

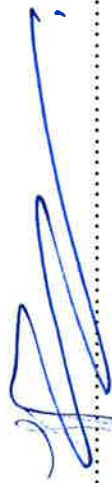
NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

I, J-P Champion, as Strong Leader, delegate the decision to the Cabinet member as shown below, to endorse the initial response sent by The Community Housing Group to Worcestershire County Council regarding the proposed county council cuts under the Future Lives programme.:

Cabinet Member – Anne Hingley

Dated: 16/12/12.

Signed: 

Leader of the Council

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Initial response to the proposed Future Lives spending cuts being made by Worcestershire County Council	To endorse the letter Community Housing Group have sent.	Community Housing Group have sought endorsement regarding their initial response from Wyre Forest District Council as the proposals affect approximately 3000 service users including 1200 tenants of CHG	12 th December 2013

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 19.12.13
 Signed: *Anne Hingley*
 Councillor: *ANNE HINGLEY*
 Cabinet Member

Yvonne Leishman – Managing Director

Community House | Stourport Road | Kidderminster | Worcestershire | DY11 7QE
Tel: 01562 733024 | Email: information@communityhg.com

Ref: YL/DH/ajm

Date: 6th December 2013

Mr. Richard Harling
Director of Adult Services and Health
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester.
WR5 2NP.

Dear Mr. Harling,

Future Lives Consultation: Proposed changes to prevention and support services for adults and young people

I am writing in relation to the proposed funding reductions in Housing Related Support, recently announced by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). The Community Housing Group are specifically concerned with the impact on Older People services, as this affects 1,200 of our customers directly. However, we are also concerned about the impact on other services and other client groups, within Wyre Forest particularly young people. Funding reductions in both these areas will have a massive and long term impact on the most vulnerable communities and the decision appears to be contrary to the government's recent announcements on the preventative focus of the Care Bill and extending the support to young people in care.

We fully understand the very difficult financial position WCC finds itself in. We know that savings must be identified and we wish to work with both the County and District Councils to secure these savings in a manner which creates least disruption and turmoil to the lives of the vulnerable people currently in receipt of these services. Whilst acknowledging the position of the County Council, however, the fact should not be lost, that originally Supporting People money came from Housing Benefit and related to Supported Housing. That money was given to the County Council for that express purpose and it does seem grossly unfair (perverse) that these services are being removed due to wider financial pressures and the money used elsewhere.

Cont'd



The Community Housing Group

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Company Registration No. 4682354 | Registered Housing Provider No. LL4437 | Group Chief Executive: Raymond Brookes

The full impact on our customers is still to be assessed and we are currently in the process of undertaking an assessment based on our assumptions of the likely levels/speed of service changes, having analysed the documents released by the County Council to date. Once this exercise is complete and hopefully the position is clarified during consultation we will respond in more detail. In the meantime we would like to register a number of very real concerns that we have with regard to both the decision and the way it is being proposed to be implemented.

1. You are intending to consult on the overall service and budget proposals before agreeing the detail of the proposals and therefore how people are likely to be affected. There is, as yet, no clear understanding or impact assessment of the effects on vulnerable people and on other services (including those managed by WCC/Adult Social Care or the District Council) that these funding reductions are likely to have.

We have serious concerns regarding the lack of consultation you have carried out to date particularly at a strategic level. This extends to the consultation you have indicated as a preparatory to funding changes. As an organisation which prides itself on customer consultation we feel that the level of consultation and timescales proposed will not give some service users the depth of information required to understand the implications and respond in a meaningful manner.

2. There have been no proposals, indeed it appears no consideration given, to a managed decommissioning of these services. Thousands of vulnerable people will be affected by the decision, a decision which will prevent them having access to critical services which currently help maintain their independence. There is a real need to prepare people for the changes, not least in equipping them to cope with proposals to move all assessments for services to a web-based, self service system. A move which is likely to dismay and seriously disadvantage many older people.

Time is also required to identify affordable alternative service options to try to replace some of the Supporting People, Housing Related Support Services, which are being lost. Services cannot be redesigned over-night and proper planning and thought needs to be given to ensure vulnerable people are not put at risk.

A key part of this transition will require providers to work with individuals, many of whom will find it difficult to understand the changes, to maximise their income and benefits entitlement, to identify those at risk, and those who may be eligible for statutory services.

Whilst the Group will do all it can to facilitate changes we recognise that we cannot continue to provide support where there is no income stream and services as they currently exist will have to end.

We would want to offer our support to communities and the County Council to ensure a smooth transition of services. This would enable change to happen more seamlessly and safely, ensure individuals are given the support they require and offer an opportunity to redesign service options.

You may already be aware of the work which the Company carried out last year to prepare almost a thousand tenants for the impact of changes arising from the Welfare Benefits regulations. Our work with individuals ensured people were aware of changes, able to consider the options available to them, maximise their eligibility for Benefits support and prevent the deterioration in their personal circumstances.

TCHG's contract is due to cease on 31 March 2014. This will leave 1,200 Wyre Forest Customers without help and assistance. Therefore we would like to discuss the opportunity to decommission these services appropriately by being given sufficient time to undertake the work described above.

3. In other Districts across Worcestershire, due to contracts having started later and different notice periods negotiated, Housing Related Support for Older People is likely to extend until August 2014. There is clearly an Equity issue resulting from this situation which will mean that Housing Related Support for Older People in the Wyre Forest District will cease 5 months before the services to older people in the remainder of Worcestershire. Therefore, we would ask that our contract is extended to bring it in line with the other Worcestershire Districts and this will enable us to put a proper decommissioning plan in place as noted above.

Whilst my comments above have focussed on the impact of these changes for vulnerable people, the other key benefit of a decommissioning strategy is that it also allows us to plan and manage the impact of these changes for staff employed in delivering these services. We have 94 staff whose jobs are being put at risk by the proposed changes.

Our expectation was that any reconfiguration or downsizing of services by yourselves would have been managed in consultation with providers. The loss of these jobs will be catastrophic for both the individuals and the local economy.

The Company is committed to continuing to deliver services which support the residents of Wyre Forest and wider Worcestershire through the refocusing of our services, the integration of health and care services and the development of the self funding market.

I recognise that you have commenced a formal consultation process, but would ask for an early opportunity to discuss a decommissioning strategy, due to the short timescales affecting our particular contract.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Leishman
Managing Director

- c.c. *County Councillor Marcus Hart - Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well Being*
County Councillor Elizabeth Eyre - Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families
County Councillor Sheila Blagg - Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care