

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday 24 March 2015

TIME: 7.30 pm

VENUE: Committee Rooms 1&2
Harrow Civic Centre

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 4)

Chair: Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

Ghazanfar Ali	Richard Almond
Jeff Anderson	Kam Chana
Michael Borio	Chris Mote
Kiran Ramchandani	Paul Osborn (VC)

Representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector: Mrs J Rammelt / Reverend P Reece

Representatives of Parent Governors: Mrs A Khan/1 Vacancy

(Note: Where there is a matter relating to the Council's education functions, the "church" and parent governor representatives have attendance, speaking and voting rights. They are entitled to speak but not vote on any other matter.)

Representative of Harrow Youth Parliament

Reserve Members:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick | 1. Susan Hall |
| 2. Adam Swersky | 2. Barry Macleod-Cullinane |
| 3. Phillip O'Dell | 3. Lynda Seymour |
| 4. Antonio Weiss | 4. Stephen Wright |
| 5. Jo Dooley | |

Contact: Una Sullivan, Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1785 E-mail: una.sullivan@harrow.gov.uk

AGENDA - PART I

1. ATTENDANCE BY RESERVE MEMBERS

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Committee;
- (b) all other Members present.

3. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2015 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS *

To receive any public questions received in accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 17 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received and there be a time limit of 15 minutes.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, 19 March 2015. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

5. PETITIONS

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

6. REFERENCES FROM COUNCIL/CABINET

- (a) Petition Referred from Cabinet - Pinner Memorial Park:

Reference from Cabinet on 19 February 2015

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARE ACT IN HARROW (Pages 13 - 26)

Report of the Director, Adult Social Services

8. LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT (Pages 27 - 50)

Report of the Corporate Director, Resources

9. MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEES

For information.

- (a) Minutes of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 5 February 2015 (Pages 51 - 58)

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Which the Chairman has decided is urgent and cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

• **DATA PROTECTION ACT NOTICE**

The Council will audio record item 4 (Public Questions) and will place the audio recording on the Council's website, which will be accessible to all.

[**Note:** The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

Deadline for questions	3.00 pm on Thursday 19 March 2015
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

24 FEBRUARY 2015

Chair:	* Councillor Jerry Miles	
Councillors:	* Ghazanfar Ali * Richard Almond * Jeff Anderson * Michael Borio	* Kam Chana * Chris Mote * Paul Osborn * Kiran Ramchandani
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) Mrs J Rammelt † Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) † Mrs A Khan
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance (Councillors)	Simon Brown Pamela Fitzpatrick Graham Henson Barry Kendler	Minute 73 Minute 74 Minute 71 Minute 75

- * Denotes Member present
- † Denotes apologies received

66. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

67. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

68. Minutes

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record;
- (2) the minutes of the special meeting held on 20 January at 6.00pm be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:
minute 60, p37, paragraph 5, line 5, after "... for decision in April." insert the sentence: "Whatever was produced would go out for further consultation."
- (3) the minutes of the special meeting held on 20 January at 7.30 pm be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

minute 65, page 43, first paragraph, after "... nowhere to move to," amend the remainder of the sentence to: "and only 5% of private sector rented accommodation in Harrow is at or below the housing benefit rate, which means families are having to find the extra from somewhere else."

minute 65, p44, paragraph 9, add the following sentence:
"The Youth Parliament representative did not support it either."

69. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

70. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

71. Corporate Plan 2015/16

The Committee received a report which contained the proposed Corporate Plan for 2014-19 which set out the Council's strategic direction, vision and priorities for the next four years. It incorporated the Council's Corporate Equality Objectives

The Chair advised the Committee that the report had already been considered by the Cabinet and that the Corporate Plan would be finalised at the Council

meeting on 26 February 2015. The Committee were being asked to provide comments that would be forwarded to the Council meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Corporate Resources & Policy Development introduced the report and made the following points:

- moving to a 4 year Corporate Plan was intended to provide stability;
- the Corporate Plan set out the vision for the Council's direction, alongside the Council's ambitions;
- the summary contained the 'golden thread' of 'Making A Difference' and set out both what to do and how to do it;
- the intention to 'mainstream' the Equalities agenda had been achieved with the inclusion of the Corporate Equalities Objectives in the Corporate Plan.

A Member noted the commitment to 'engage with residents differently' and asked how the Council would move towards a new model of local government in which residents were more involved. The Portfolio Holder responded that the process had begun with the 'Take Part' consultation, and would continue as the Council considered how to improve engagement and response rates. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, added that a research project would seek to identify the best means of improving engagement and involvement.

A Member noted that £31m had been secured for regeneration in the heart of Harrow, and that a pilot scheme was in place to tackle rogue landlords. The Portfolio Holder agreed that these projects were good news. He added that the licensing scheme would be monitored for its effectiveness.

A Member queried how the success of planned outcomes would be measured as there were no targets contained in the Corporate Plan. The Portfolio Holder and Divisional Director explained that these would be contained in the corporate scorecard which would be reported to Cabinet quarterly.

A Member commented that the proposal to change the petition scheme, and reduce the threshold for the number of signatures required to trigger a debate went against the stated objective to improve engagement. In his view the petition scheme as it stood had been very successful in garnering public opinion and engagement in issues that mattered to residents and he could not understand why it was necessary to change a successful mechanism for engagement. The Portfolio Holder replied that the terms could be changed if necessary. The Member added that plans to reduce the amount of scrutiny taking place would lose yet another opportunity for engagement.

A Member queried the stated ambition of the Council, in that the Corporate Plan aimed to be 'one of the safest boroughs', when in fact statistics showed that Harrow was considered to be the safest London borough. The Divisional Director explained the statistical analysis and stressed that the ambition to

remain at the top had not changed. However, he believed that the perception and fear of crime remained high despite the facts, and work would continue to address this.

A Member asked how the Council would verify its commitment that Labour Members would work in the community. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that the commitment was to do a minimum of 50 hours over the year, and that many councillors did more.

A Member asked what measures were in place to support the commercial sector in Harrow. The Portfolio Holder responded that work was ongoing to promote apprenticeships, local procurement, and requirements for contractors to recruit locally. This would all support increased employment, which would in turn improve commercial activity. Another Member commented that it was equally important to retain what already existed in the small town centres.

