

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP,  
CULTURE AND TOURISM**

**5 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Report of the Executive Director – Commissioning,  
Communities and Policy**

**URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
COMMISSIONING, COMMUNITIES AND POLICY  
WHALEY BRIDGE HARDSHIP FUND AND WHALEY BRIDGE BUSINESS  
HARDSHIP FUND**

**1. Purpose of the report**

To note the urgent decisions taken by the Executive Director of Commissioning, Communities and Policy in accordance with the Council's constitution to: establish a Hardship Fund and a public donation telephone line to support residents in financial hardship in Whaley Bridge and; a Hardship Fund to support local businesses in Whaley Bridge and New Mills.

**2. Information and Analysis**

On 1 August 2019, residents and businesses in Whaley Bridge and the New Mills area were evacuated following the partial collapse of the dam spillway at Toddbrook Reservoir. To ensure those affected by the evacuations and in financial hardship, did not suffer further financial difficulties, it was necessary for the Council to put in place support mechanisms for those at greatest risk.

Due to the urgency of the support required by both residents and local businesses, an urgent decision was sought from the Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy for permission to use the existing Derbyshire Discretionary Fund to establish a Hardship Fund for local residents and a public donation telephone line. A further urgent decision, to establish a Hardship Fund for local businesses was also sought. Together, both funds provided a package of support for those affected.

**3. Financial Considerations**

The additional costs of topping up the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund to establish the Hardship Fund and establishing the public donation telephone

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line were estimated to be no more than £100,000 and the costs of establishing the Hardship Fund for local businesses were also estimated to be no more than £100,000. The costs of both packages of support could be met from General Reserves.

### **4. Legal Considerations**

The Council's Constitution provides that "notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution Executive Directors shall have the power, after discussion, if practicable, with the Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair, to take such actions deemed to be necessary and expedient in matters requiring urgent consideration and which, because of the timescale involved, or the need to safeguard the interests of the County Council, cannot be dealt with by submission to the next meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committee".

### **5. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors have been considered – prevention of crime and disorder, human resources, equality and diversity, property, health and transport considerations.

### **6. Background Papers**

None

### **7. Key Decision            No**

### **8. Call-In**

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report?

**No**

### **9. Officer's Recommendations**

That the report be noted.

**EMMA ALEXANDER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – COMMISSIONING, COMMUNITIES  
AND POLICY**

# DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

6 August 2019

## URGENT DECISION

### Report to the Executive Director - Commissioning, Communities and Policy

#### WHALEY BRIDGE HARDSHIP FUND

##### 1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to establish a Hardship Fund and public donation telephone line to support residents of Whaley Bridge affected by evacuations and in financial hardship, as a result of recent events at Toddbrook Reservoir.

##### 2. Information and Analysis

On 1 August 2019, residents in Whaley Bridge were evacuated from their homes following the partial collapse of the dam spillway at Toddbrook Reservoir. Since that time, emergency services and public sector agencies, including the County Council have been working to secure the dam and support the local community and affected residents.

Alongside existing efforts and to support affected households experiencing financial difficulties, it is recommended that the County Council use the existing Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) to establish a Hardship Fund for Whaley Bridge residents. This would involve the creation of a fast track application process accessed via the existing Call Derbyshire DDF helpline and a one off emergency payment of up to £104 per household for those experiencing financial hardship in the affected area.

The County Council has also received offers of financial support from members of the public who wish to support those affected residents in Whaley Bridge. To support the collection of public donations, the County Council will be establishing a public donation telephone line which will be open between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. The Council is currently in discussions with Whaley Bridge Town Council about their role in distributing public donations to affected residents and the local community. The County Council will top up any donations received from the public with an additional amount equivalent to the amount of Gift Aid that would otherwise be received to a maximum of £40,000.

### **3. Financial Considerations**

The additional costs of topping up the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) to establish the Whaley Bridge Hardship Fund and provide a top up to any donations equivalent to the amount of Gift Aid received are estimated to be no more than £100,000 and can be met from General Reserves.

### **4. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, human resources, health, property and transport considerations.

