the forthcoming abolition of the Social Fund and the transfer of responsibility for Local Welfare Assistance from the Department of Work and Pensions to Local Authorities
- To present the options appraisal undertaken within the Council to identify the most effective local delivery model
- To outline the recommended Trafford Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) model, "Trafford Assist" for Executive decision

### Recommendation

That the Executive approve the adoption of the Trafford Assist model of provision for local welfare assistance as set out in this report and endorses the steps taken to date to implement it.

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Joanne Willmott, Joint Director of Operations, Communities and Well Being  
Extension: 2710

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal  
Appendix 2 – Information for Scrutiny  
Appendix 3 – Eligibility Criteria  
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

*Implications:*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Proposal will enable effective delivery of Local Welfare Assistance that will link to all Corporate Priorities
Financial	Budgets proposed in this report of £562,219 (section 6) can be financed from the grant expected from the Government.  Positive intervention model will ensure effective use of resources and value for money.
Legal Implications:	Section 70 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 effectively abolishes the Social Fund and this report proposes the local alternative.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Services are undertaken in line with the public sector equality duty set out in Section 49 of the 2010 Equality Act. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and the proposed local welfare assistance scheme takes into account the results of that impact assessment which will also be included to inform the way in which the scheme is administered. In addition the effect of the operation of the scheme on individuals with protected characteristics will be reviewed once it is up and running.
Sustainability Implications	Not Applicable
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	Not Applicable
Risk Management Implications	Risk Management Strategy is incorporated into the report
Health and Safety Implications	Not Applicable

## 1. Introduction

The Social Fund, currently administered by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), supports the most financially vulnerable people in society by paying for one off expenses and unforeseen costs and is currently funded via a combination of loans and grants.

As part of the wide ranging Welfare Reforms and the Government's Localism Agenda the Social Fund is being abolished with effect from the 1/4/13, with responsibility for delivering Local Welfare Assistance transferring to Local Authorities. The development of Trafford's Local Welfare Assistance model has been closely aligned to the wider welfare reform changes such as changes to Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit as the interdependencies between various welfare reforms, together with the current economic situation, will potentially increase need and demand for Local Welfare Assistance.

There is no national guidance or framework prescribing Local Welfare Assistance as the expectation is that Local Authorities will develop the best service for their local area. The key message from the DWP is that the current scheme is not fit for

purpose and Local Authorities need to innovate and look at adding value to their chosen model.

## 2. Value of the fund

A DWP settlement letter received in August 2013 stated that the amount of funding due to Trafford for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 is:

<b>Fund allocation from DWP</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Set up costs	£4,641	-	-
Administration Grant	-	£98,077	£89,898
Local Welfare Assistance fund	-	£464,142	£464,142
		£562,219.00	£554,040.00

## 3. Options Appraisal

Joanne Willmott, Joint Director of Operations, Communities and Wellbeing, was appointed Senior Responsible Officer for the Project on 4/9/12, supported by Karen McDonald, Business Change Analyst with the Transformation Team.

During September and October 2012 a range of activities were undertaken to inform the options appraisal and key recommendations including:

- Work with the Welfare Reform Steering Group
- Local Welfare Assistance workshop
- Benchmarking with other local authorities
- Meeting with Department of Work and Pensions partnership manager.
- Meetings with Children and Young People Service staff regarding section 17 payments and funding available to children leaving care
- Meetings with Revenue and Benefits team representatives
- Discussions with third sector partners including Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Union and Trafford Housing Trust

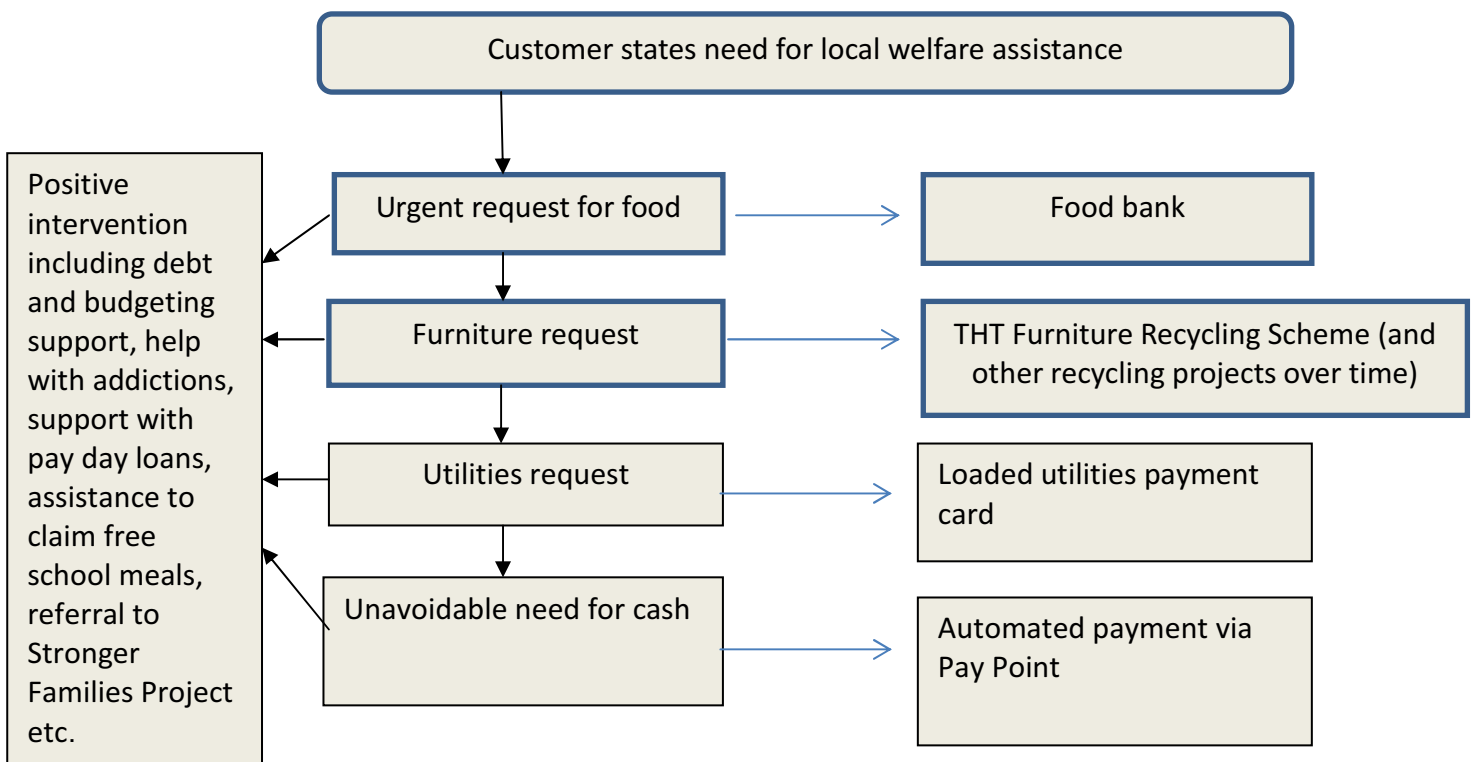
A comprehensive options appraisal was developed and presented to the Transformation, Performance and Resources Meeting on the 5/11/12 where the recommended model was endorsed for CMT decision. This is included as appendix 1 of this report

CMT endorsed the model on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. It was also identified by CMT that a presentation of the proposed model to Scrutiny on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012 would be useful.

The Scrutiny Committee raised a number of helpful points, such as the importance of involving Local Members which have been added to this report. They also requested further information which forms appendix 2 of this report.

#### 4. Trafford Assist

The following diagram illustrates Trafford’s Positive Intervention Model for Local Welfare Assistance to provide innovative solutions and reduce the requirement for cash payments. Consultation and discussion with a range of partners has resulted in naming this project “Trafford Assist”



The national economic situation and the interplay of a wide range of welfare reforms means Trafford Council is required to meet a potentially increasing level of need for local welfare assistance with a shrinking resource. We cannot therefore attempt to replicate the DWP model which is not fit for the future.

Trafford’s model is innovative and transformational to deliver maximum benefits for a vulnerable cohort of Trafford residents while ensuring best value for the Council.

Trafford Assist consists of the following core elements:

- Development of a collaborative model based on a partnership between Trafford Council, Trafford Housing Trust and Trafford Citizens Advice Bureau supported by a range of trusted assessors from the community and voluntary sector.

- Development of 6 key strands of Local Welfare Assistance

Development of food banks (Citizens Advice Bureau). The CAB service will be the statutory core provision, supported and enhanced by a range of voluntary provision, primarily delivered by the faith community. An element of the budget has been reserved to enable the payment of small grants to organisations looking to establish additional food banks.

Development of furniture and white goods provision (Trafford Housing Trust) with potential to extend this to other furniture recycling projects over time.

Using request for help as positive intervention point. This includes delivery of budgeting and debt advice (CAB, Credit Union and wider information and advice partnership) together with wrap around support from wider Council teams and functions such as Trading Standards (loan sharks), drug and alcohol services, free school meals, alignment with section 17 payments, referral to Stronger Families Project etc.

Limited use of automated payments via Pay Point where cash alternative is unavoidable.

Triage provided by a range of third sector organisations, with CAB as lead partner.

Assessment and decision making will be undertaken by the Revenue and Benefits Department, supported and overseen by a Council Wide steering group. Three new Trafford Assist roles have been developed and recruited to.

All partners such as Citizen Advice Bureau, Trafford Housing Trust and a wide range of information and advice providers have been involved in developing Trafford Assist and are fully committed to implementing this service on the 1/4/13.

## **5. Trafford Assist Pathway**

Trafford Assist will work in the following way:

- Citizens Advice Bureau Trafford and a number of information and advice providers will operate as trusted assessors. They will be contacted by individuals in need and discuss people's specific circumstances. If people meet initial eligibility criteria the trusted assessor will complete an on-line referral form. A full wrap around service based on positive intervention including benefits advice, debt counseling and support to access a wide continuum of support services will be available

- The referral form will be submitted electronically to the Trafford Assist assessment team, located within Revenue and Benefits Department
- A decision will be made within 1 working day (current waiting time can be up to 14 weeks) on whether individual meets eligibility criteria and if they do the most appropriate award.
- Individual applicant receives food bank voucher, furniture voucher, or electronic code to receive loaded utility card or cash payment via Pay Point.