A Member asked whether parks were accounted for in the Plan. The Portfolio Holder reiterated that with savings of £83m to be made, hard decisions had to be made. The Council would invest in services for the vulnerable, such as the Youth Offending Team, Adult Services, and the Under 5s but could not support every service. It was possible that regeneration and increased income could produce some mitigation, but he was also of the view that attitudes to litter had to change, with the public taking more responsibility for their actions.

In response to queries about named commitments not being explained elsewhere in the Plan, the Portfolio Holder stated that the current model of local government was not sustainable. It would be necessary to empower local communities and devolve some decision making. He agreed that in such circumstances it may well prove possible that a community could take on the responsibility to maintain a local park.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Committee's comments be considered.

RESOLVED ITEMS

72. Reference from Cabinet on 19 February 2015

Members received a reference from Cabinet in relation to a petition which requested that the Council reconsider cuts to the Parks Service in respect of Pinner Memorial Park. The reference had been received as the petition contained over 1000 signatures, which required its consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The lead petitioner attended the meeting and read the terms of the petition.

The Chair outlined the practical options for the Committee in respect of the petition, in that it could be referred to Cabinet with the Committee's comments, or referred to Council for consideration within the budget item. He observed that a referral to Cabinet would take place once the budget had

been set, and if referred to Council, the petition may get lost among others being presented. He informed the Committee that in view of this, he had spoken to the Leader already and drawn his attention to the petition. The Leader had assured the Chair that he would take the petition and residents' views into account when considering cuts to the service.

A Member commented that short notice of the matter had prevented a number of local groups attending the meeting or putting forward their views. He requested that consideration of the petition be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee. A Member pointed out that this would take place after the budget had been set and it would no longer be possible to influence the decision. In response, the Member pointed out that consultation was still taking place and that a high level of public interest had occasionally resulted in a change to proposals.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the petition be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 24 March 2015.

73. Short Quality Screening Inspection by HMI Probation Service

The Corporate Director, Children and Families, introduced the report and described the background to the current situation in respect of the performance and assessment of the Youth Offending Team and service. The results of the team's 'Core Case' inspection in 2011 had been disappointing, and following a new inspection regime, with an increase in standards expected, the recent Short Quality Inspection had also given a disappointing result. Consequently an action plan had been produced, and the report highlighted those issues already addressed, and those which remained outstanding.

While he in no way excused the results, or was complacent about the need for improvement, he believed that the team had made significant improvements and would continue to do so. Staffing issues had been addressed and he was confident that the team was well placed and equipped to deliver better performance and outcomes. A number of audit and quality assurance mechanisms had been introduced, which ensured that senior management was aware of problems and potential failures to meet targets.

The Service Manager highlighted a discrepancy that skewed performance figures, in that when a home visit was made to a young person, if the young person failed to meet or engage with staff, this was recorded as a failure to meet, even though the staff member had made the visit. A Member asked why this detail could not be added to the statistics to illustrate the variance.

A Member commented that a glossary of abbreviations would be helpful, and that the format of the report was not helpful in comparing information.

A member asked how the Committee could be confident that genuine change and improvement was underway, as similar claims had been made some years ago at a time when the service was seen to be underperforming. The Corporate Director reiterated his belief that staff and measures were now in place to provide continued improvement, but that he recognised there was a

long way to go. He accepted the findings of the SQS report, which had inspected a sample of cases, but believed that the report had in some aspects been overly critical. Feedback had been sought but not given, and comparison with other local authority inspections suggested that there had been a difference in assessment.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools & Young People assured the Committee that he received regular briefings from officers and that he continued to scrutinise and challenge the work and performance of the team.

RESOLVED: That the report, the Short Quality Screening Action Plan, and progress made since the Core Case Inspection, be noted.

74. Revenue Challenge Panel Report

The Committee received the report of the Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, which set out the observations and findings of the Revenue Challenge Panel with regard to the Council's budget setting and associated processes.

The Chair thanked all those involved in the review for their work and informed the Committee that the recommendations, if agreed, would be taken to the Cabinet meeting on 19 March.

The Panel Chair introduced the report and described the key points identified during the review, namely:

- there was a need for a longer term budget – a 3 year forecast would be more helpful;
- it would be necessary to move away from directorate based budgets towards outcome based budgets;
- the review panel had received presentations from a number of other local authorities and had been particularly impressed with Warrington.

In response to a Member's query about whether the shift would be incremental, the Panel Chair replied that the review panel had been cautious about the speed of change, and had suggested a timeframe of 100% outcome based budgets by 2020. The process would begin with next year's budget.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report of the Revenue Challenge Panel review be noted;
- (2) the recommendations included in the report be agreed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

75. Capital Challenge Panel Report

The Committee received the report of the Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, which set out the observations and findings of the Capital Expenditure Challenge Panel with regard to the Council's capital programme.

The Chair thanked all those involved in the review for their work and informed the Committee that the recommendations, if agreed, would be taken to the Cabinet meeting on 19 March.

The Panel Chair outlined the key findings of the panel, and in particular that there was no overall corporate strategy or structure to manage the capital programme; once the budget was agreed by Council there was a silo approach in taking the projects forward.

He pointed out that some under spend could arise for positive reasons, for instance when a contractor had underperformed then the full contract price might not be paid. However, it was important to have clarity in reports as to the reasons for an under spend or slippage. He highlighted one problem created by the need to scan invoices for audit purposes, which resulted in a bottleneck for payments.

The report also demonstrated the need for less bureaucracy and greater flexibility in approving expenditure, as the threshold for Council approval was inhibiting the ability to respond to changing conditions or developments. He agreed that the wording for a proposal to change the constitution in respect of this needed to be refined, but acknowledged that there had been pressure to complete the report within deadline.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report of the Capital Expenditure Challenge Panel be noted;
- (2) the recommendations included in the report be agreed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

76. Libraries Review Scope

The Committee received the report of the Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, which set out the draft scope for the Scrutiny Review of Libraries.

The Chair noted that the Council was working jointly with the London Borough of Ealing to review the current contract with Carillion Integrated Services and its performance in delivering library services across the two boroughs.

The Panel Chair stated that the aims of the review were set out in the draft scope document.

