

## Agenda Item 7

For publication

### **Bedford Borough Council – Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date - 05 December 2024**

**Report by - Natalie Gandy, Senior Democratic Services Officer**

**Subject - MAJOR REVIEW ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BEDFORD BOROUGH RESIDENTS – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO DATE**

After consideration of all the evidence gathered during the review, the Committee arrived at the following recommendations.

#### **The Committee recommends to the Executive of Bedford Borough Council that:**

- 1.1. That the Local Welfare Provision team be retained, as they have the expertise in helping residents requiring financial support.
- 1.2. To protect the Local Welfare Provision Service and reinstate this Service as soon as possible.
- 1.3. That Council Officers that signpost individuals for financial support have the right training, knowledge, and experience to undertake this role effectively.
- 1.4. Review the internal processes to ensure that there is a seamless one-stop-shop approach for residents in crisis, and to ensure that they are not transferred from one part of the Council to another.
- 1.5. Look at the cooking facilities available in temporary accommodation, and more specifically the availability of microwaves in Travelodges.
- 1.6. To strengthen partnership working and communication with organisations.
- 1.7. Address the gap in Adult Social Care, specifically in relation to the needs assessment and the financial assessment (it was to be noted that work on this had commenced but should be completed).

- 1.8. There was a need for named contacts across the relevant Council departments.
- 1.9. A need to digitalise processes, whilst recognising that digital exclusion needed to be tackled. This included the need for paper and phone options for residents.
- 1.10. To try and bridge the gap for those people who were not eligible for Discretionary Housing Payments but still had housing arrears. This would be via the development of an improved Discretionary Housing Payments process.
- 1.11. To review the Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Welfare Provision forms and processes, with input from stakeholders.
- 1.12. Personal Housing Plans should be rolled out further and more comprehensively.