## 6. Proposed Budget to support model

The Local Welfare Assistance fund available for administration and awards is £562,219

Budget item	Amount
Civica software	£8,000
Civica set up costs	£3,500
Paypoint set up costs	£5,850
Paypoint training days	£2,625
One off set up costs	£10,440
Trafford Assist staffing team	£74,441
Communication & administration	£9,339
Citizen Advice Bureau food bank	£90,000
Trafford Housing Trust Rainbow furniture	£150,000
Credit Union	£20,000
Cash equivalent awards	£100,000
Information & Advice contributions	£20,000
Development fund re food banks & alternative recycling schemes	£16,439
Partington Youth Centre running costs	£25,000
Contingency	£26,585
<b>Total</b>	<b>£562,219</b>

## 7. Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria have been worked up by a wide range of partners and stakeholders and formally signed off by the Welfare Reform Steering group – please see appendix 3. Key principles include that an applicant must be a Trafford resident (or expected to become one within 6 weeks to ensure support offered to people escaping domestic abuse or leaving prison) with no accessible capital or funds. All cases will be considered on their individual merit with priority given in relation to:

- Mental or physical disability and illness and general frailty
- Physical or social abuse or neglect
- A long period of residential or institutional care or sleeping rough
- Unstable family circumstances
- Behavioural problems, e.g. because of drug or alcohol misuse
- Risk of carer breakdown

## **8. Citizens Advice Bureau Trafford (CAB)**

Citizens Advice Bureau Trafford is a key partner in the development and delivery of Trafford Assist and their major contribution needs to be recognised.

A formal specification and funding agreement has been developed in which the CAB has a central role in providing a food bank service to vulnerable people living in Trafford. This will be in accordance with the agreed referral/eligibility process. The service will ensure that service users are treated with both dignity and respect throughout their journey. The content of the food parcels are being discussed with representatives from Public health to ensure they offer a balanced and nutritious selection of food. Specific responsibilities include:

- To carry out the assessment process to determine needs and to filter those most in need and who or where to best signpost to, focusing on areas such as: Assessment of debts / welfare / poverty / employment etc.
- To provide access via telephone as well as drop in sessions throughout the borough during core opening times of Monday to Friday 9am till 5pm
- To provide a dedicated LWA telephone advice line which is available Mon to Fri 9am till 5pm
- To provide a home delivery service where needed
- To provide a borough wide service
- The service will be responsible for the purchasing of the food parcels which will be done on a spot purchase basis
- To recruit and support volunteers as and when required
- To register with the Council as a food business
- To support client applications to LWA

Funding of up to £90,000 has been agreed to fund infrastructure costs, staffing capacity and the spot purchase of food parcels. The current social fund does not offer a service out of hours and at weekends. Part of the on- going monitoring and evaluation of Trafford Assist will be to establish if an out of hours option is required and then develop as necessary. Trafford's Emergency Duty Team already operate out of hours and provide crisis support in relation to social care to individuals and families in Trafford.

## 9. Trafford Housing Trust Rainbow Furniture

Trafford Housing Trust Rainbow Furniture is a key partner in the development and delivery of Trafford Assist and their major contribution needs to be recognised.

A formal specification and funding agreement has been developed which identifies the role of Rainbow Furniture in providing emergency household items to vulnerable individuals referred via Trafford Local Welfare Assistance. The service will ensure that all Trafford residents referred via Trafford Local welfare assistance service receive a high quality supportive service offering both dignity and respect to the individual.

Specific responsibilities include:

- To provide quality equipment as outlined within Trafford Housing Trust's guidelines and policies
- To provide items as specified on the referral consent form. Any items not specified cannot be invoiced for and will not be paid by Trafford Council
- To provide a home delivery service where needed
- To provide a borough wide service
- To recruit and support volunteers as and when required
- To invoice the Council on a spot purchase basis
- To support individuals seeking employment where possible and appropriate, in line with THT's guidance

An overarching budget of £150,000 has been allocated to purchase the following items on a spot purchase basis:

Item	
Wardrobes	
Settees	
Cookers	
Beds	
Bedding	
Towels	
Mattresses	
Fridges	
Washing machines	
<b>The below items are as part of a complete starter pack for a complete purchase price of £60</b>	
4 Plates	
Cutlery	
Cups	
Kettle	
Hand and body towel	



Bedding
Pans
Cooking utensils
Drinking glasses
Mirror

## 10. Project Management and Implementation

A full project plan has been developed and a Steering Group has been established. Key milestones achieved to date include:

- Agreeing pathways and eligibility criteria
- Developing communication plan and supporting marketing materials
- Agreeing working protocol with DWP and information and advice partners
- Commencing Equality Impact Assessment
- Confirming business processes
- Completing Food bank (CAB) and Furniture (THT) specifications and funding agreements
- Devising a utilities solution via pay point
- Recruitment to Revenues and Benefits Team
- IT procurement, implementation of Civica solution and training for staff
- Identifying Partington Youth Centre as Trafford Assist hub, providing storage space for food banks, furniture recycling and community clothing recycling project.
- Shadowing planned and agreed with DWP staff once Trafford Assist staff are in place. A local communication agreement has been developed and DWP staff have been invited to stakeholder briefings w/c 11<sup>th</sup> March.
- The stakeholder briefings will take place in Sale, Urmston & Old Trafford to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

Implementation for 1/4/13 is on track, with all due milestones achieved. Key outstanding actions include finalising the application form and communication material for distribution to key stakeholders (including Elected Members).

## **11. Conclusion**

Trafford Assist has already received positive recognition by the National Social Fund Project Team who have identified it as innovative and providing added value and stated that Trafford Council were well advanced in implementing a positive model, compared to other Local Authorities.

Trafford Assist is based on positive intervention and a balanced approach to rights and responsibilities and provides the best possible outcomes to vulnerable Trafford residents while also delivering value for money for the Council and the most effective approach to demand management.

### **Other Options**

#### **Outsource the scheme to an established organisation.**

This would involve an external partner processing applications, making award decisions and distributing customer payments. Discussions have taken place with several potential partners including Credit Union and Family Fund, however a complete solution has not been found to support this option.

#### **Do not provide a formal Local Welfare Assistance Scheme in Trafford.**

This option presents significant risk to the Council:

- There is already substantial demand for the Social Fund which is likely to increase due to the impacts of several imminent Welfare Reforms.
- Customers will be directed to Trafford Council by DWP which will leave the Council vulnerable and could damage reputation if customers present at customer access points and suitable arrangements are not in place to provide assistance.
- Additional demand could be placed on other discretionary funds within the Council e.g. Section 17 payments which prevent children going into care.
- The most financially vulnerable residents of Trafford could be left without any means of support which could be harmful, especially following an unforeseen crisis
- An AGMA benchmarking exercise has confirmed that only one Council is considering whether to put a formal scheme in place. All other Councils are proposing to provide a formal scheme.

### **Consultation**

As outlined in the report and attached options appraisal extensive discussion and consultation has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders and partners.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

As outlined in the report Trafford Assist is an innovative and transformational model focussed on delivering effective support to Trafford citizens while delivering maximum value for money to the Council

**Key Decision** No

**Finance Officer Clearance** (type in initials).....ID.....

**Legal Officer Clearance** (type in initials).....MJ.....

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** (electronic)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Brounlee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

## Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal



Social Fund Reform  
High Level Delivery Options  
Version 2.0  
21st November 2012

## Document History

Version	Summary of Changes	Date	Author
0.1	Additional information added	24.10.12	Karen McDonald
0.2	Amendments following Peer Review	24.10.12	
0.3	Additional information added	26.10.12	
0.4	Additional information added	30.10.12	
0.5	Amendments following Peer review	31.10.12	
0.6	Additional information added	01.11.12	
0.7	Report re-formatted	02.11.12	
0.8	Amendments following SRO review	02.11.12	
1.0	Submitted to TPR	05.11.12	
1.0	Submitted to CMT	12.11.12	Jo Willmott/ Karen McDonald
1.1	Amendments following feedback from Corporate Director CYPS	12.11.12	
1.2	Amendments following feedback from CMT	20.11.12	
2.0	Submitted to Corporate Director CYPS for Lead Member Briefing	21.11.12	

## Approvals

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Joanne Willmott	Senior Officer Responsible	02.11.12	0.8
Joanne Willmott	Senior Officer Responsible	05.11.12	1.0
TPR		5.11.12	1.0
CMT		21.11.12	2.0

## Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Joanne Willmott	Senior Officer Responsible	02.11.12	0.8
Transformation Performance Resources Group and		05.11.12	1.0
CMT		12.11.12	1.0
CMT		21.11.12	2.0

# 1. Executive Summary

## ***Background***

The Social Fund, administered currently by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), supports the most financially vulnerable people in society by paying for one off expenses and unforeseen costs and is currently funded via a combination of loans and grants.

In 2010 Central Government announced a review of the Social Fund. This is part of a wide range of Welfare Reforms. The review is at the heart of the Government's Localism Agenda and determined that two main elements of the Social Fund would transfer to Local Authority control from April 2013. Other elements of the fund will remain under DWP control and the DWP have stated that the Local Authority controlled element of the Social Fund will be called Local Welfare Assistance.

This report is to advise the Transformation Performance and Resources Group of options available for delivering the Social Fund when Trafford Council takes responsibility for elements of the fund and recommends the option which best suits the needs of vulnerable Trafford residents.

Trafford must decide on the most appropriate model for delivering the scheme in a very short time period. The chosen scheme must be fully operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.