RESOLVED: That the scope for the Scrutiny Review of Libraries be agreed.

77. Minutes of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the minutes of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 November 2014 be noted;
- (2) the minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings held on 27 November 2014 and 6 January 2015 be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.48 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chair

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 24 March 2015

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARE ACT IN HARROW

Responsible Officer: [Bernie Flaherty](#)

Scrutiny Lead Member area: Councillor Jerry Miles

Exempt: No

Wards affected: Please list Ward(s).
[All](#)

Enclosures: •Appendix A: The Care Act, Key Fact Sheet

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the implementation programme in Harrow for the Care Act.

Recommendations:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- a) Note the approach taken in Harrow to the implementation of the Care Act
- b) Note the progress to date in preparing for implementation
- c) Consider the risks identified.

Section 2 – Report

The Care Act 2014 is the single biggest change to adult social care legislation in the UK since the National Assistance Act 1948. It aims to simplify a diverse range of legislation that has developed since 1948; put best practice in social care on a statutory footing; and respond to the challenge of how people plan and pay for the cost of their social care. The changes are being implemented at pace, and it is important that Harrow has appropriate arrangements in place to deliver the requirements of the Act.

In Harrow, a work programme is being led by the Director for Adult Social Services to ensure effective local implementation. In addition, officers are involved in regional and national activity around the implementation of the Care Act 2014.

Background

The Care Act received Royal assent on 14 May 2014. The draft guidance and regulations were published for consultation in June 2014, and the consultation closed on 15 August 2014. The final guidance and regulations were published 23rd October 2014.

The Care Act is being implemented in two distinct phases:

Phase One: From 1st April 2015, local authorities will have a range of new duties including:

- The rights of carers to assessments and services will be extended and put on a similar footing to those of service users.
- Local authorities will be required to offer comprehensive information, advice and advocacy services to prospective and current users of adult social care services.
- Local authorities will need to offer advice and support to people who arrange for, and pay for, their own social care services.
- There will be a duty to ensure that health and social care support is effectively co-ordinated.
- There is a new duty for Local Authorities to pick up care needs on a temporary basis should a provider be unable to continue service
- People who own their homes will be able to defer paying the cost of residential care so that their homes can be sold either after death or a time they feel ready to do so, rather than rushing sale after 12 weeks to afford their care.
- People with eligible support needs will have a statutory right to a personal budget, and this right is now extended to carers.
- Local authorities will be encouraged to integrate and work better with external partners such as local NHS bodies, police and probation services, as well as internal partners, specifically including housing, children's services and public health officers. This is to be done with the intention to provide better more personalised support for service users, to meet the objective of:

- **Preventing**
- **Reducing** and;
- **Delaying** needs.

Phase Two: From 1st April 2016, the changes to funding reforms will be implemented; the final phase of these reforms is highly dependent on the outcome of the general election.

The proposed changes under consultation include:

- Setting a limit on the total amount people will pay for their social care (£72,000 15/16). The aim of this is to enable and encourage people to plan for how they will meet the cost of their social care in later life. It is expected that more people will approach local authorities for assessments at an earlier stage as a result. There are also some additional recommendations for the treatment of working age adults
- Changing the capital limits on how much people can have in savings or assets before they have to contribute to the cost of their social care (increased from £23,250 to £118,000).
- Making Policy suggestions for the creation of an appeals mechanism for all social care decisions, that will provide an independent review of decision making processes and make recommendations to the Local Authority about the application of their policies and how they should apply them to the specifics of the case at hand.

Governance

A Care Act Implementation Board has been established to ensure effective implementation of the Care Act. This Board has representatives from all major departments and partners involved in the Care Act (Childrens, Housing, Resources, Access Harrow, Public Health, Central & North West London NHS Trust, CCG).

In many areas of work, Harrow is already well-positioned. For example, the Council already has a well-established Safeguarding Adults Board and produces a Safeguarding Adults Annual Report. Harrow is also one of the leaders in personalisation with the highest percentage of cash personal budgets in the country.

Harrow is well placed in terms of meeting the legal requirements of the Care Act as the Act aims to ratify existing good practice and personalisation objectives.

The key workstreams within the 2015 programme are:

Carers: the Care Act widens the responsibility of local authorities for carers, and increases the rights of carers to assessments and services. Harrow welcomes this recognition of the vital role that family carers play in enabling people to remain living in the community, and wants to ensure that people are properly supported in this role. Harrow currently supports 2500 carers linked to an eligible service user. The new requirements could see this increase significantly (2011 Census suggests there are 24,000 unpaid carers in Harrow).

In order to prepare for this increase demand this workstream has involved understanding how many additional carers may need assessment and services, and whether or not our current carers' offer needs to be developed and extended to provide this support. In addition this workstream is looking at the way in which carers assessments are carried out to best match the service user with these services. This workstream is currently in the process of working with the Voluntary sector to re-tender for this service outcome.

Market Shaping: The Care Act requires local authorities to shape a market of care within their area which offers choice and quality for all services users, whether self-funders or supported directly by the Council. This includes the development of a "Market Position Statement", to clearly articulate the approach the local authority is taking to ensuring the services available in the Borough are reflective of needs in the area, and to ensure the quality of service provided is of the highest standard, with competitive low prices.

Harrow as part of its implementation of Personalisation has spent the last five years developing its local market and was one of the first to publish a Market Position statement. This document was also considered by the Institute of Public care (IPC) as one of the most comprehensive, and user focussed in the country. Minor amendments have been made to make it compliant under the Care Act. This workstream is also looking at the new responsibilities for provider failure, including devising a strategy to deal with Local Authority duties if a provider should fail.

Assessment and Eligibility: Possibly the most significant change in practice under the Care Act is the replacing of four levels of eligibility under FACs criteria with one eligibility threshold, most comparable to the high/moderate level under FACs. Harrow is currently at a substantial level, which means this effectively lowers the threshold to eligibility. This workstream is working through in detail the implications of the change to the eligibility threshold, including reviewing forms used by front line staff, and reviewing how this will operate in practice.

