

People Select Committee
Review of Tees Credit Union
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Councillor Marilyn Surtees	Contact details: marilyn.surtees@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Judy Trainer	Contact details: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk
Departmental Link Officer: Margie Stewart-Piercy	Contact details: margie.stewart-piercy@stockton.gov.uk
Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2021-24 priority:</p> <p>To develop a new approach to tackling inequality in the Borough and to ensure that we deliver targeted support and help to those currently living in poverty to improve their outcomes, including around health inequalities and emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>Tees Credit Union merged with Moneywise Credit Union Ltd in September 2017. The aim of this review would be to consider the operation of the Credit Union since the merger to ensure that it is serving the needs of the people of the borough and specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates. The review is timely because it would be approximately two years after the merger and this would be a good time to ensure that the changes made to support the merger have been completed successfully.</p> <p>In December 2018 Moneywise Credit Union Ltd was appointed to operate the new Community Bank in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. The review would provide a good opportunity to consider whether any opportunities for collaboration arise from this new operation which may generate further benefits for the Moneywise customers in Stockton on Tees.</p> <p>The review would also provide an excellent opportunity to consider whether increased support and collaboration can be achieved with businesses and VCSE organisations in the borough in terms of payroll giving and collaborative working. The opportunity through the scrutiny process to illicit the views of partners and businesses would be valuable.</p> <p>The review could also consider opportunities for generating greater take up of the Moneywise services with Council employees and seek to ensure that we have a healthy and high performing credit union in the Borough which is helping to tackle financial exclusion.</p>	

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- Is the Credit Union operating well following the merger in 2017 and have all opportunities associated with the creation of the new Community Bank in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland been explored?
- What is the Credit Union business model and is it clear, robust and future proofed?
- Are there plans to expand?
- Is the Credit Union maximising the opportunities available for advertising it's products and are messages clear? How well known is the Credit Union and its benefits? Are incentives offered?
- Is the Credit Union meeting the needs of all vulnerable customers in the Borough is there anything we can do to assist with this?
- Have all opportunities for collaborative working with the Council and other agencies been explored?
- How many companies are signed up for payroll deductions? Is there a strategy for increasing this?
- How easy it is for customers to sign up and access services, including online and other methods?
- What is the management/ staffing structure/ numbers?
- How do customers pay in and access their savings?
- What is the optimum ratio between savers and borrowers?
- Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected demand for services? Have there been any positives/negatives as a result of the pandemic?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, Tees Credit Union and local employers.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months:

Approve scope and project plan – 10 January 2022

Receive evidence – 14 February 2022

14 March 2022

11 April 2022

Draft recommendations – 9 May 2022

Final report – 13 June 2022

Report to Cabinet – 14 July 2022

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

Financial Statements

Staffing Structures

<p>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</p>	<p>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p>
<p>Phil Goad, Moneywise</p>	<p>Operation of the Credit Union since the merger Is the business model clear, robust and future proofed? Have all opportunities for collaborative working been explored? Are the Credit Union clear about their customer base? Take up of services and payroll giving</p>
<p>Catalyst Citizens Advice Bureau Foodbanks Local Companies Thirteen Group</p>	<p>Opportunities for collaborative working and payroll giving Are products available appropriate? Are there areas of unmet need? How well is support advertised/ signposted?</p>
<p>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p>	
<p>Committee meetings, desk top research, mystery shopping, feedback from VCSE via Voice Forum.</p>	
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p>	
<p>Partners in the voluntary and community sector will be involved.</p>	
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	
<p>The review will consider the impact of support in preventing discrimination for those with Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics.</p>	
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p>	
<p>The review would support the policy principle of protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention, particularly those people in our communities who are subject to, or at risk of harm, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and those who are financially excluded or whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The review would also support the promotion of equality of opportunity through targeted intervention, specifically in relation to financial inclusion.</p>	
<p>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved support/ products and take-up • Improved communication and connections with businesses and VCSE organisations in the borough • Improved collaborative working 	

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	November 2021	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	14 Dec 2021	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee and receive introductory presentation	10 January 2022 and introductory presentation	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBA	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Moneywise Director Tees Credit Union Catalyst CAB Local Companies Foodbanks	14 February 2022 14 March 2022 11 April 2022	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	9 May 2022	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	17 May 2022	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	23 May 2022	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	13 June 2022	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	21 June 2022	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	14 July 2022	Cabinet / Approving Body