## ***Elements of the Social Fund to be localised from April 2013***

Two cash limited elements of the current Social Fund provision will become the responsibility of Local Authorities from April 2013:

- Crisis Loans for items and/or living expenses
- Community Care Grants

## ***Value of the fund***

A DWP settlement letter received in August 2013 states that the amount of funding due to Trafford for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 is as detailed in the following table:

<b>Fund allocation from DWP</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Set up costs	£4,641	-	-
Administration Grant	-	£98,077	£89,898
Local Welfare Assistance fund	-	£464,142	£464,142

The DWP have indicated that they paid out £794,500 in 2010/11 to financially vulnerable customers in the Trafford Borough for Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants.<sup>1</sup> This amount reduced to £559,600 in 2011/12 due to changes implemented to the Social Fund eligibility criteria.

It should be noted that an unspecified amount of the money paid out was for Rent In Advance payments which will be paid out of a separate Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) fund in Revenues and Benefits from April 2013. DHP funding will increase at this time to partially mitigate the severe financial effects on some customers due to new Welfare Reform initiatives including:

- Localised Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2013
- Housing Benefit Under Occupancy reductions from April 2013
- Benefits Cap from April 2013
- Universal Credit phased introduction from October 2013

The 2013/14 fund allocation represents only 83% of the amount of money paid out in Trafford 2011/12.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, demand on the Social Fund is highly likely to increase as many customers will struggle to pay priority bills and as a result will be unable to budget for replacement household items. In addition they will have insufficient financial resources to cope should a crisis arise unexpectedly.

The fund will not be ring-fenced therefore a decision is required on how the monies will be spent. This decision will impact the overall delivery model of the scheme.

### ***Delivery options for Local Welfare Assistance***

The following delivery/administration options have been considered as part of this review:

1. Outsource the scheme to an established organisation. This would involve an external partner processing applications, making award decisions and distributing customer payments.
2. The development of a mixed model focusing on key areas of need. This will consist of an initial agency referral process to assist with claims and give budgeting advice. This will be followed by an internal assessment and decision making process in Revenues and Benefits. Fund awards will be distributed via 3<sup>rd</sup> party collaboration including food banks and recycled furniture. Cash payments will be avoided by the use of pre- paid cards.
3. Do not provide a formal Local Welfare Assistance Scheme in Trafford.

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<sup>1</sup> This accounts for elements of the fund that will be transferring to Trafford.

<sup>2</sup> 2011/12 spend supplied by DWP

## ***Benchmarking and consultation***

Benchmarking has been undertaken with all AGMA Councils. At the same time consultation has taken place with members of the Welfare Reform Steering Group and front line staff who support customers in the completion of Social Fund applications. Further detailed information can be found in Section 6.

## ***Recommendations***

### **Key Recommendations**

The national economic situation and the interplay of a wide range of welfare reforms means Trafford Council is required to meet an increasing level of need for local welfare assistance with a shrinking resource. We cannot therefore attempt to replicate the DWP model which is not fit for the future.

The model needs to be innovative and transformational to deliver maximum benefits for a very vulnerable cohort of Trafford residents while ensuring best value for the Council.

The comprehensive options appraisal undertaken over the last two months has informed the following key recommendations:

- Development of a collaborative model based on a partnership between Trafford Council, Trafford Housing Trust and Trafford Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Development of 6 key strands of Local Welfare Assistance

Development of food banks (CAB)

Development of furniture and white goods provision (Trafford Housing Trust) with potential to extend this to other furniture recycling projects over time

Delivery of budgeting and debt advice (CAB and wider information and advice partnership) to support people to more effectively manage their resources.

Limited use of pre - payment cards where cash alternative is unavoidable.

Triage provided by a range of third sector organisations, with CAB as lead partner

Assessment and decision making to be undertaken by Revs and Benefits Department, supported and overseen by a Council Wide steering group. Funding has been identified from DWP grant to fund this team together with other key developments.



## ***Underpinning Recommendations***

- The eligibility criteria for the scheme would be designed by an expert task group to ensure robustness and transparency.
- Governance arrangements would be made in conjunction with Procurement, Audit and Legal Services.
- The fund would be managed internally to establish strict controls and monitoring of award distribution.
- The assessment process would be supported by referrals from agencies such as Welfare Benefits and CAB. There is opportunity for the agencies to work with the customer to establish the root cause of financial problems where possible and offer positive signposting to other agencies where appropriate.
- The Benefits Service has immediate access to customer information including the Council Tax Property Database and DWP benefit entitlement information.
- The Benefits Service has infrastructure and skilled staff who have expertise in processing benefits and Discretionary Housing Payments. Approximately 18,000 benefit applications are currently handled, many of which are from vulnerable people.
- Local Welfare Assistance compliments the existing Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme, administered within the Benefits Service.
- Good working relationships are already in place between the Benefits Service and agencies such as Access Trafford, Welfare Benefits, Registered Social Landlords and CAB. A formal collaborative approach will be developed between all parties to explore opportunities for the scheme.
- Essential household items can be distributed by the Trafford Housing Trust Rainbow Furniture Project who sell good quality used items for a fraction of the price of new goods. This is a non-profit making Social Enterprise in the heart of the north of the Trafford Borough. The development of this arrangement will safeguard the fund as it will be cheaper than supplying new goods, therefore reducing costs, and also ensure that goods reach customers homes for their intended purpose.
- In order to reduce cash payments an arrangement will be developed by Trafford CAB who are in the process of setting up a food bank in the borough. This will be supported by an agreed amount of Local Welfare Assistance money and ensure that balanced nutritious meals are provided to support customers' health and wellbeing.
- One off pre-payment cards will be promoted to cover Crisis Loan expenses, where the award is not for essential household items or food. This will negate the requirement for staff to administer cash payments directly to customers.
- Further opportunities will be explored with partners to reduce cash payments as far as possible for example collaboration with Utility and travel companies.

The following diagram shows Trafford's recommended Diversion Model for Local Welfare Assistance

Local Welfare Assistance Diversion Model to provide innovative solutions and reduce the requirement for cash payments

Customer states need for Local Welfare Assistance

Urgent request for food

Food bank

Furniture request

THT Furniture Recycling Scheme

Utility payment request

Loaded utility card

Non avoidable cash payment

Pre-payment card

## 2. Drivers for Change

Central Government announced in 2010 that the Social Fund would be reviewed as part of the wider agenda to change the whole Welfare Benefit scheme in 2013. The reforms are underpinned by the phased introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.

The Social Fund Review determined that two main elements of the Social Fund would be abolished on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and that funding for discretionary Local Welfare Assistance Schemes would be granted to Local Councils to administer their own schemes from April 2013.

Two funds will move to local authority control from April 2013:

- Community Care Grants
- Crisis Loans for items and expenses

As a result, Local Authorities are now developing policies and processes to distribute funds to the most financially vulnerable people in their communities.

The following table gives an overview of the current Crisis Loan and Community Care Grant Scheme.

Fund element	Description	Criteria
Crisis loan items or expenses (recoverable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to help people with immediate short-term needs in a crisis or as a result of a disaster</li> <li>• Payments can be for living expenses or household items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must be over 16 years old</li> <li>• The need must be as a result of an emergency or disaster</li> <li>• There would be a serious risk/damage to health and safety without the payment</li> <li>• Exclusions apply e.g.; hospital in-patients and prisoners</li> </ul>
Community Care Grant (non recoverable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For essential household items, travel expenses, removal expenses, utility connection/reconnection charges</li> <li>• Help people to live independently in the community</li> <li>• Help families who are under extreme financial pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must receive a qualifying benefit: Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit</li> <li>• Award is reduced by amount of any capital held</li> </ul>

The following table gives a breakdown of claims received, awards made and spend in 2011/12. A detailed breakdown of spend is not available from DWP at this time.

<b>Social Fund category</b>	<b>Claims received per category</b>	<b>Awards made per category</b>	<b>% of total awards made Per category</b>	<b>Spend per category</b>	<b>% of total spend Per category</b>	<b>% awards made Based on number of claims received per category</b>	<b>%refused claims Based on number of claims received and awards made</b>
<b>Crisis Loan Items 2011/12</b>	290	130	4	£20,100	3.6	44.8	55.2
<b>Crisis Loan Living Expenses 2011/12</b>	3450	2830	77	£152,600	27.3	82	18
<b>Community Care Grants 2011/12</b>	1400	710	19	£386,900	69.10	50.7	49.3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5140</b>	<b>3670</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>£559,600</b>	<b>100</b>		

Trafford must be prepared to have an operational scheme in place from April 2013. This requires key decisions on the operating model and the development of a full project plan including a strategy, local policies and regulations, collaboration opportunities, ICT systems, business processes and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

Central Government is encouraging Local Authorities to think creatively about the design and delivery of this new service provision, and there is no prescribed guidance on how to deliver the scheme. As such collaboration and community engagement has been considered as part of the delivery model. In addition consultation has taken place with a range of agencies who provide advice and guidance to customers about benefits and financial matters on an ongoing basis.

The future of Welfare Benefit schemes requires Councils to work closely with partners to understand the needs of communities. This is already taking place at Trafford Council and strongly supports the Council's vision. The Council also has a social obligation to work with communities to reduce deprivation, anti-social issues and crime.

## ***Critical Success Factors***

- To comply with Central Governments agenda to localise discretionary benefit.
- Provide a holistic solution which utilizes funds and resources achieving value for money for Trafford Council.
- Claims will be assessed by highly trained staff who will strive to ensure that awards are made to those most in need.
- Manage Government funding robustly so that expenditure is within budget and does not exceed funding.
- Collaborate with key agencies and stakeholders to ensure that customers have the best advice and guidance with work is undertaken to establish root cause and prevention wherever possible.
- Ensure value for money on items purchased especially where funds are used to obtain essential household items.
- Ensure that the scheme criteria are robust, transparent and complies with policy, procurement, audit and legal requirements.
- Adequate measures must be in place to ensure staff safety.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately skilled and trained to handle diverse and challenging customer interactions.

