



### **Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)**

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#### **Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Monday, 20th January, 2014

#### **Place**

Committee Room 2 - Council House

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#### **Public Business**

1. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether to exclude the press and public for the item(s) of private business for the reasons shown in the report.

2. **Apologies**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- (a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December, 2013  
(Pages 3 - 6)

Report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services

- (b) Matters Arising

5. **Second Quarter Hospitality Statement for the Mayoralty of Councillor Gary Crookes, 2013-2014** (Pages 7 - 12)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

6. **Welfare Reform: Recommendations from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 11th December 2013** (Pages 13 - 18)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

7. **Transformation Programme Progress Report** (Pages 19 - 28)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

8. **The Customer Journey** (Pages 29 - 38)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

9. **Amendment to the Benefits Risk-Based Verification Policy** (Pages 39 - 44)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

10. **Outstanding Issues**

Report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services

11. **Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

#### **Private Business**

12. **Amendment to the Benefits Risk-Based Verification Policy** (Pages 45 - 64)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources

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Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Friday, 10 January 2014

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Su Symonds

Membership: Councillor D Gannon (Cabinet Member)

By invitation: Councillors T Sawdon (Shadow Cabinet Member), C Fletcher (Chair, Scrutiny Coordination Committee), J Clifford (Deputy Chair, Scrutiny Coordination Committee)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Su Symonds, Governance Services Officer**

**Tel: 024 7683 3069**

**Email: [su.symonds@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:su.symonds@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Monday, 2 December 2013**

Present:

Members: Councillor D Gannon (Cabinet Member)

Employees:

J Barlow, Resources Directorate  
J Bilen, Resources Directorate  
J Crawley, Resources Directorate  
T Savill, Resources Directorate  
D Skinner, Resources Directorate  
N Sutaria, Resources Directorate  
S Symonds, Resources Directorate  
L Welton, Resources Directorate  
C West, Executive Director, Resources

Apologies: Councillor T Sawdon (Shadow Cabinet Member)

## **Public Business**

### **32. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **33. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2013 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **34. Progress against the Procurement Strategy 2010 - 2015**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which was a summary of progress against the strategy with recommendations for further development of the strategy that had been approved by the Cabinet Member at his meeting in June 2010. The same strategy had also been adopted by Solihull and Warwickshire Councils with a view to working as a shared procurement service with the resultant benefits of reduction in duplication of effort, economies of scale and increased purchasing power. Cabinet Member also received a briefing note from Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1), which had considered the report at its meeting on 25 November 2015. There were no additional recommendations from the Board.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting the Cabinet Member:**

- (1) Considered the comments from Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board**
- (2) Endorsed the progress against the procurement strategy.**

35. **Holiday Purchase Scheme**

Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which gave information relating to the potential introduction of a holiday purchase scheme, through which employees could purchase up to a defined number of additional days leave dependent upon service delivery requirements.

A Holiday Purchase Scheme allowed employees to buy additional annual leave and pay for it through deductions from salary over the course of the annual leave year. This made the purchase of additional annual leave more affordable from the employee's perspective.

The Holiday Purchase Scheme would be opened up to employees on 1 February 2014 for a four week period to enable them to purchase additional annual leave for the 2014/15 leave year

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member approved the introduction of a holiday purchase scheme as set out within the report in order for the organisation to trial the holiday purchase scheme in 2014/15. A review of the scheme would take place in January 2015.**

36. **First Quarter Hospitality Budget report for Lord Mayor (Crookes) 2013/14**

The Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which was the first hospitality report for the mayoral year of Councillor Gary Crookes. It updated the Cabinet Member on how the budget had been spent during the first quarter of the mayoral year 2013/14 and estimated expenditure for the second quarter. The annual hospitality budget for the mayoral year was £65,596.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member endorsed the contents of the report which described how the hospitality budget had been spent on an event by event basis.**

37. **6 month (April - September 2013) Cumulative Sickness Absence 2013/2014**

Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which contained the cumulative sickness absence figures for the Council and individual directorates.

Annual and quarterly information was based on full time equivalent (FTE) average days lost per person against the FTE average days per person available to work. This was the method previously required by the Audit Commission for annual Best Value performance indicator reporting. The City Council continued to use this method to ensure consistency with previously published data.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member received the report providing sickness absence data for the six-month period of April-September 2013 and endorsed the actions taken to monitor and manage sickness.**

**38. Agency Workers and Interim Managers - Performance Management Report Q2 (1 July to 30 September 2013).**

Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which contained performance information on the use of agency workers procured through the Master Vendor Contract for quarter two period 1 July to 30 September 2013 and compared quarter one 2013/14 with quarter two 2013/14 expenditure. It also detailed the interim manager spends for the same period.

The Master Vendor contract required all agency workers to be ordered through Reed Recruitment and came into force on 2 May 2011. Reed would supply all suitable agency workers through their own agency or through a second tier arrangement with other agencies on behalf of the Council using rates of pay based on an agreed pay policy and a negotiated mark-up rate with Reed. The information supplied by Reed on the agency spends gave detailed information on agency worker usage and spends.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member**

- (1) Approved monitoring processes to continue for both agency workers and interim managers**
- (2) Endorsed compliance with the corporate policy on the recruitment of temporary agency workers through the Master Vendor, Reed Recruitment, and interim managers through the Preferred Suppliers list**
- (3) Instructed officers to continue to work towards reducing expenditure on the use of agency workers**
- (4) Approved that future orders were not accepted if no reason was given for the need for the agency worker.**

**39. Performance within the Revenues Service for the period April 2013 - September 2013**

Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which updated on performance and developments within the revenues service during the period April 2013 to September. The revenues service was responsible for the collection of more than £111 million of Council Tax from 136,000 domestic properties, more than £120 million of non-domestic rates from 8,000 properties and more than £90 million of corporate income. The service was forecasting to collect 96.0 per cent of Council Tax and 98.5 per cent of Business Rates in 2013/14. The service had reduced council tax arrears by 21 per cent between April and September.

The service has also expected the level of corporate debt outstanding for more than six months to reduce to below the £0.8 million operational target by the end of March 2014.

Compared with the first six months of 2012/13, the Council had collected an additional £2.4 million of council tax and an additional £2.3 million of business rates.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member**

- (1) Endorsed the performance of the revenues service for the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013**
- (2) Agreed to receive a further report at the first meeting of the 2014/15 municipal calendar year to provide an update for the period April 2013 to March 2014**

**40. Performance within the Benefits Service for the period April 2013 - September 2013**

Cabinet Member received a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which updated on performance and developments within the benefits service during the financial year 2013/14. The benefits service in Coventry administered more than £160 million (paying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support) to more than 40,000 households. The service processed the average new claim for benefit in 24.8 days and processed the average notification of a change in circumstances in 19.7 days. During the first six months of 2013-14, the Service had dealt with a number of additional pressures through the Government's significant programme of Welfare Reforms.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member**

- (1) Endorsed the performance of the benefits service for the period 1 April to 30 September 2013**
- (2) Agreed to receive a further report at the first meeting of the 2014/15 municipal calendar to provide an update for the financial year 2013-14.**

**41. Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

**42. Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.50 pm)



20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources), Councillor Gannon

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director, Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Second Quarter Hospitality Statement for the Mayoralty of Councillor Gary Crookes, 2013-2014

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**Is this a key decision?**

No. Although the issue concerns all Wards in the City, the impact is not expected to be significant and is therefore not considered to be a key decision.