Deferred Payments: Although Harrow already offers deferred payments, the Council needs to ensure it is able to meet a potentially increased demand for this function, owing to extended eligibility criteria for Deferred Payments under the Act, and a requirement on the Local Authority to offer them when certain criteria are present. This workstream aims to quantify expected demand for deferred payments, and ensure that the local authority is compliant with the final guidance. The report concerning Deferred Payment Agreements will be going through Cabinet in March 2015, and the Policy is currently open for a 4 week Public Consultation.

Information, advice, and advocacy: The Care Act requires Local Authorities to provide information to people on how and where to access services, and to ensure that there is adequate access to independent financial advice services, as well as provision of advocacy support. This workstream includes developing Council information and working with partners in the voluntary sector to commission high quality information & advice services. This workstream is currently in the process of working with the Voluntary sector to re-tender for this service outcome.

Transition: The Act requires Local Authorities to sufficiently plan for young people receiving services moving to adulthood. This coincides with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 to develop co-ordinated education, health and social care plans for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Safeguarding: The Care Act puts adults safeguarding on a statutory footing, and creates a Safeguarding Adults board, which mirrors the arrangements for safeguarding children's boards. The Act also widens the breadth of the adults safeguarding remit with the inclusion of self-neglect and modern slavery into the remit of Safeguarding concerns. This will lead to an increase in Safeguarding referrals and investigations and put additional pressure on the service.

In addition to the workstreams identified above, a number of enabling projects are also being progressed to support successful implementation of the Act.

These include:

Information technology: This includes developing tools to support people in finding information and managing their care and support online where they choose to do so. Harrow is currently working with the Council's web team to develop online self-assessment and signposting tools. Adults are also currently working with Oxford Computer Consultations to develop My Community ePurse to include a system of "care accounts" linked to personal budgets. This will track the amount that people are paying towards their care in order to establish when they meet the cap on the total amount they have to contribute to their care costs. The finite requirements for this are currently in draft format and open for public consultation.

Workforce development: Ensuring that staff are supported to deliver the Care Act. The programme team have delivered training to a range of staff across all directorates. This includes training around the changes in legislation and guidance, as well as new ways of working, for example information and sign-posting. This workstream has utilised the £16k training grant to facilitate bespoke training all Social Care and Access Harrow staff around the Care Act changes based on requests for specific training topics.

Communications: Making sure that our residents, staff, and other key stakeholders are aware of the appropriate changes that arise due to the Care Act, and are provided with information in the right format at the right time. This has been done via presentations and on-going discussions with impacted groups (i.e. Social Care Providers, Carers, members and CNWL Carers).

There has also been extensive national communication around the Care Act changes, and we have kept all public messages in line with these.

Project Support: These changes have to be delivered at scale and pace. A programme management approach is being used to co-ordinate this activity. Updates are provided to the Director for Adult Social Services at the Care Act programme board, which is held every four weeks.

The local authority is required to provide regular “stocktake” updates to the joint national programme board that oversees national delivery of the Care Act. The latest stocktake for Harrow is included as Appendix B and still illustrates that Harrow is confident that it will meet all the requirements by the 1st April.

We will also be reporting on a monthly basis to Senior Management team and Members the financial impacts, risks and issues raised following the 1st April 2015.

The attention of Overview and Scrutiny committee is directed to:

Funding: The Government have announced £1.223m (2015/16) in additional funding for Harrow to support the implementation of the Care Act through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and a further £545k via the Better Care Fund (BCF) for Social Care Reform.

Harrow have carried out extensive modelling work around costs. Harrow has used the two National Models but has developed its own modelling to include additional pressures likely as a result of the Care Act (e.g. lower eligibility threshold, increased Safeguarding responsibilities, Equipment under £100).

This has suggested that there will be a gap of £1.765m in 2015/16 based on funding allocations. This pressure has been raised in a number of reports and briefings including the commissioning panel and leader updates.

Carers: Based on demand modelling consistent with National approach the best estimates suggest that approximately 2100 additional carers will approach the Council for support in 2015/16.

The commissioning team have mapped existing support and services for Carers. In addition, service capacity is currently being planned to ensure support is readily available.

Information, advice and advocacy: Harrow has launched a new and refreshed version of its online information tool for adult social care. This is now available online, but is still in its development stage. This will support residents, carers, voluntary sector partners and staff in finding appropriate information and linking people into local services that will help them.

Communications: A national communications toolkit was published in November 2014 by Public Health England, which includes approved national wording and key messages Local Authorities could market as their own including customisable leaflets. Harrow has adopted their key messages on our own website and will be publishing leaflets in the coming weeks.

Implications

Key risks:

Risks	Mitigation
<p>Funding: There is national recognition that funding is not enough to cover implementation costs for 2015/16. The LGA, ADASS and London Councils have all leaned on this fact in discussions with the Department of Health, but there have been no additional funds since original allocations. Only marginal redistribution of funds for different purposes in line with the final guidance.</p> <p>Demand for Assessment: There is a risk that the numbers of carers (2015) and self-funders (2016) approaching the Council for assessment and support will be greater than anticipated.</p> <p>Timescales: The final guidance was delayed by a number of months, but the deadline for implementation and go live was not delayed; all changes have had to be made in an extremely short time frame, with limited resources.</p> <p>Service User and Carers Expectations: The expectations of service users and carers about what is available are likely to exceed the provisions of the Act. National campaigns set misleading messages e.g. <i>“you will no longer have to sell your home to pay for your care”</i>.</p> <p>Judicial Review: The risk of challenge and judicial review with any changes in law are significant. The Care Act covers all aspects of adults social care and therefore represents an even greater risk as there will be no existing case law covering the Act.</p> <p>Care Home Development: The Law around Ordinary Residence will mean that Local Authorities will take over the Social Care costs of Self-Funders living in the Borough as soon as they reach the Care Cap introduced in Phase 2 (April 2016). Additional development of Care Homes in Harrow aimed at Self Funders will put significant (£5m - £7m) additional pressure on Adults budget from 2020/21 onwards. Each additional care home bed potentially represents a significant increased pressure on the Adult’s budget.</p> <p>Phase Two: There is a General Election between the consultation and final guidance, although the direction from Department of Health is to begin making preparations for the second phase of guidance, it could be altered massively, or revoked entirely with the change of administration.</p>	<p>As the actual pressure is unpredictable Adults will be closely monitoring the increased demand, changes in eligibility and provision of new services. This will be mitigated by prioritising assessment and adjusting Resource Allocation Systems.</p> <p>Modelling demand has been consistent with national approaches. Harrow is working on Demand Management approaches including new online self-assessment tools.</p> <p>Harrow has applied strong governance to the implementation of the Care Act across all Departments and Partners.</p> <p>Access Harrow and Reablement staff have been trained on what the Act means in real terms. FAQs have been developed locally to respond to queries and information & advice (web and leaflets) developed to try and ensure people know what is available.</p> <p>Legal services have worked with Adults to identify low risk approach to implementation. We have consulted on Deferred Payments but have kept changes to current policies and procedures to a minimum to reduce the risk of challenge.</p> <p>Adults have linked with planning including the Director for Planning and have provided comments on all known planning requests for Care Home development. The Chief Executive, Leader and Members have been briefed about the potential pressure. The Adult’s Commissioning team are currently mapping future demand so that we can provide a clear statement of the type of provision needed in the Borough.</p> <p>Harrow are following advice from the Department of Health, to begin preparing for the implementation process to happen as stated in the draft guidance, but are prepared that the final phase of the changes may vary.</p>