## **3. Scope / Outline**

1. To recommend the most appropriate Local Welfare Assistance option for Trafford Council for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.
2. To provide costs for each delivery option.
3. To review existing DWP qualifying criteria and payment options for the Social Fund to establish whether this is the most appropriate way of administering the scheme.
4. To benchmark with AGMA Councils to determine their approach to Local Welfare Assistance provision.
5. To consult with key stakeholders including Third Sector to understand their experiences and requirements for Local Welfare Assistance.
6. Make recommendations on appropriate payment methods.

## 4. Methodology

Findings to support this document have been collected via a range of activities in September and October 2012 with key stakeholders as follows:

Findings vehicle	Outputs
Desk top analysis – DWP information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the current criteria and application methods of the Social Fund scheme</li> </ul>
Steering Group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share members experiences relating to Social Fund</li> <li>Consultation – what are their thoughts and ideas for a new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme</li> </ul>
Steering Group Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed data capture to help inform the design of a new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.</li> </ul>
I Network workshop with Social Fund Project Officers from the North West region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmarking information</li> <li>Alternative Social Fund delivery options</li> <li>Sub group meetings with AGMA Councils for project life cycle</li> </ul>
Multi Agency workshop with officers directly involved with Social Fund customer applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share front line experiences</li> <li>Obtain customer feedback</li> <li>Share ideas to create a new and improved scheme</li> </ul>
Meetings with CAB Chief Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities of a collaborative working approach for a food bank in North Trafford</li> </ul>
Meetings with Trafford Housing Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities of the Rainbow Furniture Recycling Project providing used furniture and white goods as part of the Local Welfare Assistance scheme.</li> </ul>
Interview with Trussell Trust North West Development Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of the Trussell Trust food bank provision in South Trafford</li> </ul>
Interview with Information Governance Officer CYPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of data sharing implications</li> </ul>
Interview with Senior Business Support Officer Section 17 payments CYPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of the Section 17 discretionary payments fund</li> </ul>
Interview with Senior Business Support Officer Children In Care CYPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of the funding available for young people leaving care</li> </ul>
Interview with Emergency Planning Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of funding/arrangements in place for residents following a disaster in the community</li> </ul>

## **5. Existing Provision**

Limited statistical data has been provided to Local Authorities to date from DWP. Detailed information is required to understand what the fund has paid out for and any emergent key trends in order to manage demand and expectations and provide the most appropriate replacement scheme.

Customers can self-refer when making an application to the fund. There is no root cause investigation into the customers' needs or steps to offer preventative signposted services.

### ***Application and Payment methods***

#### **Community Care Grants & Crisis Loan Items/Services**

Application is via a 36 page hard copy form which is taken or posted to a Job Centre Plus office. The form is very detailed and includes sections on personal information, moving house, health problems, items required, money paid out, travelling expenses and payment options. The waiting time for a decision is typically 4 weeks.

If the claim is successful, payment will be made directly into a bank account or Credit Union account or exceptionally by giro.

#### **Crisis Loans for day to day living expenses**

Application is via a free phone telephone application service. The waiting time to speak to a claims assessor is estimated to be 40 minutes and the application process can typically take over an hour. The process is via a scripted check list. If the claim is successful the customer will be given a same day time slot to present at the nearest Job Centre Plus Office and receive a giro to cash at the Post Office.

Customers are given a shared time slot for giro collection. They are kept in a waiting area by security staff and then called by name to collect their giro. The giro is presented from behind a glass screen and there is also security presence at the exit area.

#### **Repayment of Crisis Loans**

Crisis Loans for items or expenses are repaid in installments either from benefit payments or if the customer is working, by arrangement. The repayment terms are agreed by the customer before the loan is paid. Deduction amounts vary dependent upon the customer's circumstances. Often there is a delay in the deductions being taken and more than one loan can be recovered at the same time. This leads to further financial hardship as customers cannot cope financially with a significantly reduced benefit rate. Customers can apply to have the deductions reduced although this can be a lengthy process and is not always successful. This can often lead to a further Crisis Loan application.

Community Care Grants are not recoverable.

## ***Recent changes to the Social Fund***

Several changes to the Social Fund eligibility criteria have been implemented by DWP since April 2011. These measures demonstrate the challenge of safeguarding the cash limited funds, and ensuring that the monies are distributed to the people who are most in need. For example:

- Protecting the funding for Community Care Grants by disallowing repeat claims for the same need within 12 months.
- Disallowing repeat claims for Crisis Loan Items following a disaster for the same need within 12 months.
- A cap has been set of three Crisis Loan awards for general living expenses in a 12 month period.

## **6. Benchmarking**

### **1. Welfare Reform Steering Group.**

70% of members of the Welfare Reform Steering Group completed a questionnaire to capture their views on fundamental considerations for the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme. The following table summarizes key statements made which have been considered in the recommended option for the new scheme:

<b>Local Welfare Assistance consideration</b>	<b>Summary</b>
The overall scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All responses stated that internal provision would be preferable to maintain strict controls of the fund and customer care standards and allow a holistic approach to service delivery.</li> <li>• Several responses specified that the scheme should be administered by Revenues and Benefits due to their expertise in benefit claims assessments and instant access to customers financial details</li> <li>• The number of claims should be limited to a specific amount per customer per year. Case by case exceptions should apply where there is immediate risk of homelessness or a risk to health and safety.</li> <li>• The fund needs to be very closely managed on a regular basis to monitor budgets, demands and trends.</li> </ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All responses stated that existing DWP criteria should be used as a starting point for the new scheme.</li> <li>• Proof of residence in Trafford should be a requirement. Exceptions will apply where the customer is homeless or fleeing domestic violence.</li> <li>• Supporting information from an agency should be provided at the point of application.</li> </ul>



<b>Local Welfare Assistance consideration</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific list of allowable items should be defined for the scheme. This should not be published.</li> <li>• The scheme must be fair and transparent.</li> <li>• The scheme should prevent homelessness, starvation and risk of significant danger to the customers safety or wellbeing.</li> </ul>
The application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications should be by referral from an agency where possible to ensure that information supplied is reliable and comprehensive.</li> <li>• Crisis Loan expenses applications should be made by telephone to ensure that claims are processed quickly and negate the need for customers to approach the Council in person.</li> <li>• Visits should take place to assist particularly vulnerable customers. This would be an opportunity to ensure that positive signposting takes place.</li> <li>• Staff and customers must be able to clearly understand the process to manage expectations.</li> <li>• Information should be shared between Council departments to streamline the process.</li> <li>• Staff safety is paramount. Staff should be equipped with the appropriate skills to deal with sensitive and challenging situations.</li> <li>• Risk assessments need to take place to plan for appropriate security measures.</li> </ul>
Payment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All responses stated that cash should be avoided. This will help to mitigate safety issues and potentially deter false claims which have occurred when cash is given.</li> <li>• Use furniture projects and food banks to avoid the need for cash and ensure that funds are spent on their intended purpose.</li> <li>• Work directly with Utility companies and travel companies to make direct payments to suppliers.</li> <li>• Provision of second hand goods must be sustainable and have capacity to deal with demand.</li> </ul>
Ideas for the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community initiatives should be widespread, large scale and available to everybody.</li> <li>• Knowledge of all available discretionary grant schemes is essential to support customers.</li> <li>• Advice services and Council departments need to work together to ensure that appropriate support is given and avoid the risk of duplicate awards from differing sources.</li> <li>• Work with Registered Social Landlords to establish processes to help tenants move into new properties without delay.</li> </ul>

Local Welfare Assistance consideration	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on a solution to help customers who have no choice but to abandon their belongings when they leave a property only to require new items when they are rehoused later.</li> <li>• Collaborate with Housing Providers and Support Providers to ensure that people most in need are prioritized. For example homeless households are unable to move on to permanent accommodation without furniture. This causes bed blocking. An early referral process and swift action is required to reduce the cost of homelessness.</li> <li>• The prospect of recovering awards should not be abandoned as this would help the fund to go further.</li> </ul>

## 2. AGMA Councils

All ten AGMA Councils attended an I Network Social Fund event in October to discuss key Local Welfare Assistance considerations. A questionnaire was also completed which detailed options for delivery for the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.

Nine Councils intend to deliver the new scheme internally using a range of collaborative approaches with partners including Food banks and Furniture Recycling schemes. Five Councils intend to administer the scheme within Revenues and Benefits. One Council is yet to decide whether to provide a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.

One of the key issues raised was the threat of customers accessing funds from neighbouring authorities, and being awarded duplicate Local Welfare Assistance awards. It was agreed that Council officers should meet on a monthly basis to discuss a common list of issues and strive to align local schemes and collaborate wherever possible

## 7. Key Findings/Issues/Opportunities

The DWP has confirmed that the existing Social Fund scheme is not fit for purpose. The following table details key findings/issues and how these can be mitigated to provide an improved scheme.