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**Executive Summary:**

This is the second Hospitality report for the Mayoral Year of Councillor Gary Crookes. It updates the Cabinet Member on how the budget has been spent during the second quarter of the Mayoral Year 2013-2014 and estimated expenditure for the third quarter.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member is recommended to consider the contents of the report which describes how the hospitality budget has been spent on an event-by-event basis and to make any appropriate recommendations.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 sets out actual expenditure for events for the second quarter from the 16<sup>th</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

Appendix 2 sets out estimated expenditure for the third quarter from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

**Other useful background papers:**

None.

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No



**Report title:****Second Quarter Hospitality Statement for the Mayoralty of Councillor Gary Crookes 2013-2014****1. Context (or background)**

1.1 The annual Hospitality budget for the Mayoral Year is £65,596.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The Cabinet Member is recommended to note the contents of the report which describes how the hospitality budget has been spent.

2.2 The amount of £13,651.37 was spent at the end of Quarter 2. Appendix 1 sets out a detailed breakdown of how this sum has been spent on an event-by-event basis. This means that 21% of the original Hospitality budget has been spent, which compares with an average of 23% for the same period for the previous three years and 57% of the budget so far.

2.3 Appendix 2 sets out estimated expenditure for the Quarter 3 – from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 The Lord Mayor's hospitality budget is monitored on an event-by-event basis by the Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Mayoralty and is reported on each quarter.

3.2 The Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal is also monitored on a quarterly basis. The Heart of England Community Foundation is acting as the umbrella organisation once again for the appeal. The balance as at 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013 stood at £2,760.

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Preparations are already in hand for the events planned as outlined in Appendix 2.

**5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources****5.1 Financial implications**

The hospitality report is presented to the Cabinet Member and is expected to stay within the approved budget. Any underspend at year end will be returned to corporate reserves.

**5.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**6. Other implications**

None

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The Lord Mayor's Hospitality Budget is spent to reflect the Lord Mayor's Mission Statement as outlined in the Council's Constitution which aligns itself to the Council's core aims and objectives.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

No significant risks are associated with the budget management. Health and Safety issues are considered for all events with the more significant events eg Annual Meeting of the Council, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade being monitored by the Council's Safety Events Group.

### 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

No impact, the events are managed by the Lord Mayor's office.

### 6.4 Equalities / EIA

An Equality Impact Assessment for the Lord Mayor's Office was last undertaken in February 2012 to ensure the Mayorality promotes equality across the city and the recommendations in this report do not constitute a change in service or policy.

### 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

### 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

#### Report author(s):

**Name and job title:** Jane Barlow, Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Mayorality

**Directorate:** Resources

**Tel and email contact:** 024 7683 3047      jane.barlow@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Directorate or organisation</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Jane Worwood	Accounting Technician	Resources - Finance	16.12.13	18.12.13
Su Symonds	Governance Services Officer	Resources - Democratic	19.12.13	20.12.13
<b>Names of approvers: (officers and members)</b>				
Chris West	Executive Director	Resources	19.12.13	18.12.13
Democratic: Christine Forde	Assistant Director (Legal & Democratic)	Resources	19.12.13	06.01.14
Finance: Aimee Proctor	Lead Accountant	Resources	19.12.13	06.01.14
Legal: Carol Bradford	Legal Services	Resources	19.12.13	20.12.13
HR: Neelesh Sutaria	HR Business Partner	Resources	19.12.13	19.12.13
Members: Councillor Damian Gannon	Cabinet Member			

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[www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)

ACTUAL Costs of Functions of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: 16<sup>th</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013

<u>Date</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Number of Guests</u>	<u>Actual Cost</u>
18.08.13	Tickets for Chairman of Stratford Charity Event – Stratford Riding for the Disabled Association	2	£20.00
25.08.13	Donations towards Coventry Festival of Motoring 2013	-	£1,563.79
29.08.13	Sikh Union Launch of Water Aid Appeal	100	£1,337.21
10.09.13	Refreshments for Good Citizen Recipient prior to Full Council	6	£27.60
11.09.13	Civic Lunch with Delegation from Jinan, China	30	£651.19
21.09.13	Visit of Freeman from Northampton	20	£40.00
03.10.13	Refreshments during preparation meeting for Civic Visit to Jinan	6	£25.50
03.10.13	Tickets for Chairman of Lichfield DC charity event	2	£36.40
09.10.13	Dinner with visitors from Kiel for presentation of Lamppost	8	£325.00
16.10.13	Lunch with Lord Mayor for the Day Children as part of Local Democracy Week	10	£22.44
16.10.13	Lunch with Managers from Shanghai studying at University of Warwick	12	£236.00
19.10.13	30th Anniversary Global Care Celebration	70	£401.30
21.10.13	Civic Gift to mark the 30 <sup>th</sup> anniversary to the twinning links	-	£100.00
22.10.13	Refreshments for Good Citizen Recipient prior to Full Council	6	£29.05
25.10.13	Tickets for ABF The Soldiers' Charity Supper	2	£60.00
29.10.13	Lunch with Professor Kiselev from Volgograd State University	3	£26.85
06.11.13	Annual Peace Lecture	80	£582.71
10.11.13	Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade	180	£3,536.95
14.11.13	Dinner of Commemoration to mark the 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lord Mayoralty	120	£4,629.38
	<b>Refreshments, wines and spirits for Quarter 2</b> <i>(Currently Unavailable)</i>		£0.00
	<b>Actual Costs Previously Reported at Quarter 1</b>		£14,270.42
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£37,679.71</b>

ESTIMATED Costs of Functions for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014

<u>Date</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Number of Guests</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
19.11.13	Lord Mayor's Cadet Presentation Evening	21	£175.00
20.11.13	Civic Reception for International Students studying at University of Warwick	130	£1,000.00
22.11.13	Tickets for Chairman of Warwick DC Charity Wine Tasting Experience	2	£35.00
28.11.13	Contribution towards cost of Former GEC / Marconi Festive Dinner	-	£600.00
29.11.13	Tickets for Mayor of Northampton Charity Gala Dinner	2	£60.00
03.12.13	Refreshments for Good Citizen Recipient prior to Full Council	6	£25.00
04.12.13	Civic Reception for Local Residents and Community Associations	60	£300.00
05.12.13	Heart of England Christmas Carol Concert Tickets	2	£40.00
08.12.13	Tickets for Mayor of Solihull's Charity Day	2	£40.00
09.12.13	Festive refreshments at Coventry Magistrates Court Bench Photograph	150	£750.00
10.12.13	Book Launch of 'The Story of Coventry' written by Peter Walters	30	£250.00
13.12.13	Refreshments at Lord Mayor's Charity Christmas Gift Fair	-	£200.00
13.12.13	Tickets for Mayor of Stratford's Christmas Celebration	2	£20.00
14.12.13.	Tickets for Chairman of Warwick DC Christmas Concert	2	£20.00
20.12.13	Lord Mayor's Festive Drinks	-	£50.00
11.01.14	Coventry Award of Merit Presentation Ceremony	100	£7,700.00
14.01.14	Refreshments for Good Citizen Recipient prior to Full Council	6	£25.00
19.01.14	Mayor of Solihull's Fundraising Event	2	£45.00
27.01.14	Lunch prior to Holocaust Memorial Day	40	£500.00
28.01.14	Presentation of Olympic Torch from Premier Sheet Metal	30	£500.00
31.01.14	Special Freeman's Court for Rolls Royce Apprentices	130	£2,500.00
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>£14,835.00</b>
	<b>Costs Previously Reported at Quarter 2</b>		<b>£37,679.71</b>
	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE at QUARTER 3</b>		<b>£42,751.29</b>



**Public report**  
Cabinet Member

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**Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)**

**20 January 2014**

**Name of Scrutiny Chair:**

Councillor Fletcher - Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director, Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

N/A

**Title:**

Welfare Reform: Recommendations from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting dedicated the whole of its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December to considering issues relating to the government's Welfare Reform agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to review:

- the latest information on the implications of the Welfare Reform changes on local people, communities and the city;
- the way services and support to local people are being co-ordinated in the city; and
- the impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities.

