

TO: CHAIRMEN OF LOCAL COUNCILS
IN CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER
(*via the Clerks*)

Room 51, County Hall
Chester
Cheshire
CH1 1SF

5th February 2009

Dear Chairman

Arising from the recent stakeholder consultation events introducing Cheshire West & Chester Council, to which many Local Council representatives attended, a number of organisations and Local Councils have requested greater clarity regarding the continuity of funding arrangements as we make the transition from the four current local authorities to Cheshire West & Chester Council on 1st April 2009.

I wrote personally (letter dated 26th November 2008) to all Local Councils to give an assurance that individual Local Councils would continue to receive funding where contractual and/or grant funding arrangements are in place or any less formal arrangements which resulted in a payment.

This correspondence was accompanied by a detailed request for confirmation of any existing funding arrangements (e.g. street amenity cleansing, burial grounds payments etc.) which Local Councils have with the County Council and/or the Borough/City Council. Thank you to all those that have now responded and I would like to confirm, once again, that these current contractual arrangements will be honoured for the duration of 2009/10 and have been built into our draft budget proposals for this period.

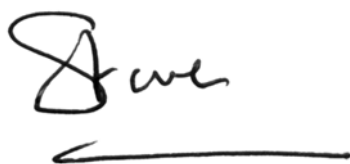
If you have not yet responded, I would encourage you to do so as a matter of urgency to ensure that we build your existing requirements into our 2009/10 budget when it is set on 26th February 2009. Therefore, please ensure that you respond as quickly as possible (and by 13th February at the latest) to Lyn Raynor, Partnership Officer (Tel: 01244 972370 or e-mail lyn.raynor@cheshire.gov.uk). For those Local Councils where these grant payments have been identified and confirmed, precise amounts are currently being validated and we will then contact you again shortly regarding the next stage.

In November, it was also announced (in a letter dated 27th November 2008 from the Cheshire West & Chester Leader, Councillor Mike Jones) that we would remove the current inconsistency across the Cheshire West & Chester area whereby Local Councils in the Chester District area received a notional payment relating to the double taxation issue.

However, I am delighted to announce that we are proposing investment into the working of the Local Area Forums in the form of delegated budgets to each Councillor to utilise, in consultation with the Forum, to invest in local schemes that will make a real difference to local communities. This investment is planned at £360,000 (subject to Council approval on 26th February) across Cheshire West & Chester (based upon £5,000 per Councillor) and represents a significant financial investment in local service delivery.

During 2009/2010, we recognise that we need to undertake a fundamental review of the payments to Local Councils and the Third Sector. This will be based upon a move towards a "commissioning" based relationship with these organisations and less reliance on grant payments. It will also seek to move towards longer-term commissioning arrangements based upon three year contracts to provide greater stability and certainty for your organisations which is, again, a clear request that we have received from you. This work will be undertaken in consultation with local partners and in direct conversation with each of the organisations currently receiving funding from the local authorities. This process will be completed by October 2009 to allow sufficient time for organisations to develop their financial plans for 2010/11 and beyond.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Steve Robinson
Chief Executive