Key finding/issue	Mitigation/opportunity
<p>A lack of key data from DWP exists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend by location/ward</li> <li>• Spend by circumstance i.e.; flood</li> <li>• Breakdown of reasons for high claim refusal rates</li> <li>• How will the fund be distributed?</li> <li>• How many applications are in person as result of dire emergency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with DWP 7<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>• DWP workshop for Local Authority staff 8<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>• Build an accurate claims history database from April 2013 to monitor budget, demands and trends.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social fund refusal rates are very high.</li> <li>• The refusal rate for Community Care Grants in Trafford in 2011/12 was 50%.</li> <li>• This is a waste of assessment time, incurs high administration costs and causes frustration and distress for customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Welfare Assistance applications should be referred by a recognised agency wherever possible. This filter can be used to guide and advise customers, and ensure that claims made are commensurate with the claims criteria.</li> <li>• The eligibility criteria for the scheme will be robust, easy to understand and transparent to limit the number of claims which are ultimately refused.</li> <li>• Specialist training will be given to claims assessors to ensure consistent decision making.</li> <li>• Structure the application to assist with early identification of eligibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash payments are made by giro or into a bank account. There is no audit trail to ensure that payments are used for their intended purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash payments should be avoided where possible.</li> <li>• Recycled furniture and white goods can be provided by a Social Enterprise.</li> <li>• A food bank can be set up by CAB.</li> <li>• Pre-paid cards should be used to cover crisis expenses.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities with other agencies to make direct payments.</li> <li>• Existing procurement frameworks should be utilised where possible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Loan (expenses) applications typically take over an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Loan Expenses applications will be dealt with by telephone locally</li> </ul>

Key finding/issue	Mitigation/opportunity
<p>hour on the telephone. Calls are handled in a contact centre which is not necessarily based locally and deals with a large volume of claims covering many local authority areas. There are several intervals where the customer is kept on hold, causing upset and frustration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application form for Community Care Grants and Crisis Loan items is 36 pages long.</li> </ul>	<p>and will handle only Trafford requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis Loan Items and Community Care Grant applications should largely be made on line.</li> <li>Claims should be completed by an agency in the customer's presence where the customer has no computer access. Supporting statements can be made by the agency at the time of the claim submission.</li> <li>A small supply of hard copy forms will be available for use when a computer is not available and the customer is self-referring.</li> <li>Visiting Officers will be deployed where a customer is particularly vulnerable so that one to one support can be given.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff safety is a serious concern. DWP staff operate behind glass screens and security staff are employed at Job Centre Plus Offices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application process will be inclusive, transparent and customer focused. Customers will be treated as individuals on a case by case basis.</li> <li>Advanced customer service training will be provided for front line staff at key customer service points across Trafford.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deductions from benefit to recover Crisis Loan repayments can lead to further financial hardship and repeat Crisis Loan applications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Welfare Assistance payments are not recoverable. It will not be possible to recover the money at source from DWP benefits and recovery by sundry debtor bill would be costly and time consuming.</li> <li>There will be a limit on Crisis Loan applications within a 12 month period.</li> <li>A universal support network will be offered to customers at the point of referral to enable preventative measures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Social Fund has created a dependency for some customers who submit repeat claims within a short time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications must make clear that the Social Fund has been abolished and replaced with a new scheme with different eligibility criteria, application methods and</li> </ul>

Key finding/issue	Mitigation/opportunity
	<p>awards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency advice and signposting will be available to encourage customers to take responsibility for their circumstances and receive support to prevent a similar situation from recurring in the future.</li> <li>• Stakeholder briefings will take place to communicate that Local Welfare Assistance is the last resort for customers rather than a first point of access.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Council wide Service Review for Information &amp; Advice Services is currently taking place which will be working towards a new delivery model for Information and Advice services across the Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key aim of the review is “to provide clear, accurate and accessible information and advice to Trafford residents when they need it, whilst providing a value for money service”.</li> <li>• This aim supports one of the key strands of the recommended Local Welfare Assistance model which uses a triage system provided by a range of information and advice agencies.</li> <li>• Access to clear and accurate information is vital to the success of the Local Welfare Assistance model. The outcomes of the review will support this.</li> <li>• The Social fund Project team will be kept updated on the progress of the I&amp;A review to ensure that the access to Social fund is not adversely affected by the I&amp;A review outcomes.</li> </ul>

## 8. Recommendations

### Option 1 Outsource the scheme to an established organisation.

This would involve an external partner processing applications, making award decisions and distributing customer payments. Discussions have taken place with several potential partners including Credit Union and Family Fund, however a complete solution has not been found to this option.

## **Credit Union**

The Manchester Credit Union was approached to discuss the possibility of providing a complete Local Welfare Assistance solution. This would include assessments, decision making, award distribution and fund monitoring.

The Credit Union expressed reluctance to make decisions on Local Welfare Assistance claims despite reassurance that the claims criteria would be robust, transparent and designed collaboratively, and claims would be supported by agencies where appropriate. A costing model from the Credit Union was requested to determine whether further discussions could take place however further information has not been received to date.

## **Family Fund**

The Family Fund charity is a registered charity for families with disabled children and is one of the UK's largest grant-makers. Earlier this year the Family Fund offered Local Authorities a complete Grant Platform and outsourced Grant Administration Service for Local Welfare Assistance which included receipt of the application through to awarding the payment. In recent weeks, there have been significant changes to their service provision:

- Requirements to provide Councils with the highest levels of security for data. The Family Fund have confirmed that these requirements will be too challenging and burdensome.
- The Family Fund portal does not have the key design features that are required i.e. on-line or self- service application methods.
- Family Fund were not prepared to risk or commit further investment in their solutions without a number of firm agreements being put in place and Local Authorities have significantly delayed their commitment to their chosen Family Fund Local Welfare Assistance solution.

As a result of these changes the Family Fund have withdrawn the Grant Platform and Grant Administration Service and are currently offering fulfillment of grant items only. This option would not provide a complete solution or give the opportunity to work with recycled goods and food bank providers and would ultimately be more costly as only new goods would be distributed thus reducing Trafford's options.

## **Option 2 An initial agency referral process followed by internal assessment and decision making provision carried out in Revenues and Benefits, with 3<sup>rd</sup> party collaboration to distribute fund awards.**

The Council has an opportunity to embrace the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme with a vision to develop a high quality service which meets the needs of residents. A collaborative model will ensure that expert agencies support customers to establish root cause and offer positive signposting.

Local Welfare Assistance assessment staff will work in the Benefits Development and Support Team in Revenues and Benefits and will be managed by the

Customer Development and Support Services Manager. Assessment staff will be trained to review customers' financial and specific circumstances including emotional and health issues when assessing each claim.

Cash payments will be avoided wherever possible and alternative payment methods including recycled furniture and white goods will afford the Council the opportunity to work with trusted partners, providing a value for money solution.

The scheme should be monitored and evaluated from April 2013 to analyse spend, demand and trends and seek further collaborative opportunities with partners where appropriate.

It is recommended that Option 2 is the most suitable option for Local Welfare Assistance in Trafford.

Please see Appendix A which demonstrates Trafford's recommended Local Welfare Assistance Model

#### **Local Welfare Assistance Fund 2013/14**

The Local Welfare Assistance fund available for administration and awards is £562,219

<b>Description of cost</b>	<b>Amount</b>
IT	£8,000
<b>One off set up costs</b>	<b>£13,940</b>
<b>Assessment Team</b>	<b>£74,441</b>
<b>Communication and administration</b>	<b>£9,399</b>
<b>Contributions to CAB Food Bank</b>	<b>£100,000</b>
<b>Trafford Housing Trust recycled furniture and white goods</b>	<b>£190,000</b>
<b>Credit Union</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Cash equivalent awards</b>	<b>£100,000</b>
<b>Information and advice contributions</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Development fund re food banks and alternative recycling schemes</b>	<b>£16,439</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
<b>Total indicative expenditure</b>	<b>£562,219.00</b>

#### **Breakdown of Indicative costs for 2013/14**

	<b>Details</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Local Welfare Assistance claims assessors	2x fte Band 5 + on costs	£56,899

Local Welfare Assistance Coordinator	0.5 fte Band 7 + on costs	£17,542
One off set up costs	IT development, Transformation Team support etc.	£13,940
I.T Provision annually from existing Revs & Bens system suppliers	Civica software provision	£8,000
Professional print services from recommended Council supplier	Design and artwork services	£840
Print costs for hard copy forms from recommended Council supplier	1000 hard copy forms and envelopes (represents 20% of applications in 2011/12)	£1089
Postage costs	Franked postage costs for 1000 forms	£530
Return postage costs for hard copy forms	Business Reply service	£690
Scanning costs	Scan 1000 hard copy forms into I.T system	£3,750
Pre-paid cards	1000 cards (represents 35% of Crisis Loan expenses payments made in 2011/12)	£2,500

**Option 3** Do not provide a formal Local Welfare Assistance Scheme in Trafford.

This option presents significant risk to the Council:

- There is already substantial demand for the Social Fund which is likely to increase due to the impacts of several imminent Welfare Reforms.
- Customers will be directed to Trafford Council by DWP which will leave the Council vulnerable and could damage reputation if customers present at customer access points and suitable arrangements are not in place to provide assistance.
- Additional demand could be placed on other discretionary funds within the Council e.g. Section 17 payments which prevent children going into care.
- The most financially vulnerable residents of Trafford could be left without any means of support which could be harmful, especially following an unforeseen disaster.
- An AGMA benchmarking exercise has confirmed that only one Council is considering whether to put a formal scheme in place. All other Councils are proposing to provide a formal scheme.



## 9. Risks

The following table demonstrates key risks to the project and how they will be mitigated.

Risk	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Local Welfare Assistance scheme may not be operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 leaving a gap in emergency discretionary provision for Trafford residents. This would result in a fragmented approach to assisting financial vulnerable people and potentially cause reputational damage to Trafford Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A task group including project management will be in place from November 2012 to oversee and implement policies, systems and processes required to ensure that a Local Welfare Assistance scheme is operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.</li> <li>Deadlines will be strictly monitored to ensure that the project progresses at the required rate throughout the project life cycle.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DWP will relinquish responsibility for the Social Fund from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. An absence of joint communication by DWP, agencies and Trafford could mean that unrealistic expectations are held by DWP, agencies and customers. This could result in an incorrect understanding of the new Local Welfare Assistance scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A meeting has been arranged with DWP to discuss a joint communications plan.</li> <li>Trafford staff have been invited to a DWP workshop to discuss communication and roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>Internal stakeholders including Customer Services staff will be briefed on the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.</li> <li>Information providers in Trafford are being consulted with and will be briefed on the new Welfare Assistance Scheme.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will not be an adequate I.T system in place to support the internal administration of Local Welfare Assistance by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I.T solutions will be investigated in November</li> <li>Discussions will be held with Trafford's Procurement Team in November.</li> <li>I.T specifications, implementation, testing and training will be closely project managed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff may not have the appropriate skills and training to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Services staff will be briefed in the key principles of the</li> </ul>