In addition to agreeing a number of areas which it wanted to pursue further at future meetings, the Committee also made two recommendations for the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) which are set out below.

**Recommendations:**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) seeks to:

1. Continue to pursue a joined up approach in relation to Welfare Reform and that voluntary organisations are involved as appropriate in the developing work on a single point of access.
2. Protect funding to those organisations providing advice and dealing with transitional processes in relation to Welfare Reform.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Other useful background papers:**

Papers considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013:

Welfare Reform Briefing Note:

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s14228/documents/s14228/Welfare%20Reform.pdf>

Appendix 1: The Impact of Welfare Reform on Coventry - September 2013

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s14229/documents/s14229/Welfare%20Reform%20-%20Appendix.pdf>

Appendix 2: Welfare Reform presentation

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s14230/Welfare%20Reform%20Presentation%20PDF.pdf>

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

Yes - Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:**

Welfare Reform: Recommendations from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting dedicated the whole of its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December to considering issues relating to the government's Welfare Reform agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to review:
- the latest information on the implications of the Welfare Reform changes on local people, communities and the city;
  - the way services and support to local people are being co-ordinated in the city; and
  - the impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities.
- 1.2 In addition to identifying a number of issues that it wanted to review further, the Committee also made recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) supporting the work being carried out to join up approaches across the authority and to involve the third sector in work on a single point of access as well as seeking to protect funding to those organisations providing advice and dealing with transitional processes in relation to Welfare Reform.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 The Committee gave detailed consideration to a range of issues relating to the implementation and impacts of the Welfare Reform agenda and in addition to contributions from council officers also heard from:
- Simon Brooke: Head of Income Management, West Midlands Housing Group and Chair of the Coventry Partnership's Working Together on Welfare Reform Group
- Charley Gibbons: Chief Executive of Coventry Citizens' Advice Bureau and Chair of Coventry Partnership
- Sue Bent: Director Coventry Law Centre
- Martin Buxcey: District Operations Manager, Coventry & Warwickshire Department for Work and Pensions
- 2.2 The Committee reviewed the detailed analysis prepared on behalf of local partners by the Council's Corporate Research Team of the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on individuals, communities and the City and recognised the importance of this in supporting decision-making.
- 2.3 The Committee heard from partners about the joint work being done through the Coventry Partnership's Working Together on Welfare Reform Group discussing common issues, sharing knowledge and working together to tackle emerging problems. They welcomed the positive approach being taken in the city and the range of initiatives and interventions being taken.
- 2.4 The Committee also reviewed the City Council's position, particularly how the Benefits Service is dealing with a number of additional pressures through the Government's significant programme of Welfare Reforms. They welcomed the work being undertaken by a number of council services to provide support to people to help meet long, medium and short term needs, as well as help people in emergency situations and the Committee supported the development of approaches that would ensure that these were as joined up as possible, particularly at the point of access.

- 2.5 The Committee questioned officers and the partner representatives on a number of issues, including:-
- The extent to which the non-financial impacts of Welfare Reform, such as the effects on public health, are understood
  - The impact of benefits sanctions and the number of appeals lodged and won against the imposition of those sanctions. In relation to this issue, the Committee welcomed the work being undertaken by the Coventry Law Centre to understand local impacts and the fact that the Department for Work and Pensions indicated that they would be commissioning work to review data on appeals
  - Severe Disablement Benefits and the Independent Living Fund and the extent to which the impacts of reforms on disabled people are clearly understood
  - The Council's performance in relation to processing new claims for Housing Benefit/ Council Tax support and spend against the Discretionary Housing Payment fund
  - The joined up working between the partners and the benefits this had achieved
  - Payments being made to households rather than individuals and the impact on those people at risk of financial abuse that may be exacerbated by this change
- 2.6 The Committee identified two areas where it wished to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) which are the subject of this report.
- 2.7 Recommendation 1 acknowledges the positive work being undertaken within the authority to take a joined up approach across several parts of the organisation with responsibilities for elements of the welfare reform agenda and/or services that can provide support to those affected. The Committee recognised that clear access arrangements can have a significant impact on vulnerable people as well as ensuring the council is using its resources as effectively as possible. The Committee wished to support this approach and would like to see the third sector involved as appropriate in extending work on single point of access.
- 2.8 Recommendation 2 recognised the support being provided to vulnerable people affected by Welfare Reform and the pressures this is placing on those organisations providing advice and dealing with transitional processes. While recognising that the council itself is facing significant financial pressures, the Committee wished to recommend that the Cabinet Member seek to protect funding to these organisations in the Council's budget setting decisions.
- 2.9 The Committee also identified further areas relating to the Welfare Reform agenda that it wished to review in the future. These will be built into the Committee's work programme and include:
- Reviewing future work undertaken on the impact of Welfare Reform, focusing on non-financial aspects such as public health, and that the Committee will consider, at an appropriate time, the work being commissioned by the Marmot Steering Group on the wider impact of Welfare Reform.
  - Receiving a further report in due course on the impact on those people at risk of financial abuse that may be exacerbated by payments being made to households rather than individuals.
  - Supporting the in depth analysis currently being undertaken into the impact of Welfare Reform and requests that this work be extended to include the impact on disabled people.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Not applicable



#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Not applicable

#### **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

##### **5.1 Financial implications**

The report contains no specific financial implications. In relation to recommendation 2 the Council's standard practice is to consider decisions on funding external organisations as part of its Budget Setting process, including for those organisations providing advice in relation to Welfare Reform. Any decisions will therefore be made by Cabinet and full Council and this recommendation can be considered as part of the contribution to the budget consultation. The revised Discretionary Rate Relief policy included within the Pre-Budget Report includes specific protections for organisations that provide advice to the most vulnerable residents.

##### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications in relation to this report, as it forms part of the Council's constitutional process whereby the Council's Scrutiny Boards can make recommendations to Cabinet (including a Cabinet Member exercising decision making functions under section 3.2.6. of the Constitution), but such recommendations are not binding. In particular, the second recommendation relates to matters which are linked to the Council's Budget, a matter which is reserved to full Council for decision making.

#### **6. Other implications**

None

##### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The Council's work on welfare reform supports the Council's vision and objectives for jobs and growth, supporting young people and protecting vulnerable residents.

##### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Not applicable

##### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Not applicable

##### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

No Equality and Consultation Analysis has been carried out as the recommendations do not constitute a change in service or policy. Equality analysis formed a part of the work reviewed by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at its meeting.

##### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Partner organisations affected by welfare reform and addressing its impacts made a significant contribution to the reports, presentations and discussion at the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting.

