

AUDIT & RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Subject / Title:
**DWP Implementation of Universal
Credit in Enfield – Council
Readiness Plan**

For comment

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1. Executive Summary

The DWP is taking a staged approach to rolling out Universal Credit across Enfield. The rollout will commence in November 2017 and conclude in February 2018. The staged approach starts with the postcode areas EN1, EN2 and N9 8 All other postcodes in Enfield commence rollout in February 2018.

Local residents will cease to receive housing benefit once they hit a 'trigger point', which will mean if they are a new claimant they must claim Universal Credit, or if they are an existing claimant they must transition across to Universal credit and cease to receive housing benefit.

The Council has established a programme board to consider the implementation of Universal Credit by the DWP, the cessation of the administration of Housing Benefit for a significant number of local residents and the impact of this change on residents and other Council services. This Board is chaired by James Rolfe Executive Director of Finance, Resources and Customer Services. Membership of the Board has been initially internally focused, but is now set to include representatives of the DWP and the voluntary and community sector, as rollout of Universal Credit commences.

The Board is considering the currently identified risks as part of the programme and project management approach,

The Audit and Risk Management Committee is asked to consider the attached document which sets out the risks as currently identified. With such an unprecedented change to the administration of benefits for local residents, this risk register will be regularly reviewed and adjusted as the rollout commences.

For planning purposes, the rollout is assumed to involve approximately 240 local households per month until all residents who match the DWP criteria have transferred across to Universal credit. Estimates indicate that approximately 24,000 households will be impacted over time.

2. Recommendations

To note the contents of this report.

3. Background

Universal Credit Full Service is due to commence roll out across Enfield from November 2017. The rollout is being managed by the DWP as Universal Credit is a government initiative, Enfield Council and its representatives are key stakeholders in this matter.

The Council started planning for readiness in July 17, with a cross Council engagement plan and detailed service / project planning taking shape over the summer of 2017. The Programme Board was instated in September 2017.

Governance of decision making and a strategic delivery is the primary focus of the Board, chaired by the Executive Director of Finance, Resources and Customer services.

The Board meets monthly and receives updates on the implementation plan, provides feedback and challenge and identifies actions as necessary.

The terms of reference for the Board are :

- To prepare Enfield Council for the cessation of the administration of Housing Benefit
- To oversee the roll out of the Government's Universal Credit programme.
- To determine the appropriate level of support for identified groups within the community and generic advice and information for the rest of the community.
- To ensure the impact of Universal Credit on local people is taken into account in future commissioning arrangements of the VCS and third Sector.
- Ensures the Council operates in a fair, equitable and consistent way

The projects within the Universal Credit Readiness Programme are :

- **Impact Assessment on the following priority areas**
 - Recovery of Council debts
 - Homelessness
 - Health and well being
 - Management information to measure the impacts
- **Stakeholder engagement and communications**
 - Universal credit briefings, awareness sessions and workshops
 - LA co-location at Job Centres to give support and training

- Personal Budgeting Support – CAB commissioned
- On line support information for support services (Council and Voluntary Sector) and residents

- **Service Delivery Model**
 - Customer Journey mapping to establish Signposting, scripting and advice packs for various groups to include Customer services, support services (Council and Voluntary sector) and Cllrs/MP's
 - Revised income collection and homeless prevention processes

- **ICT**
 - Delivery of changes to Housing Benefit and Council Tax support resulting from rollout Universal Credit, including cessation of implementation of housing benefit.

Risk Register

The risks associated with the roll out of Universal Credit have been identified as part of the programme culminating in a risk assessment workshop held on Monday 16th October 2017. This workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders to score the risks:

The risk register is attached and will be reviewed on a regular basis.