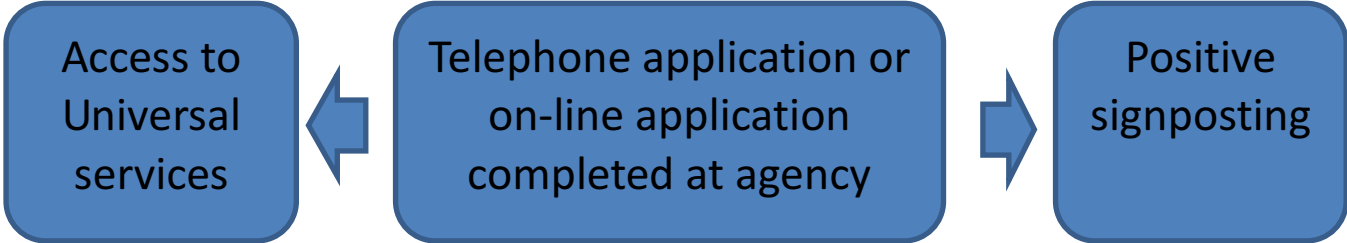
<p>handle sensitive and challenging customer interactions appropriately. This could result in potentially volatile instances.</p>	<p>scheme, application methods and where to obtain support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Customer Service training will be provided to staff who have direct contact with Local Welfare Assistance customers.</li> <li>• Risk assessments will take place at customer facing access points.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplicate payments could be made to customers who qualify for awards from more than one discretionary fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A coordinated approach will be implemented. Cross referencing of claims will take place to check on any previous claims history.</li> <li>• A customer claims history will be recorded from the start of Local Welfare Assistance so that claims records can be accessed instantly.</li> </ul>

## 10. Proposed Next Steps

- Design Implementation Plan
- Set up Local Welfare Assistance Taskforce Group and schedule regular meetings
- Appoint Legal/Accountancy/ICT representatives
- Develop communications strategy
- Agree data sharing protocols with Legal/key internal and external stakeholders
- Design LWA Scheme criteria in conjunction with Steering Group and Taskforce Group
- Tender process for purchase cards (part of Corporate Pre-Paid Card User Group)
- Tender process for ICT system
- ICT system development
- ICT system implementation
- System testing
- Develop Service Level Agreements with 3rd sector/Registered Social Landlord stakeholders
- Design EIA document
- Write LWA Scheme regulations
- Design business processes
- Recruitment of staff
- Train staff
- Brief key stakeholder groups
- Produce internal/external communications

LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE MODEL

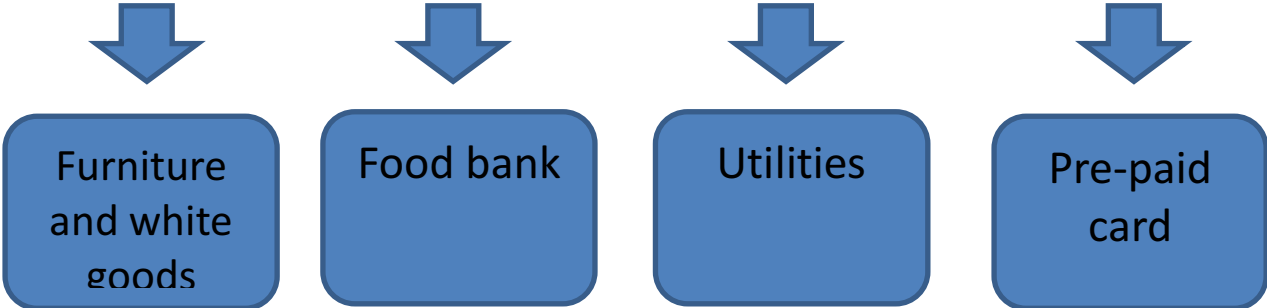
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ASSESSMENT AND DECISION



AWARDS



## Appendix 2

### Information requested by Scrutiny Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> December

#### 1: Risk Assessment

The following table demonstrates key risks to the project and how they will be mitigated.

Risk	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Local Welfare Assistance scheme may not be operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 leaving a gap in emergency discretionary provision for Trafford residents. This would result in a fragmented approach to assisting financially vulnerable people and potentially cause reputational damage to Trafford Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A task group including robust project management and governance arrangements has been established to oversee and implement policies, systems and processes required to ensure that a Local Welfare Assistance scheme is operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.</li> <li>Deadlines will be strictly monitored to ensure that the project progresses at the required rate throughout the project life cycle.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The changing benefit landscape will increase demand for Local Welfare Assistance leading to pressure on the available budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The model is based on maximising the impact of Local Welfare Assistance investment and diverting people from requiring cash assistance through positive intervention</li> <li>The budget will be monitored weekly to ensure effective use</li> <li>A review will be undertaken in July 2013 to evaluate impact and identify any further actions necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DWP will relinquish responsibility for the Social Fund from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. An absence of joint communication by DWP, agencies and Trafford could mean that unrealistic expectations are held by DWP, agencies and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A meeting has been held with DWP to discuss a joint communications plan.</li> <li>Trafford staff have attended a DWP workshop to discuss communication and roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

<p>customers. This could result in an incorrect understanding of the new Local Welfare Assistance scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal stakeholders including Councillors and Customer Services staff will be fully briefed on the new Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.</li> <li>• Information providers in Trafford are being consulted with and will be fully involved in the implementation of the new Welfare Assistance Scheme.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will not be an adequate I.T system in place to support the internal administration of Local Welfare Assistance by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I.T solutions have been scoped in November 2012</li> <li>• Discussions have been held with Trafford's Procurement Team in November.</li> <li>• I.T specifications, implementation, testing and training will be closely project managed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff may not have the appropriate skills and training to handle sensitive and challenging customer interactions appropriately. This could result in potentially volatile instances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Services staff will be briefed in the key principles of the scheme, application methods and where to obtain support.</li> <li>• Advanced Customer Service training will be provided to staff who have direct contact with Local Welfare Assistance customers.</li> <li>• Risk assessments will take place at customer facing access points.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplicate payments could be made to customers who qualify for awards from more than one discretionary fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A coordinated approach will be implemented. Cross referencing of claims will take place to check on any previous claims history.</li> <li>• A customer claims history will be recorded from the start of Local Welfare Assistance so that claims records can be accessed instantly.</li> </ul>

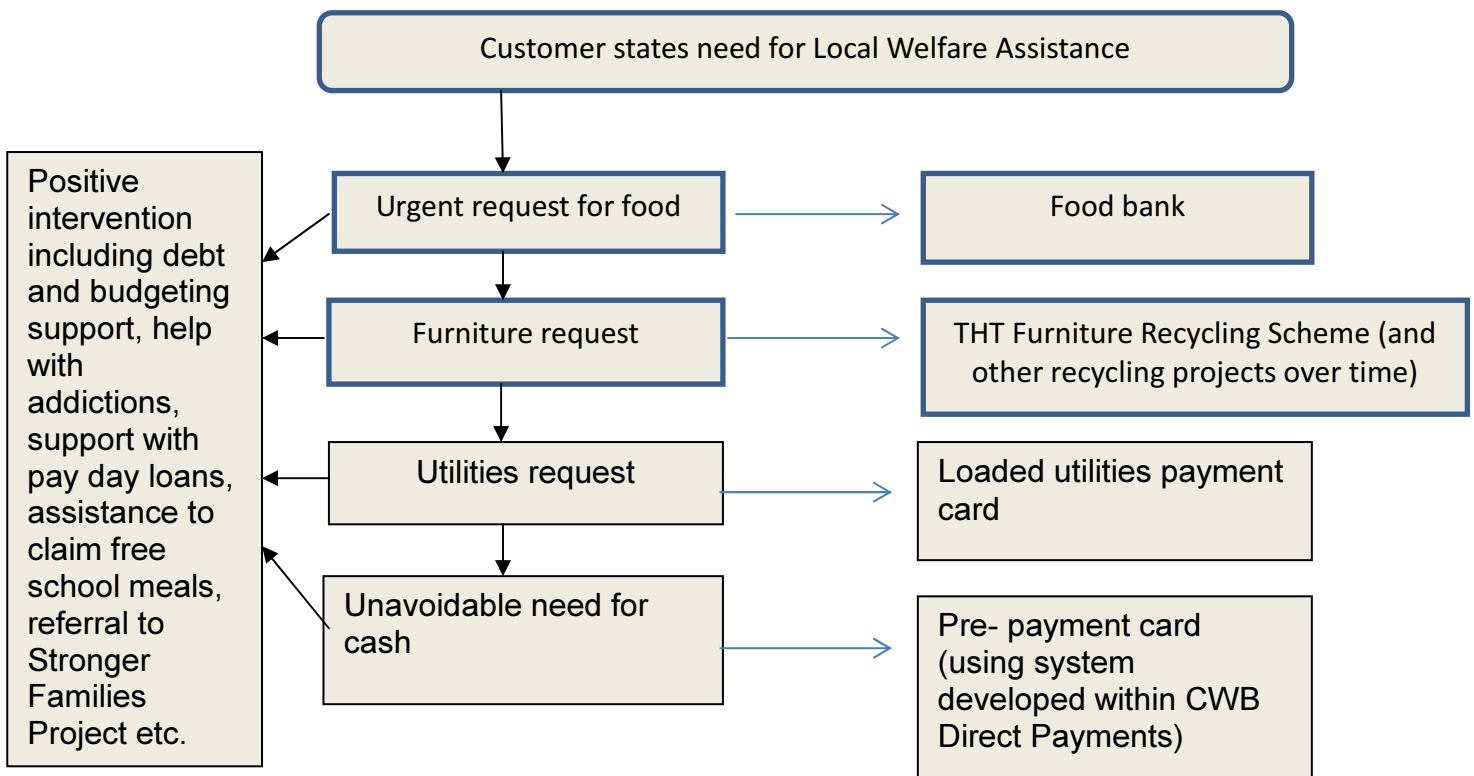
## 2: Trigger Events and Pathways

Trigger events include:

- Money lost, stolen or spent, leaving household unable to purchase essentials such as food
- Household emergency such as a fire, leaving household without essentials such as food and furniture
- Key household equipment such as fridge or cooker requiring replacement
- Out of the ordinary travelling expense such as need to attend a funeral of close family member and no money available to pay for this.
- Leaving residential care and requiring furniture to establish home in the community.