### Report author(s):

#### Name and job title:

Adrian West, Head of Scrutiny

#### Directorate:

Resources

#### Tel and email contact:

024 7683 2286

[adrian@west27.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:adrian@west27.orangehome.co.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Resources	3 January 2014	6 January 2014
Su Symonds	Governance Services Officer	Resources	3 January 2014	6 January 2014
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Finance: Paul Jennings	Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)	Resources	8 January 2014	8 January 2014
Legal: Christine Goodwin	Senior Lawyer	Resources	9 January 2014	9 January 2014
Director: Chris West	Executive Director Resources	Resources	8 January 2014	9 January 2014
Members: Cllr Fletcher	Chair, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee		3 January 2014	9 January 2014
Cllr Clifford	Deputy Chair, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee		3 January 2014	10 January 2014

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## Public report

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Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) 13 January 2014

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) 20 January 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) - Councillor Gannon

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director, Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

Not applicable

**Title:**

Transformation Programme Progress Report

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

The Transformation Programme was launched in June 2009, and its progress is reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. The purpose of this report is to set out what has been achieved in 2013/14 to date, and how the Programme is contributing to the significant challenges facing the City Council.

**Recommendations:**

**Cabinet Member is recommended to:**

- a) endorse the progress that has been made in delivering specific reviews in the Transformation Programme
- b) affirm commitment to the continuation of the Programme, and its contribution to the service improvement and cost reduction challenge, and

**Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board is recommended to:**

- a) note the progress that has been made in delivering specific reviews in the Transformation Programme
- b) identify any issues for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – recently completed and Ongoing Reviews

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

Yes

Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) 13 January 2014

**Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:**

## Transformation Programme Progress Report

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Council's **abc** Programme - A Better Council for A Bolder Coventry – was launched in June 2009, and is affecting all the services the Council delivers. The Programme's overall objectives are to achieve better value for money by reducing the costs of delivering services including looking at new ways to deliver services, provide better and consistent customer services, develop and deliver real culture change across every level of the organisation, to rationalise the Council's property estate and to invest in new technologies where appropriate to support service delivery.
- 1.2 As set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy the Government's June Spending Round announcement confirmed continuing large cuts to local government resources. Therefore, the fundamental factor shaping the City Council's MTFS continues to be one of unprecedented financial pressure leading to significant reductions in spending levels that are likely to continue in the period up to 2020 and possibly beyond. The delivery of the Transformation Programme remains a key element of the Council's response to these challenges and the savings it produces will be essential to the Council continuing to achieve a balanced budget.
- 1.3 In support of these aims, the City Council's strategic approach to the demands that it faces includes:
- Continued implementation of the **abc** transformation review programme, reshaping services and making very significant savings. The emphasis of **abc** (A Bolder Coventry) will move towards challenging the things the Council needs to consider stopping doing or doing in partnership with others, in particular in high spend areas. Central to this will be the need to actively manage the demand for services to enable the Council to focus its services increasingly on the most vulnerable. This means changing the relationship between the Council and its citizens and encouraging those who are able to, to do more for themselves. This is likely to include relooking at areas that have already been reviewed as we strive to make further savings and improvements;
  - Kickstarting the Friargate business district adjacent to Coventry railway station by rationalising and relocating the Council's office estate into the first office building as an anchor to the scheme. This regeneration project is critical for delivery of jobs and business rate growth for the City, to attract new businesses, boost confidence, to increase city centre footfall, improve the prospects for the City Centre South development and to generate economic prosperity for the City. In doing so, the Council will also generate savings directly through rationalisation of its office estate. The project will provide a platform for modernising many of the ways that the Council works and be a springboard for Council members and officers to operate in far more streamlined and cost effective ways, improving services to Coventry citizens. It is one of the ways the Council is using its assets and powers to best effect locally in order to deliver the aims of the corporate plan.
- 1.4 In the light of the short-term financial challenges that face the City Council, the implementation of its existing **abc** programme is fundamental to balancing its budget up to the end of 2014/15. Target savings from approved **abc** reviews over 2013/14 to 2015/16 rise to £44m across a number of areas, most significantly in terms of scale, in the People Directorate, who will deliver a consolidated transformation programme plan

across the new Directorate by April 2014. The MTFS includes budgeted **abc** savings of £36m during 2013/14 rising to £54m in 2014/15 and £72m by 2015/16.

- 1.5 In the medium term, development of the next stage of transformation will become the next most significant factor to enable the Council to achieve its new financial targets namely the pre- Budget report gap of up to £50million by 2016/7. As part of this and given the magnitude of the savings required, **abc** will need to focus on addressing questions of whether the Council needs to continue to undertake services itself, to do so in partnership with others or to invite others to deliver them on the city's behalf.
- 1.6 Perhaps the most critical element of transformation will involve the need to change the relationship between the Council and those who use its services. This change will be critical to the achievement of savings going forward, requiring many citizens to do more for themselves such that the Council will, overwhelmingly, provide face to face and dedicated support only to those who are most vulnerable in an improved single city centre based Customer Services Centre. However this also offers the opportunity to make accessing our services more convenient for customers through use of the internet and maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of our telephone contacts.

## 2. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

As this is a progress report, there are no options for consideration. This report summarises the progress made in delivering the programme of reviews to improve Council services and reduce costs as well as future action planned. Details on each project within the programme are being separately considered by Scrutiny and by Cabinet as policy decisions are brought forward.

## 3. **Progress in undertaking abc Reviews**

- 3.1 **Appendix 1** shows the forecast and budgeted savings for recently completed and live reviews and provides an explanation for variances. Where reviews have underachieved against targets, actions are in place to ensure that these are met in future years. Over the next six months, the programme needs to focus on putting in place plans to achieve the 2014/15 and 2015/16 targets. Additionally, the Council will need to develop plans for delivering the additional savings identified in the pre-Budget report.

## 4. **On-going Management and Governance of the Programme**

- 4.1 Arrangements are in place to ensure effective programme and project governance. The programme is overseen by the Strategic Management Board supported by project boards for individual projects including the kickstart programme. Following the creation of the People, Place and Resources Directorates, revised arrangements are being developed for the monitoring and shaping of the programme at a senior management level, linking closely with the kickstart programme. This will aim to simplify project documentation and improve the way the Council links all of its activities to make changes and reduce cost.
- 4.2 Progress and key decisions are presented to Cabinet or Cabinet Members as appropriate. Progress is reported regularly to Scrutiny, who also consider reviews as they develop and at the evaluation stage. A Cabinet Member Advisory Panel is in place for the kickstart programme. Update reports are provided upon request to the Audit Committee.

4.3 A transformation programme office, which now sits within the Resources Directorate, supports the development, management and co-ordination of the **abc** and kickstart programmes and provides project management and support resource to projects. The Council intends to reduce its reliance on external advisors and grow internal transformation capability through the transformation programme office. This is supplemented by project and service support expertise from across the Council. The Council will carefully evaluate the scale and scope of external consultancy input to the programme over the coming year, focussing any external input on skills or experience that directly lead to savings and where the Council does not have the internal capability.

5. **Results of consultation undertaken**

5.1 As this is a progress report there has been no consultation undertaken.

6. **Timetable for implementing this decision**

6.1 As this is a progress report there is no decision to be implemented.

7. **Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

Financial Implications

7.1 The over-riding financial principle for the Transformation Programme is that its costs, including external fees and the internal Programme office, will be funded in the due course of time from the efficiency savings which it achieves.