Financial implications

There are risks around the proposed allocation of funding for the new burdens for adult social care. The most significant risk is that funding will not be sufficient, and the Council will have to fund the shortfall.

At this stage there has been no confirmation that funding will be recurrent funding, and what the future allocation will be. The Department of Health is working on a single cost model for 2016/17. This should be available before the end of March 2015.

It is unclear at this stage whether the funding for the additional assessments from the Care Act will be for financial assessments as well as care assessments. There is a risk that there is no funding for additional financial assessments, and this will result in a further cost pressure for the Council. The clarity of communication is not present at this point, meaning it is very difficult to predict the impact of the changes for 2016.

Legal Implications

The Care Act ("the Act") sets out a modern and cohesive legal framework for adult social care in the form of a single statute. It implements the Government's commitment to reform social care legislation in the White Paper Caring for our future: reforming care and support (July 2012). The new legislation will replace much of the existing law and statutory guidance on adult social care.

The Act also implements the changes recommended by the Dilnot Commission on the Funding of Care and Support by introducing a cap on the costs that people will have to pay for care. Sections 15 and 16 of the Act allow the Secretary of State to make regulations establishing a financial limit on the amount that adults can be required to pay towards the costs of meeting their eligible needs over their lifetime. Local authorities will be prevented from making a charge for meeting needs (other than for daily living costs) once an adult's care costs have reached that limit. The cap on care costs and other funding reform provisions will not come into force until April 2016.

The care and support provisions are in Part 1 of the Act which sets out the core legal duties and powers relating to adult social care. More detailed legal requirements are contained in regulations made under the Act.

The London Borough of Harrow will be required to review its policies and procedures in light of the new legislation to ensure that these comply with the responsibilities set out in the Act. Owing to the short time frame for implementation, we have started with those of key significance (for example: the Deferred Payments Policy, and Financial Charging Policy) to the initial changes, but will continue to review existing Policy and Procedure post April 2015.

Performance Implications

In recent years Performance in Harrow has been very strong across all indicators: Assessment waiting times are low (87% within 28 days); almost every single service user and carer is reviewed annually (94.5%); social care delays to discharge are at their lowest levels since they were measured (2nd in London); and Harrow has the highest percentage of cash personal budgets in the Country (13/14 - 47.1%).

The increased demand for assessment under the Care Act will have a significant impact performance. In particular the assessment waiting times and the capacity to complete reviews within existing staffing levels are likely to be impacted by the Act.

Other concerns will be the timescales for Safeguarding referrals and the threshold for Deprivation of Liberty Assessments carried out by the in-house team. Cost pressures and Capacity issues are also likely to impact on delay discharges.

The Adult's service will monitor this closely and report any significant pressures to the Senior Management Team and members on a monthly basis.

The Department of Health are looking at the introduction of new measures into the Adult Social Care Outcomes framework to reflect the new duties on local authorities. New measures are likely to include measures around Carer Assessment and Outcomes; Transition into Adulthood; diversity of the market of care services; and the Making Safeguarding Personal work stream.

Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The Care Act 2014 represents a significant change in the way adult social care services are delivered and organised, and needs to be delivered at pace.

A programme structure has been developed to support effective implementation of the Care Act, with a number of component workstreams.

Risk Management Implications

See separate guidance notes.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? Yes

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? **Yes** – we are in the process of designing an overarching EQIA, this will sit with the extensive national EQIA carried out last year.

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Council Priorities

The Care Act makes a positive contribution to the following:

- *Making a difference for the vulnerable*
- *Making a difference for communities*
- Making a difference for local businesses
- *Making a difference for families*

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Greenway, Head of Safeguarding Assurance & Quality Services, Adults Social Care

Tel: 020 8424 1043

Background Papers:

DRAFT

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Fact sheet: Overview of the Care Act 2014

Introduction

The Care Act 2014 replaces numerous previous laws, to provide a coherent approach to adult social care in England. Part one of the Act (and its Statutory Guidance) consolidates and modernises the framework of care and support law; it set out new duties for local authorities and partners, and new rights for service users and carers. The changes are coming in two phases, April 2015 and April 2016. April 2016's draft Regulations are currently open for Public Consultation, but the 2015 changes include the following:

A new emphasis on 'wellbeing'

The new statutory principle of individual **wellbeing** underpins the Act, and is the driving force behind care and support.

Prevention

Local authorities (and their partners in health, housing, welfare and employment services) must now take steps to:

- ✓ prevent,
- ✓ reduce
- ✓ or delay
- ✓

the need for care and support for all local people.

Integration

The Act includes a statutory requirement for local authorities to **collaborate, cooperate and integrate** with other public authorities e.g. health and housing. It also requires seamless transitions for young people moving to adult social care services.

Information, advice and advocacy

The Act places a duty on local authorities to ensure that information and advice on care and support is **available to all** and **when they need it**. Independent **advocacy** must also be arranged if a person would otherwise be unable to participate in, or understand, the care and support system.

Diverse care markets

There must be **diversity and quality in the market** of care providers so that there are enough high-quality services for people to choose from. Local authorities must also step in to ensure that no vulnerable person is left without the care they need if their service closes due to *business failure*.

