

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....27th November 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Welfare Reform Update including Q2 Performance

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on an update on quarter 2 monitoring of the outcomes / impact of Welfare Reform and to update Members following a review of our Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

Previous reports had detailed the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which set out Government's intention to reform the benefits & tax credits system to provide greater incentives to work. The report provided details of the second quarters monitoring using the framework agreed by Members in July 2013. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had updated the timetable for roll out of universal credit including more information as to when Local Authority's would cease to provide housing benefit and the housing function would be administered by DWP as part of Universal credit. Information on the new arrangements were detailed in the report. An update on implementation of the revised Discretionary Housing Benefit Payment Scheme implemented in April 2013 and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme were also detailed in the report with recommendations for policy in these two areas in the financial year 2014/15.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. Members note the proposed new timescales for the migration of the housing benefit functions to DWP and note that a detailed risk assessment will be completed and presented to Members once further information is available.
3. The quarter 2 performance monitoring outcomes be noted.
4. The operation and impact of the existing DHP Policy be noted and it continue in its current form.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

5. The existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme be continued following the annual review.

3. Reasons for the Decision

This report provides an update on the various welfare reforms, highlighting early indications of impact and areas of concern. Performance indicators have been developed which will help to identify impacts of welfare reform changes within the borough and provide a basis for future actions and policy development. Information on the new timescales for the migration of the housing benefit function to DWP provide members with an update on this agenda. Members are required to review and agree the DHP Policy and Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2014/15.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Thursday, 5th December 2013

Proper Officer  
29 November 2013