7.2 One off costs to support the completed and existing **abc** reviews to date total £8.4m. The total of budgeted on going savings from these **abc** reviews (which are already factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy) are £36m during 2013/14 rising to £54m in 2014/15 and £72m by 2015/16. The 2013/2014 budget report recognised that to deliver future additional savings a degree of external support will be required and a sum of £500k for 2013/2014 rising to £1m in 2014/2015 has been included.

7.3 The progress achieved against the budgeted targets is set out in **Appendix 1**.

8. **Other Implications**

8.1 The programme of review work has, and will have implications for many or most aspects of the Council's services and activities. Business cases are drawn up for each review which addresses all relevant implications.

9. **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)?**

9.1 The Transformation Programme is crucial to the improvement of services to customers and the reduction of costs which will enable the Council to manage its medium term financial position.

10. **How is risk being managed?**

10.1 The Programme in total, and specific projects within the Programme, are subject to a number of key risks, which need to be managed. Risk management arrangements have been put in place, and are regularly monitored at project and programme level.

11. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

Full consultation will take place with employees and trades unions about any service change and redesign issues, and the Security of Employment Agreement will apply where appropriate.

12. **Equalities/EIA**

12.1 The implications will be considered on a project by project basis.

13. **Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

13.1 The methodology questions the impact of current activity and options being considered on the environment and the specific project on Sustainability and Low Carbon Economy is implementing a range of measures across the Council.

14. **Implications for partner organisations?**

14.1 The involvement of partner organisations is important to the Programme and the implications will be considered on a project by project basis.

**Report author(s):**

Lisa Commane

**Name and job title:**

Assistant Director Major Projects and Transformation

**Directorate:**

Resources

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Joy McLanaghan	Project Support Officer - Transformation	Resources	11/12/13	12/12/13



<b>Names of approvers:</b> (officers and members)				
Cllr Gannon	Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)		12/12/13	12/12/13
Chris West	Executive Director	Resources	11/12/13	12/12/13

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## Completed and Ongoing Reviews

## APPENDIX 1

Reviews Completed (Target remains Partially Unachieved)

Review	Savings Targets (£000)					Explanation of Variance
	2013/2014			2014/2015	2015/2016	
	Target	Forecast	Variance	Target	Target	
<b>A14 Commercial Waste</b>	-420	-200	-220	-420	-420	Unlikely to achieve this stretch target as £200k net income equates to an additional turnover of around £2m and the market is still extremely competitive. However, the management of the service has recently changed and endeavours are being made to identify opportunities to optimise the financial position moving forward
<b>A17 Corporate Transport</b>	-400	-300	-100	-400	-400	The target savings increased in 2012/13 from £300k to £400k. One off cost reductions and income generation initiatives have enabled the target to be delivered on a short term basis. The review still needs to identify ongoing savings to achieve the targets permanently.
<b>A47 Sustainability and Low carbon</b>	-298	-225	-73	-298	-298	2013/14 savings are slightly below target but will be offset by one off cost reductions. Full year savings achieved in full from 2014/15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-1,118</b>	<b>-725</b>	<b>-393</b>	<b>-1,118</b>	<b>-1,118</b>	

Ongoing Reviews (new reviews or targets increase from 2013/14)

Review	Savings Targets (£000)					Explanation of Variance
	2013/2014			2014/2015	2015/2016	
	Target	Forecast	Variance	Target	Target	
<b>A09 Admin and Business Support</b>	-2,600	-2,600	0	-2,600	-2,600	
<b>A13 Money Matters</b>	-2,370	-2,370	0	-3,075	-3,075	
<b>A18 Catering</b>	-1,259	-1,259	0	-1,259	-1,259	
<b>A24 i-Cov</b>	-5,000	-5,000	0	-5,000	-5,000	
<b>A31 Daycare Services</b>	-1,000	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,000	

<b>A35 Management Restructure</b>	-2,000	-2,000	0	-2,000	-2,000	
<b>A40 Commissioning Services (inc Vol Sector)</b>	-2,450	-2,450	0	-5,450	-8,450	
<b>A45 CLYP Programme</b>	-2,000	1,300	-3,300	-4,000	-5,200	The recommendations of the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) have been fully delivered. The target activity changes, however, have not been achieved. Numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) have increased since the FSR, and are showing no signs of reducing, and numbers of externally purchased fostering placements continue to be higher than target as a result of increased LAC, and a lower than planned number of internal fostering placements. There is a net overspend of £3.3m, which is a combination of non-delivery of the savings target and additional activity pressures. This is being reported through the budgetary control process. Action continues to be taken to address the financial challenges and the forecast will be reviewed and refined throughout the financial year.
<b>A46 CCTV</b>	-250	-230	-20	-250	-250	Slightly below target for 2013/14 due to delays in implementing the new structure. For 2014/15 onwards the target will be met.
<b>A50 Transforming Public Health</b>	-500	-513	13	-1,000	-1,000	
<b>A53 Cultural Trusts</b>	-392	-392	0	-665	-665	
<b>A54 Strategic Review of Community Services</b>	-3,000	-3,267	267	-8,000	-15,000	
<b>A55 Review of SEN/Disability</b>	-500	-500	0	-1,000	-1,000	
<b>A56 CLYP Statutory Functions Review</b>	-500	-500	0	-1,000	-1,500	
<b>A58 Strategic Regeneration and Business Growth</b>	0	0	0	-2,000	-3,000	
<b>A60 Strategic Asset and Property</b>	-500	-500	0	-1,000	-3,000	
<b>A61 Commercialisation/Income Maximisation</b>	-550	-870	320	-2,050	-3,050	
<b>A63 Future Shape of the Council</b>	0	0	0	-500	-500	
<b>A64 Reduce Demand for Council Services</b>	-500	0	-500	-1,000	-3,000	No robust plan in place as yet to deliver 2013/14 savings target

<b>Early Intervention Grant</b>	-2,500	-1,800	<b>-700</b>	-2,500	-2,500	The Directorate planned to deliver £1.6m in 2013/14 towards the grant reduction £2.5.m with the remainder to be managed on a one off basis from within the bottom line. There are currently plans in place to deliver a total of £2.0m in 2014/15. Delivery of the remaining will form part of the budget setting discussions and process.
<b>Headcount Reduction Strategy</b>	-500	-500	<b>0</b>	-1,000	-1,000	
<b>A65 Neighbourhood Services</b>	-700	-759	<b>59</b>	-1,000	-1,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-29,071</b>	<b>-25,210</b>	<b>-3,861</b>	<b>-47,349</b>	<b>-65,049</b>	
<b>Total Budget Reductions</b>	<b>-36,052</b>	<b>-31,798</b>	<b>-4,254</b>	<b>-54,330</b>	<b>-72,030</b>	
<u>Plus</u> Non Budgeted Savings	-2,121			-2,990	-3,225	CLYP Review has FSR savings to reduce service overspends <u>and</u> budget reductions
<b>TOTAL Target Savings</b>	<b>-38,173</b>	<b>-31,798</b>	<b>-6,375</b>	<b>-57,320</b>	<b>-75,255</b>	



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Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)  
Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)

13 January 2014  
20 January 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) – Councillor Gannon

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director, Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Customer Journey – Vision and Strategy

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**Is this a key decision?**

No. Although the matter within the Report can affect all wards in the City, it is not anticipated that the impact will be significant and it is therefore not deemed to be a key decision.