Assessment and eligibility

Anybody, including a carer, who appears to need care or support is **entitled to an assessment**, it must focus on **outcomes** important to the individual. The local authority must apply a **national eligibility threshold** to determine whether the individual has eligible needs.

Charging and financial assessment

If the type of care being considered is chargeable, then the local authority must carry out a **financial assessment**. From April 2015, all councils must offer deferred payments.

Personal budgets and direct payments

A **personal budget** will form part of the care and support plan.

Summary

For people who need care and support, and their carers, there will be:

- ✓ better access to information and advice, preventative services, and assessment of need
- ✓ an entitlement to care and support
- ✓ a common system across the country (national eligibility threshold).

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**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	24/03/2015
Subject:	Local Implementation of Universal Credit
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Corporate Resources Director
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All Policy & Performance Lead Members
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Universal Credit is a major part of the Coalition Government’s welfare reform programme and has been piloted in a number of authorities and is scheduled to roll out for new Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants in Harrow between October and November 2015.

It has been designed to unify and simplify a number of both in-work and out of work benefits and to ensure that work pays.

In the first phase of roll out for Harrow, only single adult jobseekers will claim Universal Credit. For those claiming Universal Credit there will be significant changes in the way they claim benefit which will be on-line and the way they are paid which will be monthly in arrears, to cover all costs including rent.

There are implications for Harrow Council in terms of changes to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support and the services that DWP commissions to support the roll-out of Universal Credit. This report provides information on Universal Credit, its implications for residents who will be claiming, the Council and the preparation that officers have been doing to anticipate its implementation.

Recommendations:

1. Note that the roll out of Universal Credit is scheduled to commence in Harrow during October and November 2015.
2. Members are requested to also note the fact that should Harrow decide to participate and act as front line delivery support for the DWP, Harrow would need to sign a Delivery Partnership Agreement with the DWP which would be subject to a key decision, and a report would need to be put to Cabinet about this in the near future.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

Universal Credit is the most significant part of the Government's welfare reform programme, yet to be fully implemented.

It is designed to make work pay so that people are better off in work than claiming benefits and brings together both in-work benefit and out of work benefit. Universal Credit (UC) should enable people to move in and out of work more smoothly and eliminate disincentives to work. There will be access to Real Time Earnings HMRC data by Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) staff to enable claimants to receive the correct level of financial support as their circumstances change and this is also designed to increase efficiency in processing and handling claims. Pilots for Universal Credit were initially developed in a few authorities who acted as "pathfinders". UC is now being rolled out across the country, including Harrow.

Universal Credit (UC) is the new Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) benefit which replaces a range of existing benefits:

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Background

1. Universal Credit is the implementation of a single benefit to replace six existing working age benefits. It is intended to simplify an increasingly complex benefit system with one single monthly payment made to the claimant, with an increased focus on work incentives.
2. Pathfinder sites have been in place since 2013 in the North West of England, alongside national demonstration projects testing elements of the Universal Credit programme. In October 2014 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions issued a ministerial statement confirming

that Universal Credit is to be rolled out “...from February 2015 to all remaining Jobcentres and Local Authorities for new single claimants previously eligible for Jobseekers Allowance, including those with existing Housing Benefit and Tax Credit claims.”

3. This is a considerable change from previous communications received about the Universal Credit rollout programme and represents a significant acceleration in the timetable. Rollout will be in four tranches nationally starting March 2015, with implementation in Harrow commencing from October 2015.
4. It is recognised that the transition onto Universal Credit will be harder for some claimants than others, and there is a need for varying levels of support. In February 2013 the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) published the Local Support Services Framework, rebranded in 2014 as Universal Services – Delivered Locally. This framework identified the support that DWP state people would need to make the transition on to Universal Credit and acknowledged that there would be a role for delivery partners such as the local authority.
5. The Universal Services – Delivered Locally programme is still to be clearly defined. In the interim DWP has published a Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA) which lays out its expectations of the role of local authorities in the implementation of Universal Credit, which is expected to be superseded by Universal Services – Delivered Locally after the first year of running. The DPA will also detail the funding offer to local authorities to deliver these services either directly or through a commissioning route.
6. The public services defined by DWP and contained within the DPA are intended to support the more vulnerable Universal Credit claimants who may not otherwise be able to manage the transition independently. The key elements focus on online support and personal budgeting advice. In addition DWP require advice from local authorities to support their Universal Credit delivery centres both in the closing down of Housing Benefit claims, but also, and of greater concern, in regard to more complex housing cost assessments within the Universal Credit calculation.
7. Furthermore the DWP acknowledge that there will be a cost to the local authority to adjust Council Tax Support claims at the point that Universal Credit is claimed, and to assist DWP in raising awareness amongst landlords and ensuring they are in a position to support tenants in their Universal Credit claim; the level of support to private landlords is currently very limited.

8. What the DPA does not consider is the other impacts that Universal Credit will bring to local authorities, including increased demand on other services due to financial and social impacts of Universal Credit and the loss of income, for example from council rents as payments are no longer made directly to the rent account. Neither does it define the Universal Credit delivery centres' service standards to give assurances that backlogs won't accumulate, or detail channels for cases to be prioritised, such as private sector eviction cases.
9. The DPA also makes an assumption that local authorities will be willing to participate in the delivery of Universal Credit and doesn't acknowledge that the local authority's statutory duty is limited to the closure of the existing Housing Benefit claim. It may therefore be a viable position for the local authority to decline to take on any role under the DPA or Universal Services – Delivered Locally programme, while accepting that additional demand on services will be created whether the local authority signs the DPA or not.

The Position in Harrow

10. Harrow is due to begin implementing Universal Credit in October 2015. DWP has announced that this will initially only be for single claimants who would otherwise have claimed Job Seekers Allowance. Working Tax Credit and Housing Costs will also be included where relevant to the individual. It is expected that this will expand into couples, followed by households with children, but it is not known when these cohorts will be brought in.

