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FROM: MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES

DATE: 08 April 2020

TO: Minister Murphy

DRAFT EXECUTIVE PAPER: FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Thank you for sight of your paper seeking agreement on the proposed allocations in relation to the COVID-19 response. I welcome the proposed allocation of £30.3m against 5 of my Department's bids in the context significant pressures across all departments. However, one of the proposed allocations for my Department is £10m for the Discretionary Support fund to deal with the economic shock brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. Unfortunately this proposal requires legislative changes to be made and it is now considered very unlikely that this funding can be spent in Quarter 1 2020-21.

I would propose that this £10m is used instead to meet the pressures in Local Councils to enable them to continue to deliver all the vital services to the community, in addition to the support they are providing as part of the overarching COVID-19 response. Local Councils are an essential delivery partner in the COVID-19 response, being the closest to the people who need our help and support. The Councils are playing key roles in receiving referrals from the COVID 19 Community Helpline on relevant non-medical matters and supporting and sustaining the Voluntary Community Organisations and grass roots infrastructure.

Apart from the proposal I've detailed above, I am content to agree to all the proposed recommendations detailed in your draft Executive paper.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Data

Deirdre Hargey MLA
Minister for Communities