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**Executive Summary:**

In June 2013 Full Council approved the Council rationalising its operational estate to start the Friargate business district in the City, with the aim of regenerating the City, transforming the Council and delivering savings. At the heart of this programme and at the heart of the Council is the simple purpose that the Council are here to serve the needs of local people. The Council agreed as part of this programme of change to rationalise its customer facing city centre based reception points into a single Customer Services Centre (CSC) in the Council owned Broadgate House in the City Centre by 2015. This report reconfirms the vision and strategy for the way the Council delivers customer services which will underpin the changes we will make leading up to the CSC opening and beyond. The programme to deliver the changes to customer facing property, ICT and the Council's ways of working is called Customer Journey and this covers every aspect of the Council's interactions with the people of Coventry.

The way many citizens wish to interact with the Council has changed (aligned to the way they interact with their bank, airline, etc.) and the Council needs to respond to this need.

Combined with this, the significant financial pressures facing the Council mean that more than ever we need to ensure that our services are as efficient as possible. We need to focus on the practical aspects of good customer service – how people want to contact us, how we can make this simpler and more cost effective and how we can use technology better to benefit everyone. As part of our planned move to Friargate, we are investing in the way we deliver customer services to improve them, with the overall aim of regenerating the City and transforming the

services the Council provides and delivering savings so we can continue to provide services to the most vulnerable.

## **Recommendations**

### **Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) is recommended to:**

- (1) Consider the content of the report, and forward any comments or recommendations to Cabinet Member.
- (2) Identify any issues for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.

### **The Cabinet Member is recommended to:**

- (3) Consider any comments or recommendations put forward by Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board.
- (4) To endorse the Vision and Strategy for the Customer Journey programme, reaffirming the principles within the Council's existing customer services strategy.

### **List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1: Buildings directly affected by kickstart programme (some with public reception points)

Appendix 2: Customer Journey Infographic

### **Other useful background papers:**

None

### **Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

Yes – Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) – 13 January 2013

### **Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

Yes – the decision to rationalise operational property and invest in a single Customer Services Centre in Broadgate House was approved by Full Council on 25 June 2013 “Starting the Friargate Business District to Regenerate the City, Transform the Council and Deliver Savings.”

### **Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Customer Journey – Vision and Strategy**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1 In June 2013 Full Council approved the Council rationalising its operational estate to start the Friargate business district in the City, with the aim of regenerating the City, transforming the Council and delivering savings. At the heart of this programme and at the heart of the Council is the simple purpose that the Council are here to serve the needs of local people. The Council agreed as part of this programme of change to rationalise its customer facing city centre based reception points into a single Customer Services Centre (CSC) in the Council owned Broadgate House in the City Centre by 2015. This report reconfirms the vision and strategy for the way the Council delivers customer services which will underpin the changes we will make leading up to the CSC opening and beyond. The programme to deliver the changes to customer facing property, ICT and the Council's ways of working is called Customer Journey and this covers every aspect of the Council's interactions with the people of Coventry.
- 1.2 Increasingly, residents in Coventry are now able to interact with businesses such as banks and airlines 24 hours a day, at times convenient to them and from a variety of locations and devices. Often they are able to receive an immediate resolution to their query or booking. In light of these developments, the Council will respond to residents' expectations of convenient, rapid and responsive service.
- 1.3 Combined with this, the significant financial pressures facing the Council mean that more than ever we need to ensure that our services are as efficient as possible. We need to focus on the practical aspects of good customer service – how people want to contact us, how we can make this simpler and more cost effective and how we can use technology better to benefit everyone. As part of our planned move to Friargate, we are investing in the way we deliver customer services to improve them, with the overall aim of regenerating the City and transforming the services the Council provides.
- 1.4 The Council deals with a complex set of issues from cleaning the streets, maintaining street lights, cutting the grass in parks, to providing support and care to vulnerable children or adults, administering housing benefits and working with the private sector to regenerate and bring new life to the City.
- 1.5 Every day thousands of our employees have some kind of contact with our citizens. Sometimes this is face to face, sometimes it's over the phone and sometimes it's through the internet. In 2010 we established a customer services strategy through the abc programme, which set out how we will improve our services for citizens. A task and finish Scrutiny board (Customer, Communities, Finance and Workforce) helped shape the strategy and considered it on 24 March 2010. The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Neighbourhood Services formally approved the strategy on 17 June 2010.
- 1.6 The Customer Journey programme will now move forward to implement these principles which many other Councils across the country have already delivered - modernising and improving the experience that our customers have when they deal with the Council.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

#### **The vision for customer**

- 2.1 The vision for Customer Journey is "Local people and their needs are at the heart of the Customer Journey".

## **Doing nothing is not an option**

- 2.2 The changes to the Council's operational estate and the rationalisation of reception points (see Appendix 1) has already been approved as part of the June 2013 Council report. This will deliver the property changes necessary to achieve real improvements to the customer experience. The Council will need to change the way it delivers customer services as our resources decline.
- 2.3 The Council needs to make full use of modern technology and the ability and the desire of many of our residents to use this technology to improve the customer journey (for example through targeted use of our Adult Education resources to provide training to use technology) and our efficiency. This includes enabling more of our citizens to access services and information through our website on-line or through mobile devices. The Council also needs to maximise the use of its existing contact centre, so that more transactions are dealt with by the contact centre rather than with services directly with the aim that those calls are resolved more effectively at the first point of contact. This in turn will enable the Council to make best use of its diminishing resources so that we can continue to support the most vulnerable and the remaining demand for face to face contact.
- 2.4 At the moment the way we deliver customer services is not as consistent as it could be across the Council – that needs to change. We need to be clear about the standards that the Council will aim to meet, deliver those promises and learn from our mistakes so that we are continuously improving.

## **What will look different in Coventry as a result of the recommended option**

- 2.5 Customer Journey is about defining how citizens can interact with the Council in the future. There is also the opportunity to co-design services with Coventry citizens to ensure that services improve and reflect the differing expectations and capabilities of the people of Coventry. The Council will develop a detailed channel strategy that addresses how the Council will ensure services are available through the right channel for the person and the service (e.g. web, telephone, text, mail, or in person).
- 2.6 Customers will be able to report, pay and apply for many more Council services on line, making it more convenient for the customer and more cost effective for Council taxpayers. We will aim to increase the number of transactions done on line to achieve the average levels that other Councils are achieving. At the moment the Council does about 1% of its business on line, compared with an average of 50% in other Councils. We will utilise technology to actively encourage self-service and reduce demand for face to face (f2f) or telephony provision. We will work towards turning off channels by 2015, for example a reduction in reception points and fewer people paying by cash and cheque.
- 2.7 The existing contact centre needs to be developed and improved to deal with more of the phone calls that the Council receives. For the customer this will mean a more consistent service by telephone and more effective resolution of queries. To do this we will need to redesign our end to end processes.
- 2.8 For more complex queries, the Council will continue to provide f2f services where necessary. A Customer Services Centre for f2f, self-service and telephone services on floor 1 of Broadgate House will be delivered by September 2015. Floor 2 of Broadgate House will be utilised for other customer f2f contact including safeguarding conferences. The CSC will drive city centre footfall and will be the focus of f2f and self-service customer services for the Council including access to online and telephony services and paying in machines. This will make it clearer to our customers where they need to go to access f2f services and many of these are likely to be on an appointment basis.