The local Job Centre Plus has approached the local authority and arranged a meeting with the Director of Customer Services and Head of Service, Collections & Housing Benefits, for the middle of March to begin the conversation regarding implementation of Universal Credit in the borough, and the role of the council. Based on the limited information currently available, the Administration has stated the council's position as:

“We appreciate that this is a very important service to our residents and would like to provide support. However, we cannot and will not undertake this work unless we can fully recover all our costs. Any agreement entered into must give certainty regarding cost recovery and be sustainable into the long term (2-3 years minimum).”

11. Whether or not the council elects to be proactively involved in the delivery of Universal Credit, it needs to recognise that there will be impacts on residents and council service delivery. The borough has 13,000 working age Housing Benefit claimants who will ultimately transition onto Universal Credit.

Universal Credit

12. Universal Credit has now been introduced in several Local Authorities. The first cohort was new single claimants. This typically includes people whose employment status has changed, either a move to unemployment or a reduction in earnings, and those who have reached an age where a claim for benefits is appropriate.

Whilst UC brings together 6 key working age benefits, pensioners will not be part of Universal Credit and it is not known what the proposals are for pensioner claimants.

Households in enhanced management will also not be included in Universal Credit, remaining with local authorities for financial assistance with their rent. The detail around this cohort still needs to be defined, e.g. what will the funding be in respect to both rent awards and administration.

A household could currently receive multiple payments for different benefits at different points in a month. Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Income Support are administered by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits by HMRC and Housing Benefit by local authorities on behalf of DWP. Universal Credit will be assessed by DWP at regional delivery centres, reducing the number of organisations a claimant has to navigate around to receive their benefit entitlement.

13. Universal Credit requires applicants to sign a 'claimant commitment'. This is an agreement developed with the Job Centre to define the expectations on the individual to find work or increase their working hours. If the individual is deemed to have failed to meet the criteria laid down in their claimant commitment without good reason, they are at risk of having their Universal Credit sanctioned. Sanctions will result in a reduction to the level of Universal Credit awarded.

Seven waiting days will be applied to the start of a Universal Credit claim. This will mean that all claimants receive no benefit for the first seven days of entitlement. While waiting days exist for certain benefits currently, there is no similar criteria in the Housing Benefit scheme so claimants will start to have to manage the rent for the first week of their claim. They will have no access to any funds to recuperate this gap in entitlement, although there could be an increase in demand on local authority's Local Welfare Provision schemes (Emergency Relief Scheme or ERS in Harrow) to assist during this period.

14. Universal Credit is intended to offer a more gradual withdrawal of benefit from people as they increase their pay by focusing on level of earnings rather than hours worked. As the same benefit is payable whether someone is in or out of work, it is expected to make the transition into work and increasing hours worked less difficult.

On average, the level of entitlement under UC will increase for households by £16 a month, although this figure varies by income level and household type. 3.1m people are forecast to see an increase in their overall benefit entitlement, while 2.1m people will see a decrease. The real gain is envisaged to be through higher take-up and improved work incentives. Transitional protection will be given to all households already in receipt of benefit to ensure they do not lose out when they move onto UC.

15. The Benefit Cap, a maximum level of benefit entitlement, is currently restricted to Housing Benefit. While the Benefit Cap is calculated across all relevant benefits, a household may continue to receive in excess of the cap (£500 for families and couples, £350 for single people) as it is currently only applied to Housing Benefit. Once a household receives Universal Credit, the cap will apply to the total benefit payment, resulting in households losing some of their income benefits as well as housing cost support.

Universal Credit is paid as a single monthly payment, intended to act like a salary and reduce barriers to work to assist claimants in learning to budget as if in work. Where households have previously had different benefit payments staggered throughout the month, they will need to budget to ensure the single payment lasts the month.

Changes in circumstance will be calculated from the start of the monthly assessment period. Where a household moves from a higher rent property such as temporary accommodation into cheaper accommodation, they will receive Universal Credit for the whole month based on the lower rent charge and will be required to find the shortfall at the start of the assessment period from other sources. Conversely a household moving into more expensive accommodation could find that they benefit from this clause.

Households who are paid earnings on a four weekly basis will also be detrimentally affected as they will receive 13 salary payments over a year and Universal Credit will be paid over 12 months. At one point each year the household will receive two salary payments during the Universal Credit award period (month) which will result in their earnings being doubled in the Universal Credit calculation and their entitlement substantially reduced when their circumstances have not in reality changed.

These types of changes to the benefit system will result in households having to find additional funds to balance their budgets due to shortfalls in Universal Credit.

16. The default approach will be to pay the full award to the claimant rather than payment of housing costs directly to landlords. Housing Benefit is currently paid directly to social sector landlords in the majority of cases, and can be paid to a private landlord either where there are eight or more weeks of arrears, or to safeguard the tenancy.

Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs) are available under Universal Credit, but will only be available for vulnerable households or where there are eight or more weeks of arrears. This signifies a major change for social rented sector tenants, and their landlords who will need to invest additional resource into rent collection and manage an increase in the level of arrears as they compete for their tenants' money with other creditors such as council tax or fuel bills.

17. At the point of claiming, a claimant will be triaged to identify their level of vulnerability. Depending on their vulnerability 'score' they will be offered additional support via personal budgeting advice and potentially an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). APAs will always be made on a temporary basis and reviewed to determine whether the claimant has transitioned in to a position where they are able to be self-sufficient. The review period will vary from 3 to 24 months, and the decision will consider various factors including rent arrears and mental health.

18. Currently DWP has offered a phone line to social landlords to assist them in supporting their UC tenants. Experiences to date indicate that the phone line is not sufficient to cope with demand and social landlords are finding it difficult to access DWP.

The DWP has adopted a trial and learn approach to UC with a number of pathfinder and demonstration projects. The direct payment demonstration projects experienced an increase in arrears in the first year of running. It is estimated that a medium size housing association (6,000 properties) will see a reduction in rent collection of 6 percentage points, a potential loss of £1.3m.

19. When UC was first announced the DWP branded it as 'digital by default'. Through the test and learn model this has diluted to a 'digital by design' model which acknowledges that not all claimants will be in a position to claim independently online. To test the end to end digital system Sutton Council has been set up as a live trial site. Sutton is the only area in the country that will accept claims from any household type. IT systems are being tested to ensure they are robust enough to cope with all claim scenarios and interface with relevant systems such as to enable the Real Time Interface and allow automatic updates from earnings where employers are registered.