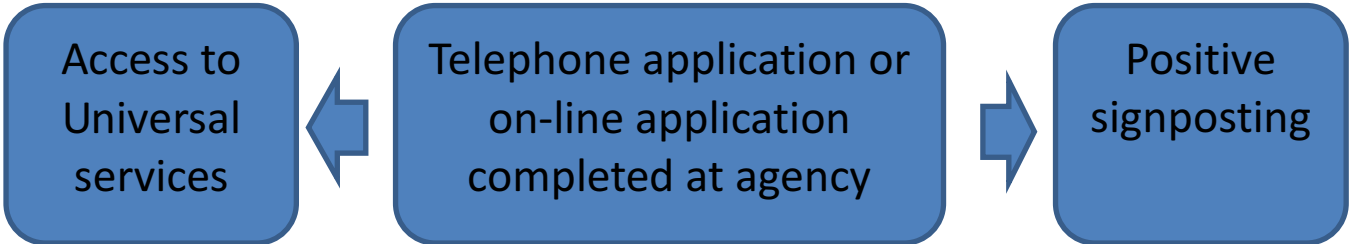
Please note these are only examples of trigger events. It may be more helpful to think about the actual need that a range of different emergency trigger events create—mainly for food, furniture, white goods, warmth and small amounts of cash

Trafford’s model will allow a flexible and individualised response based on an evaluation of actual need, as opposed to current prescriptive and inflexible model based on the completion of a 36 page application form via centralised call centre.



LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE MODEL

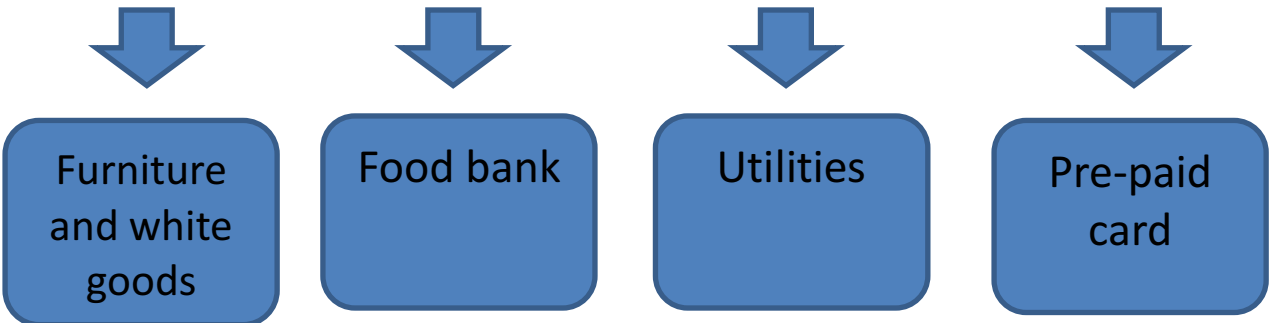
TRIAGE



ASSESSMENT AND DECISION



AWARDS



### **3: Key Differences between Current and Proposed System**

#### **Current Model – Social Fund**

- Operated by Department of Work and Pensions
- Mixture of loans and grants
- Centralised scheme operated via call centre
- Long delays of up to 14 weeks to process application and make award
- Cash payments only – no root cause analysis to understand cause of financial vulnerability, no checking that the claimed issue is real or that the award is spent on the requested issue.

#### **Proposed System – Local Welfare Assistance**

- Operated by Local Authority
- Mixture of direct provision of items and grants
- Local triage system based on partnership with information and advice providers, led by Citizens Advice Bureaux. The Citizen Advice Bureaux will receive additional funding to support the increase in capacity necessary.
- Quick decision making within one working day
- Based on positive intervention to meet immediate need for example provision of food and support to address underlying issue such as poor budgeting skills or addiction issues



#### 4: Analysis of previous use of the Social Fund in Trafford

Please note all of this information has been extracted from the DWP website:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/social-fund-reform/>

The information is limited by what the DWP currently record and have made available to Local Authorities. The definitions used are those of the DWP

2011/2012 (Full Year)	<b>Crisis Loan Items</b>	<b>Crisis Loan Living Expenses</b>	<b>Community Care Grants</b>
Awards & applications rounded to nearest 10			
<b>Summary</b>			
<b>Number of Applications received</b>	290	3,450	1,400
<b>Total expenditure</b>	£20,100	£152,600	£386,900
<b>Number of Awards</b>	130	2,830	710
<b>Lone Parent Status</b>			
<b>Lone Parent</b>	20%	21%	30%
<b>Not a Lone Parent</b>	65%	63%	39%
<b>Unknown</b>	15%	17%	31%
<b>Age of youngest child</b>			
<b>0-5</b>	17%	18%	26%
<b>6-8</b>	2%	3%	4%
<b>9-12</b>	2%	2%	4%
<b>13-16</b>	3%	2%	4%
<b>No children 16 or under</b>	75%	75%	61%
<b>Age of recipient</b>			
<b>Under 18</b>	0%	1%	1%
<b>18 to 24</b>	35%	34%	20%
<b>25 to 34</b>	20%	29%	24%

<b>35 to 44</b>	19%	19%	19%
<b>45 to 54</b>	20%	14%	21%
<b>55 to 64</b>	5%	3%	9%
<b>65 to 69</b>	2%	0%	2%
<b>70 to 79</b>	1%	0%	3%
<b>80 to 89</b>	0%	0%	1%
<b>90 and over</b>	0%	0%	0%
<b>Unknown</b>	0%	0%	0%
<b>Household type</b>			
<b>Couple</b>	7%	7%	11%
<b>Single Female</b>	36%	38%	55%
<b>Single Male</b>	57%	55%	34%
<i>Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding</i>			

**Number and type of Community Care Grant applications by local authority between April 11 and September 2011**

<b>Total Community Care Grant Spend</b>	£ 167,700	This is only for 6 months period	
<b>Number of Community Care Applications</b>	700		
<b>Applications by Demand</b>			
Moving out of residential/institutional accommodation	40		
Helping people to stay in the community	180		
Families under exceptional pressure	180		
Prisoners/offenders on temporary release	10		
Planned resettlement	30		

Travel expenses	20		
Directions not satisfied or travel expenses refused on budgetary grounds	240		
<b>Number of Legitimate Demand Applications</b>	460		
<b>Total Number of Awards</b>	370		
<b>Awards by theme</b>	Number	Spend	
Moving out of residential/institutional accommodation	40	£ 8,910	
Helping people to stay in the community	140	£ 63,240	
Families under exceptional pressure	150	£ 79,260	
Prisoners/offenders on temporary release	Under 10	£ 60	
Planned resettlement	20	£ 12,670	
Travel expenses	20	£ 2,330	
<b>Crisis Loans</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Awards</b>	<b>Spend</b>
Leaving care and not entitled to benefit	10	10	£ 200
Leaving care - rent in advance	Less than 10	-	£100
Disaster e.g. fire, flood, explosion, chemical leaks etc.	20	10	£ 700
Emergency travelling expenses	Less than 10	-	£ 100
Lost or stolen money/giro	450	340	£21,300
<b>Alignment (management of movement from one benefit to another)</b>	1,340	1,230	£75,600
<b>Capital not realisable (entitlement to some benefits subject to capital held. Some people may not be able to access this capital e.g. joint account frozen due to divorce, money in probate etc.)</b>	290	250	£15,000
Reconnection of fuel supply	Less than 10	-	£100
Homelessness - securing accommodation	10	10	£1,500

Benefit spent - living expenses required	990	840	£ 41,800
JSA disallowance imposed on customer	160	60	£10,200
Item needs replacement	30	20	£ 2,200
Total ( <i>Numbers may not sum due to rounding</i> )	3,300	2,770	£ 168,800

## Funding

DWP funding 2011/12 £559,600

Trafford Council funding 13/14 £464,142 (plus £98,077 administrative grant)

The difference in funding will be managed through a range of mechanisms:

- A number of functions remain the responsibility of DWP such as alignment (payment of cash sum while people change from benefit to benefit or their employment status changes) In 2011/12 this accounted for £75,600 of the DWP budget
- Trafford's model ensures maximum value for money. At present there is no effective checking mechanism e.g. if person claims they have experienced a fire there is not a check with the local Fire and Rescue Service to confirm this actually occurred. Similarly no check is made that the money awarded is spent on the item claimed for. As we will offer direct provision of food and furniture as our default position this will manage the current potential misuse of the social fund.
- At present there is no positive intervention to deal with the root cause of the issue such as poor budgeting skills or under claiming of additional benefits such as free school meals. The Trafford model will reduce people's repeat use of Local Welfare Assistance as opposed to the Social Fund.
- Use of greater purchasing power and good quality recycled furniture. At present people are given the cash equivalent of what it would cost them as an individual to purchase for example a new bed. Under Trafford's Local Welfare Assistance Model we will be using recycled furniture where appropriate at a greatly reduced cost or will use Trafford Housing Trust's bulk buying power if people require new items, again ensuring the money goes a lot further.

## **5: Member Briefings**

The need to brief local Members in a timely way to enable them to assist and signpost their constituents effectively is fully acknowledged and will be built into the communication plan.