2.9 The Council is also undertaking a Strategic Property Review under its **abc** programme. The Council will need to rationalise its suburban customer facing property locations over the coming years to deliver savings and this is likely to involve closer working with partners in the City to share accommodation too. This will be the subject of future reports as it will mean changes to the way the Council delivers services and may offer opportunities for improving the customer services in neighbourhoods. The Customer Journey programme will support the principles of property rationalisation by enabling residents to do more business with the Council on line and investing in an improved centrally located CSC for the reduced numbers of f2f contacts.

2.10 The Council will be using its transformation programme to embed the following principles for Customer Journey:

**Share** property, data, knowledge and values to get things done for customers.

**Responsible, Accountable** staff who focus on getting results through behaviours – developing a customer services culture across the Council

**Everyone Matters** in delivering a customer journey that reflects the differing aspirations and capabilities of local people freeing up Council resources to help the most vulnerable. Empowering customers to take advantage of new technology and influence service improvement.

**Simplify** the customer journey using new technology, cost effective access routes, communications and processes to enable customers to change behaviours and do more to help themselves

**Flexible and Adaptable** services that manage and reduce customer demand using customer insight. Flexing the way we provide services in response.

**Improve** services in order to meet our promises to deliver quality customer services on time. Learn from our mistakes.

2.11 We will also use our contacts with customers and partner organisations as an opportunity to promote and deliver other Council priorities and services, for example public health opportunities.

2.12 The Council is aspiring to deliver services which genuinely reflect the needs of its customers, which are designed in ways which our customers want, are accessible and delivered to the standards our customers expect. The information about our customers will be used to better understand their needs, wants, expectations, behaviours and experiences and the active use of this understanding then used to inform the design and delivery of services that also better meet customers' need. To become a truly customer-focused or customer-centric organisation, this insight needs to be embedded across all aspects of the organisation, from planning and decision-making to the delivery of front-line services.

2.13 As part of the implementation of Customer Journey, the Council will design simple measures to ensure that the success of the programme is understood and can be measured. This will include customer satisfaction, targets for reducing demand for channels and savings.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 A key part of the Customer Journey programme will include active informing, consultation with and involvement of residents in redesigning services.

- 3.2 The programme will require changes to the way that the Council works. Once the detail of these changes is designed consultation will be required with staff and Trades Unions in line with the Council's policies.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Work is already underway to design the Customer Services Centre. A high level plan for the implementation of the ICT changes, movement of transactions on line and into the contact centre will be in place by the end of January 2014. This will then be worked up in more detail. There are also a wider set of changes to improve and develop all aspects of customer services. These changes will then be implemented over the period up to the opening of the CSC in 2015 and beyond.

#### **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

##### 5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 Capital investment of £1million to achieve the refurbishment of the Customer Services Centre at Broadgate House was included in the June 2013 report to Council. The ICT capital programme includes an allocation of c£2m to put in place the necessary ICT changes to achieve the Customer Journey vision including changes to the website and infrastructure. This programme will need to be prioritised and developed and the revenue implications understood.
- 5.1.2 By routing customers through appropriate access channels and by providing more cost effective and accessible options the Council should also see a reduction in avoidable contact and an improvement in customer satisfaction levels. Efficiencies are predicated based on a shift in customer behaviour from using expensive forms of contact such as f2f and telephone (direct with service area) to more efficient forms of contact such as the web. Achieving this channel shift is highly dependent upon improved functionality and use of technology. However, once the channels are available the focus will turn to raising awareness with customers. By understanding different groups of customers it will make it possible to market services more effectively, such as being able to encourage take-up of services or different channels by particular groups. Research shows that the average cost of a face-to-face transaction is £7.90 whilst a telephone transaction is £2.40 and self-service is 32p.
- 5.1.3 The Customer Journey programme will support the delivery of savings as part of the Council's business case for the wider Friargate transformation within the June 2013 Council report. There is the potential for the programme to deliver significant savings to support the Council's medium term financial strategy and the financial challenges over the coming two to three years.

- 5.2 Legal implications  
None

#### **6. Other implications**

- 6.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

- 6.1.1 Customer Journey is an essential part of the Council's corporate plan and the priority to be Locally Committed. The programme will mean the Council using its assets more effectively and reducing operating costs. It means putting local people and their needs at the heart of the customer journey. It contributes to aim of having active citizens, strong and involved communities.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

- 6.2.1 The Customer Journey programme team and Kickstart Board are actively monitoring and managing key risks across the programme.
- 6.2.2 The main risks that are being managed include – achieving the property changes on time and on budget, ensuring the technology delivers the programme requirements to time and budget, changing behaviours of staff and customers in order to achieve channel shift, ensuring all Council services to work together to achieve the programme objectives and delivery of savings.
- 6.2.3 The risk of doing nothing is that customer services will not meet the needs of our customers into the future and will not be affordable.

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

- 6.3.1 The Council has already embarked on its programme to kickstart the regeneration of the City through the move to Friargate. Customer Journey forms part of this programme which will have a significant impact overall on the Council. Customer Journey will mean changes to the Council's customer facing property, new ICT systems and changes to the way that Council staff work with and for customers.
- 6.3.2 The Council will need to change the processes that it currently undertakes in the front office and in service areas in order to achieve the Customer Journey vision. This will mean simplifying the way we do things and designing processes from a customer point of view.

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

- 6.4.1 The Customer Journey vision and strategy has no immediate and specific adverse impact on protected groups at this stage. However, as the programme is rolled out we will work closely with customers to ensure that the programme assesses the impact of any changes on customers, in particular the need to ensure we address any barriers to self-service that some customers may have. Our access channels will be accessible in the broadest sense.

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

- 6.5.1 None

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

- 6.6.1 The Customer Journey programme will provide opportunities for joining up information provision across partner organisations on-line and sharing customer insight. There may also be the opportunity to co-locate face to face services with other partners to deliver and improve service for customers.

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## **Appendix 1: Buildings directly affected by kickstart programme (some with public reception points)**