### **10. Officer's Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy makes an urgent decision to:

1. Approve the use of the existing Derbyshire Discretionary Fund to establish a Hardship Fund to support residents affected by evacuations in Whaley Bridge in financial hardship through a one off emergency payment of up to £104 per household.
2. Establish a public donation telephone line to receive donations from members of the public as outlined in the report.
3. Approve proposals to top up donations received from members of the public with an additional amount equivalent to the amount of Gift Aid that would otherwise be received to a maximum of £40,000.

**Emma Alexander**  
**Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy**

**Signature:**



**Emma Alexander**

**Date:**

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

# DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

7 August 2019

## URGENT DECISION

Report to the Executive Director - Commissioning,  
Communities and Policy

### WHALEY BRIDGE BUSINESS HARDSHIP FUND

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to establish a hardship fund to support the local businesses of Whaley Bridge and New Mills affected by the financial consequences of evacuations as a result of recent events at Toddbrook Reservoir.

#### 2. Information and Analysis

On 1 August 2019, residents and businesses in the Whaley Bridge and New Mills area were evacuated following the partial collapse of the dam spillway at Toddbrook Reservoir. Since that time, emergency services and public sector agencies, including the County Council, have been working to secure the dam and support the local business community and affected residents.

Alongside the Council's current efforts to support affected households, it is recommended the County Council establishes a hardship fund to assist small and micro enterprises coping with the immediate, short term loss of income and resulting impacts on cashflow.

It is proposed this is a flexible fund of £100,000 set up around two key elements of support: emergency relief to address cashflow and business rate rebate. It is possible that over the coming weeks, additional elements of support may be required. In all cases, businesses are expected to ensure they have utilised any existing insurance policies they have in place.

#### Business Emergency Support Fund

Around £80,000 of the hardship fund has been nominally set aside to create a 'Business Emergency Support Fund' which, amongst other things, would involve the creation of a fast track application process for immediate, emergency payments of £300 per business. Eligible businesses for the immediate payment will be:

- Those located within the evacuation postcode areas and
- Are small or micro businesses (10 employees or less)

Assessment of eligibility will be based on proof of business identity and evidence of hardship through a simple application form.

It is possible there may still be a need to support some businesses beyond the initial payment and therefore businesses will be able to apply for further financial support once the emergency payment has been made. Details of the nature, level and eligibility of this support will be developed over the coming week and will be subject to due diligence in the setting up of appropriate governance arrangements. This will include maximum limits to the number of applications/ level of financial support, size of business and appeal processes as appropriate.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> August, dedicated business support advisers will be based in the Whaley Bridge multi-agency support hub for a period of time to provide direct support and advice to businesses. In addition to supporting applications for emergency relief, the business advisors will also work to assess any longer term financial impacts and support required and consider other funding streams available to those businesses

The application for immediate emergency financial relief will be made available on the Derbyshire County Council website and will be administered through the Economy and Regeneration Service, with the support of colleagues from Corporate Finance. Publicity for the emergency fund will be issued via the DCC, High Peak Borough Council and D2N2 Growth Hub websites

### Non Domestic Rate Rebate

In addition to the Business Emergency Support Fund, it is proposed the Council also allocates a nominal £20,000 from the same designated reserve (hardship fund) to support non domestic rate rebate for those affected businesses. The process for assessing eligibility and amount of rebate will be subject to detailed discussions and agreement with the High Peak Borough Council as the business rate billing authority.

As noted above, any additional aspects of financial support required as part of the hardship fund may be developed and assessed on a case by case basis.

### **3. Financial Considerations**

The £100,000 cost of the hardship fund will be met from existing reserves and will be paid to applicants in accordance with the verified details provided through the application process, the Director of Finance & ICT will determine the source of funding. It is important to note that the exact amounts of non-domestic rate rebate and level of emergency support cannot be fully estimated at this time, however, it is anticipated the allocated reserve will be sufficient for the uses outlined in the report. Any additional or unexpected costs will be subject to a Cabinet report.

#### **4. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, human resources, health, property and transport considerations.

#### **10. Officer's Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy makes an urgent decision to:

1. Approve the use of an existing reserve to create a hardship fund to support Business Emergency Support Fund and Non Domestic Rate rebate, in line with the approach set out above
2. Confirm the use of the Derbyshire County Council website as the most appropriate on-line application process.
3. Receive further reports to confirm governance processes for any additional financial support as appropriate.

**Emma Alexander**  
**Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy**

**Signature:**



**Emma Alexander**

**Date:**

**7<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