## Appendix 3 – Eligibility Criteria

### Local Welfare Assistance Criteria

#### Underpinning definition

To provide basic assistance with:

- One off costs resulting from an emergency
- Establishing or maintaining living in the community
- Meeting travel costs as a result of exceptional circumstances

#### Conditions

- Awards will not be made for the same furniture item within a 12 month period
- Food awards will be based on family size and date that customer will next receive any money.
- No more than 2 crisis awards will be made within a 12 month period

#### Eligibility criteria

Subject	Criteria and comments
Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Must live in Trafford unless the customer is EXPECTED to live in Trafford in the next 6 weeks and can provide evidence of this from an agency.</b></li> <li>• <b>Must have UK residency</b></li> <li>• <b>Local Connection criteria applies.</b></li> </ul>
Age	<b>16 years and over</b>
Income	<p><b>In the case of all LWA claims there must be no accessible capital and funds</b></p> <p><b>1. Claims for furniture</b></p> <p>Is customer on a passported benefit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If YES then an Income &amp; Expenditure Assessment is not required.</li> <li>• If NO then an Income &amp; Expenditure Assessment is required.</li> </ul> <p><i>The Income &amp; Expenditure form currently used for Discretionary Housing Payments will be adopted for LWA claims.</i></p> <p><b>2. Applications for food/travel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the case of a 1<sup>st</sup> crisis application for food/travel there will be no requirement for an income and expenditure form to be completed due to the urgency of the situation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of reason for travel will not be required where the need is for travel costs up to £10.00</li> <li>• Proof of reason for travel will be required where the cost of travel exceeds £10.00</li> </ul> <p>In the case of a second crisis application for food/travel:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">A) If the customer is in receipt of a passported benefit or alternative benefit (to be defined) there is no requirement to complete an Income &amp; Expenditure form.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">B) If the customer is not on an approved benefit there will be a requirement to complete an Income &amp; Expenditure form.</p> <p><b>3. Applications for fuel</b></p> <p>Fuel applications will be considered from householders only.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">A) If the customer is in receipt of a passported benefit or alternative benefit (to be defined) there is no requirement to complete an Income &amp; Expenditure form.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">B) If the customer is not on an approved benefit there will be a requirement to complete an Income &amp; Expenditure form.</p>
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### Local Connection criteria

(1)A person has a local connection with the district of a local housing authority if they have a connection with it—(a)because they are, or in the past were, normally resident there, and that residence is or was of their own choice, (b)because they are employed there, (c)because of family associations, or (d)because of special circumstances.

(2)A person is not employed in a district if they are serving in the regular armed forces of the Crown.

(3)Residence in a district is not of a person’s own choice if—

(a)They become resident there because they, or a person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them, is serving in the regular armed forces of the Crown, or

(b)They or a person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them, become resident there because they are is detained under the authority of an Act of Parliament.

(4)In subsections (2) and (3) “regular armed forces of the Crown” means the Royal Navy, the regular forces as defined by section 225 of the **M1**Army Act 1955 **F1**or the regular air force as defined by section 223 of the Air Force Act 1955].

(5)The Secretary of State may by order specify other circumstances in which—

(a)a person is not to be treated as employed in a district, or

(b) Residence in a district is not to be treated as of a person's own choice.

It should be noted that Local Connection provision is not usually applied in cases of domestic violence

## **Internal Guidance for decision makers**

### **Guiding Principles**

Discretionary Payment Officers will consider all the circumstances of each case and pay particular attention to:

- The nature, extent and urgency of the need
- The existence of resources which could meet the need
- Whether any other person could wholly or partly meet the need

Circumstances which may affect priority include:

- Mental or physical disability and illness and general frailty
- Physical or social abuse or neglect
- A long period of residential or institutional care or sleeping rough
- Unstable family circumstances
- Behavioural problems, e.g. because of drug or alcohol misuse
- Risk of carer breakdown

Examples where higher priority should be given:

- An award would significantly reduce the risk of someone going into care
- An award would immediately alleviate exceptional pressure in a substantial or noticeable way
- The lack of an item would seriously undermine someone becoming established in the community



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE - TRAFFORD COUNCIL

A. Summary Details		
1	Title of EIA:	Trafford Assist – Local Welfare Assistance in Trafford
2	Person responsible for the assessment:	Karen McDonald, Business Change Analyst, Transformation Team
3	Contact details:	0161 912 4845
4	Section & Directorate:	Transformation Team
5	Name and roles of other officers involved in the EIA, if applicable:	Gaynor Burton, Equality and Diversity Manager Joanne Willmott, Joint Director of Operations

B. Policy or Function		
1	Is this EIA for a policy or function?	Policy <input type="radio"/> Function <input checked="" type="radio"/>
2	Is this EIA for a new or existing policy or function?	New <input checked="" type="radio"/> Existing <input type="radio"/> Change to an existing policy or function <input type="radio"/>
3	What is the main purpose of the policy/function?	To provide emergency assistance to financially vulnerable citizens.
4	Is the policy/function associated with any	Interface with wide ranging welfare reform

	other policies of the Authority?	
5	Do any written procedures exist to enable delivery of this policy/function?	Eligibility criteria, process maps, governance structure, CMT and Executive reports.
6	Are there elements of common practice not clearly defined within the written procedures? If yes, please state.	Scheme locally designed, based on local needs and best outcomes for Trafford citizens
7	Who are the main stakeholders of the policy? How are they expected to benefit?	Citizens without accessible capital and funds who have experienced an emergency or financial crisis. Benefit will be meeting individual need in terms of food, furniture, warmth or cash payment.
8	How will the policy/function (or change/improvement), be implemented?	Project Steering Group providing oversight and scrutiny of project. Assessment team in place.
9	What factors could contribute or detract from achieving these outcomes for service users?	Contribute – successful implementation of whole programme, based on positive intervention, multi- agency partnership working and excellent relationship with Department of Work and Pensions  Detract – failure to deliver project plan, insufficient budget, lack of partnership working
10	Is the responsibility for the proposed policy or function shared with another department or authority or organisation? If so, please state?	Collaborative partnership approach in relation to co design and delivery. Accountability remains with Local Authority.

<b>C. Data Collection</b>		
1	What monitoring data do you have on the number of people (from different equality groups) who are using or are potentially impacted upon by your policy/ function?	Extensive data from DWP in terms of age, gender, family status, geography and need  Formal monitoring of customer profile in terms of protected characteristics will commence on 1/4/13 when Trafford Assist commences
2	Please specify monitoring information you have available and attach relevant information*	Please see Executive report
3	If monitoring has NOT been undertaken, will it be done in the future or do you have access to relevant monitoring data?	See comments above

*\*Your monitoring information should be compared to the current available census data to see whether a proportionate number of people are taking up your service*

<b>D. Consultation &amp; Involvement</b>		
1	Are you using information from any previous consultations and/or local/national consultations, research or practical guidance that will assist you in completing this EIA?	Involved wide range of partners and stakeholders from across Trafford.
2	Please list any consultations planned, methods used and groups you plan to	No formal consultation undertaken as not required. However lead partners Citizen Advice Bureau Trafford and wide range of information

	target. (If applicable)	and advice providers have been involved in co designing and implementing new model  Full range of stakeholder briefings scheduled, Diverse Communities Board invited
3	**What barriers, if any, exist to effective consultation with these groups and how will you overcome them?	None

*\*It is important to consider all available information that could help determine whether the policy/ function could have any potential adverse impact. Please attach examples of available research and consultation reports*

**E: The Impact – Identify the potential impact of the policy/function on different equality target groups**

*The potential impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you have assessed negative potential impact for any of the target groups you will also need to assess whether that negative potential impact is high, medium or low*

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative (please specify if High, Medium or Low)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>Gender – both men and women, and transgender;</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>Women traditionally more likely to manage food provision within a family/household. Delivery of food parcels ensure nutritional needs of family are met, reduces risk engendered</b>

				<b>by cash payment</b>
Pregnant women & women on maternity leave	<b>X</b>			<b>As above</b>
Gender Reassignment			<b>X</b>	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			<b>X</b>	
<b>Race-</b> include race, nationality & ethnicity (NB: the experiences may be different for different groups)		<b>X</b>		<b>Potential risk in food parcel approach failing to meet culturally appropriate diet</b>
<b>Disability</b> – physical, sensory & mental impairments	<b>x</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Potential risk in food parcel approach failing to meet appropriate dietary requirements.</b>  <b>Furniture and food awards will be delivered to persons own home, a benefit to some Disabled people</b>
<b>Age Group</b> - specify e.g.; older, younger etc.)	<b>x</b>			<b>Furniture and food awards will be delivered to persons own home, a benefit to some older people</b>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – Heterosexual, Lesbian, Gay			<b>X</b>	

Men, Bisexual people				
<b>Religious/Faith groups</b> (specify)		x		<b>Potential risk in food parcel approach failing to meet culturally appropriate diet</b>

**As a result of completing the above what is the potential negative impact of your policy?**

**High**

**Medium**

**Low x**

<b>F. Could you minimise or remove any negative potential impact? If yes, explain how.</b>	
Race:	<p>Advice being undertaken to ensure food parcels are culturally appropriate. In individual circumstances a cash payment could be made to meet specific requirements.</p> <p>Information will be gathered through the assessment process to ensure the scheme meets individual needs.</p>
Gender, including pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership	
Disability:	<p>Advice being taken from Public Health to ensure food parcels meet dietary requirements</p> <p>Information will be gathered through the assessment process to ensure the scheme meets individual needs.</p>
Age:	
Sexual Orientation:	

Religious/Faith groups:		<p>Advice being undertaken to ensure food parcels are culturally appropriate. In individual circumstances a cash payment could be made to meet specific requirements</p> <p>Information will be gathered through the assessment process to ensure the scheme meets individual needs.</p>
Also consider the following:		
1	If there is an adverse impact, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for a particular equality group or for another legitimate reason?	Not applicable
2	Could the policy have an adverse impact on relations between different groups?	No
3	If there is no evidence that the policy <i>promotes</i> equal opportunity, could it be adapted so that it does? If yes, how?	The model is innovative and transformational and looks to deliver positive interventions and wrap around support to a vulnerable cohort of Trafford residents.

**G. EIA Action Plan**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Key activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Links to other Plans e.g.; Sustainable Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, Business Plan,</b>	<b>Progress milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
On- going monitoring of equality impact	Design of appeals and evaluation model to ensure due regard of equality considerations and impact of individual and communities in relation to protected characteristics.	By 1/4/13	Karen McDonald	Trafford Assist Project Plan		
Ensure effective continuum of support and intervention	Develop links with range of partnership boards, organisations	By 1/4/13	Karen McDonald	Trafford Assist Project Plan		



	and communities to ensure coherence of signposting and wrap around support					

Please ensure that all actions identified are included in the attached action plan and in your service plan.

Signed

Lead Officer

Date



Signed:

Service Head Joanne Willmott, Joint Director of Operations,

Date 21/2/13