### Current

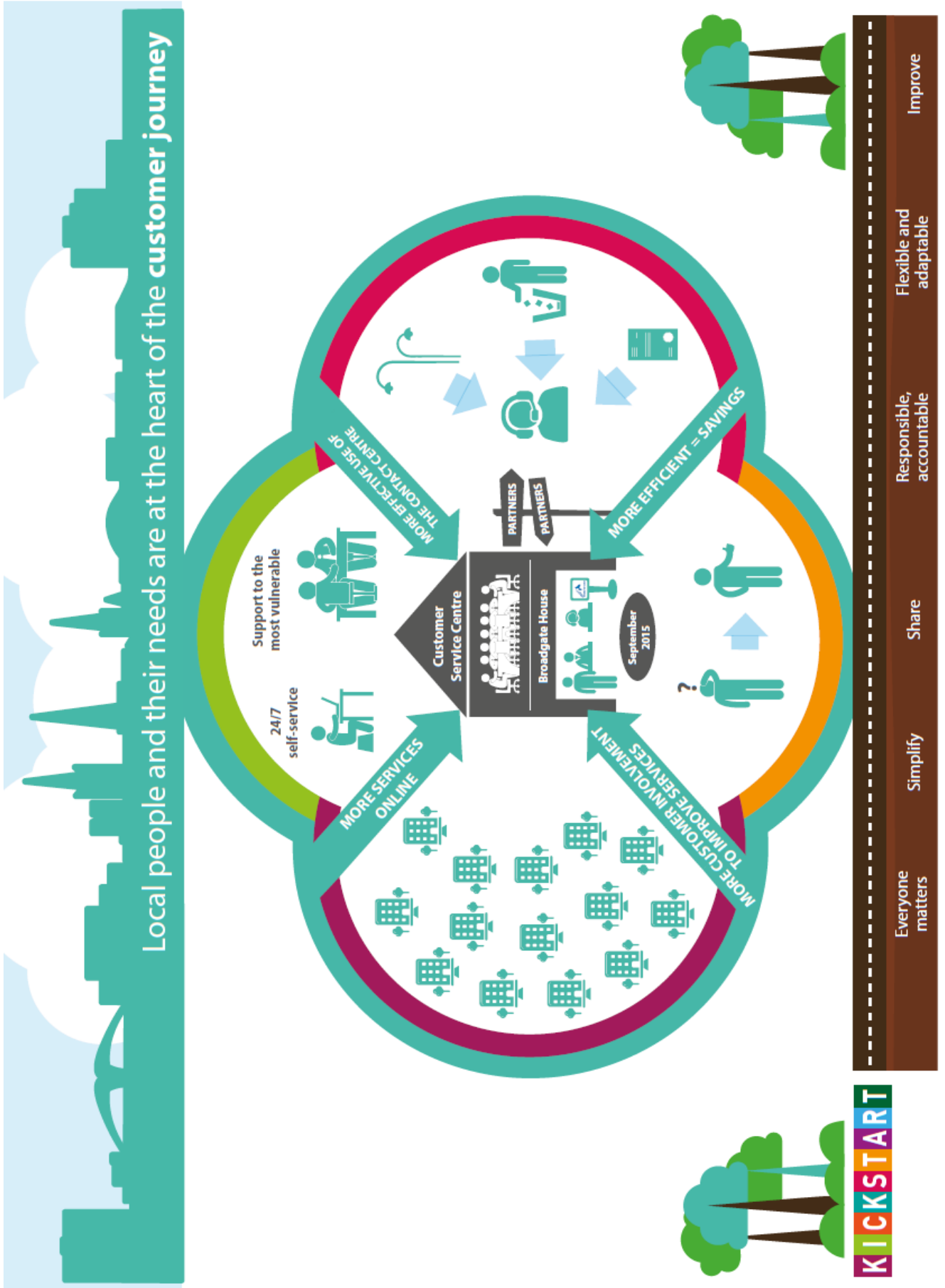
- Broadgate House (environmental health, safeguarding conferences)
- Civic Centres 1(school admissions, general enquiries) 2, 3 & 4 (planning and building control)
- Christchurch House/Spire House (Housing Benefits, housing options, Youth Offending Service)
- Harp Place (Adult Education)
- Eburne Adult Education Centre
- Elm Bank Corporate Training Centre
- Council House (general enquiries, Cashiers, Elections, Records & Land Charges, Council Tax & Business Rates)
- Coundon Family Centre
- 257 Stretton Avenue
- 312 Charter Avenue
- Moat House Neighbourhood & Leisure Centre

There are also a number of other customer facing buildings within the Council's property estate.

### Future

- Single Front Door for Customers - Customer Service Centre – Broadgate House
- A range of other buildings including 4 Suburban Offices (Charter, Coundon, Stretton & Moat House) and out of city centre operational buildings.

**Customer Journey Infographic**





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**A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended. The grounds for privacy are that it refers to the identity, financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information**

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)

20 January 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) – Councillor Gannon

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director Resources

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Amendment to the Benefits Risk-Based Verification Policy

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**Is this a key decision?**

No. Although the matter within the Report can affect all wards in the City, it is not anticipated that the impact will be significant and it is therefore not deemed to be a key decision.

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**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet Member's approval for amendments to the Council's benefits risk-based verification (RBV) policy to take effect from 1 April 2014.

When a customer makes a claim for housing and/or council tax support they are required to provide such information, in support of their claim, which is reasonably required to enable the Authority to make an accurate assessment of benefit entitlement. Such information may include a tenancy agreement, a wage slip or a bank statement. The type of supporting information required has historically been determined by the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) verification framework and the Council has had to adhere to these standards in order to satisfy external auditors as part of the annual subsidy certification process.

In March 2012 the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) approved the Council's original benefits risk-based verification policy. The policy was also approved by the Council's audit committee in April 2012 and the policy came into force on 14 May 2012.

The report recommends that the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) approve the updated risk-based verification policy.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) is recommended to approve the benefits risk-based verification policy.

**List of Appendices included:**

**Other useful background papers:**

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No



Report title: Amendment to the Benefits Risk-Based Verification Policy

## **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Coventry benefits service administers more than £150 million in housing benefit (HB) and council tax support (CTS) payments each year to more than 40,000 Coventry households.
- 1.2 The Council administers HB in accordance with relevant legislation. Historically, the standards of verification applied by Councils to HB claims have been governed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) verification framework. This prescriptive guidance detailed what types and levels of information were required in support of HB and what was Council Tax Benefit (CTB) claims. CTB was replaced by local CTS schemes in April 2013.
- 1.3 In March 2012 the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) approved the Council's original benefits risk-based verification policy. The policy was also approved by the Council's Audit Committee in April 2012 and the policy came into force on 14 May 2012.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Circular S11 confirms:
  - RBV is voluntary;
  - LAs applying RBV are required to produce an RBV policy which should detail the risk profiles, verification standards and the minimum number of claims to be checked;
  - The policy must be submitted for Members' approval and authorised by the Section 151 officer;
  - The information held in the policy should not be made public due to the sensitivity of its contents;
  - The policy must be reviewed annually but not amended in-year;
  - LAs must have a robust baseline of fraud and error against which to record the impact of RBV;
  - Reporting requirements must be detailed in the RBV policy and as a minimum LAs should report monthly on the percentage of cases in each risk category and the level of fraud and error detected in each.
- 2.2 The Council produces an annual benefit subsidy claim which is subject to certification by external auditors. Historically auditors have used the verification framework as the basis for determining whether benefit has been properly awarded. For LAs operating RBV external auditors, as part of the annual subsidy certification, check that the LA has adhered to its RBV policy.
- 2.3 This report proposes a change to the Council's RBV policy and recommends that the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) approve the amended RBV policy.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 No consultation has been undertaken.

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

The amendments to the benefits risk-based verification policy will be effective from 1 April 2014.

## **5. Comments from Executive Director Resources**

5.1 Under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 Statutory Instrument No 2011/2425 gave authorities the ability to introduce the verification scheme outlined in this report. Changes to the policy must not be made during a financial year and must receive Member approval.

## **6. Other implications**

None

### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)?**

The effective administration of HB/CTS impacts on a range of agendas and supports the Council's vision and objectives for jobs and growth, supporting young people and protecting vulnerable residents.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Risks relating to fraud/corruption and the HB subsidy threshold's impact on the general fund revenue account are managed through the corporate risk register.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no issues to consider in respect of the duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

The effective administration of HB/CTB is in the interests of a number of partner organisations, including local social landlords, and the benefits service works closely with those organisations.

#### **Report author(s):**

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