DWP has always stated that the IT systems are on track to support the rollout of UC. Feedback from the tranche 1 local authorities indicates this may not be the case but there is no substantiating evidence. From the claimant's perspective, they will only be able to access UC via an online claim. DWP anticipate local authorities providing digital support to assist residents in making a claim. While it is not expected that this will be a major concern in year 1 as the cohort going live are single people who would otherwise have claimed Job Seekers Allowance. As Job Seekers Allowance can only be claimed

electronically and the majority are under 25, this cohort will largely have experience of accessing online services. However as the roll out expands and accelerates the burden on the local authority or its commissioned services will grow and funding must be sufficient to ensure the service delivery is robust enough to cope.

National Timetable

Pathfinders commence in North-West. Started with new claims from single people who would otherwise have claimed Job Seekers Allowance and expanded to couples and now families. Housing costs introduced in 2014.	April 2013
Pathfinder sites in areas outside of North-West including Hammersmith & Fulham following same cohort rollout as above	Oct 2013
Demonstration projects – various national	2013 - 2014
National rollout acceleration announced to commence with new claims for single people who would otherwise have claimed Job Seekers Allowance including housing costs	Oct 2014
National Rollout Tranche 1 including 6 London Boroughs	Feb – Apr 2015
National Rollout Tranche 2	May – July 2015
National Rollout Tranche 3 – including Harrow in October 2015	Sep – Nov 2015
National Rollout Tranche 4	Dec 2015 – Apr 2016
Migration of legacy benefits begins	2016
End of new claims to existing benefits	End 2017
Employment Support Allowance claims to be incorporated later in the rollout plan	Unknown
Universal Credit implementation complete	2020

As at 15 January 2015, there were 26,940 Universal Credit claimants, with over 54,000 having claimed since April 2013.

Findings from the pathfinders and demonstration projects

20. DWP has taken a test and learn approach to Universal Credit, using demonstration sites to test elements such as direct payments to social sector tenants, and learning from the pathfinders to adapt proposed delivery models and identify good practice. When Universal Credit was first announced, DWP saw a very limited role for local authorities in its delivery. However, as the programme has evolved, DWP has gained an understanding of the crucial role local authorities play in supporting residents and their partnership with the voluntary sector and private and social sector landlords. DWP now believes that councils are best placed to provide and commission services that will respond to the different needs of the local population to give claimants access to effective support while transitioning onto Universal Credit.

21. In December 2013 DWP published Universal Credit – Local Support Services Update and Trialling Plan, which reported on the work carried out to date either through demonstration projects or by pathfinder sites.

Areas included in the trials were:

- Partnership working
- Partnership agreements
- Financial management including value for money
- Effective delivery of front line services
- Work readiness and Application of the European Social Fund
- Direct payments
- Digital live trial

Trials were carried out by various organisations across the country either in partnership or independently. The majority were led by local authorities, including in London, but other organisations such as Job Centre Plus offices, Citizens Advice Bureau and Housing Associations were also involved. The findings from the trials focus on Triage, Digital Inclusion, Financial Inclusion and Personal Budgeting Support and Building and Maintaining Partnership Working. It should be noted that while the trials give an insight into some of the issues claimants might face and how people will react to the changes Universal Credit will bring, many of the trials were unable to give a true understanding of the impacts due to limitations of the trials. Services delivered in the trials varied depending on the focus of the project, and the region the project was based in, e.g. rural or urban. Some examples of the good practice identified are:

- In Lewisham claimants were triaged through a telephone call and use of a script for call centre advisors to obtain a score that will then determine if the customer is 'vulnerable' and will require additional services. Individual support plans were then developed with clients which were passed on as part of the referrals to agencies for ongoing support.
- Digital Deal projects across the UK tested various approaches to helping social housing tenants get online such as installing free wi-fi in tenant blocks; refurbished, affordable computers were made available with equipment loans some from credit unions; home based one-to-one support was offered
- A number of local authorities including Milton Keynes found that group budgeting advice was less successful, possibly due to the stigma attached. However where an organisation that was trusted by the local community, such as a football club, ran the sessions, the attendance levels increased.
- Mapping of existing services in the borough to identify gaps was essential to the success for a number of the projects. A holistic approach to the delivery of support services was also key, with an emphasis on one-to-one advice, potentially over a prolonged

period, to gain the most effective and sustainable results for the individual.

The report did not provide detail on funding provided to local authorities or other partners to enable services to be delivered.

22. In February DWP also published Universal Credit At Work report which shows the outcomes from the first 6,000 Universal Credit cases. DWP research shows, compared to JSA, claimants are doing more job search activity, finding work quicker, staying in work longer and earning more. The research shows that, over a 4 month period, claimants are:

- 13 per cent more likely to have been in work than those on JSA
- earning more money

Similar to previous findings, the report also confirms that new Universal Credit claimants in the expanded sites are more likely than JSA claimants to:

- believe the benefit system is encouraging them to find work
- take any job they are able to do
- spend more time looking for work.

Support Services and the Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA)

23. DWP has developed the Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA) to establish a framework agreement between Job Centre Plus and the local authority for the delivery of services to support residents in the transition onto Universal Credit, initially for the first year of running after which it will be replaced by Universal Services Delivered Locally (USDL). USDL is expected to be a more sustainable version of the DPA, which looks at the longer term, rather than focusing on implementation as the DPA does.

Schedule 1 of the DPA sets out the services to be delivered by DWP and the local authority. What is most notable is the level of provision expected by the local authority compared to the DWP. While the DWP will assess Universal Credit at their Benefit Delivery Centres, local authorities would be responsible for delivery of front line support.

24. Six London boroughs are in tranche 1, with Brent, Wandsworth and Barnet the first to go-live. The six sites have jointly approached DWP to raise their concerns around the DPA. Following relatively small concessions from DWP, the first three sites are expected to sign the DPA while expressing their concerns around specific elements which are detailed below. Some of the sites are uneasy that if a local authority did not sign up to the DPA, then an opportunity to enter an agreement under Universal Services – Delivered Locally would not be made available at a later date. There is no evidence to support this

although if solutions outside of the local authority are put in place, then DWP may be more likely to scale these up as Universal Credit expands, rather than implement new solutions with the local authority.

25. A key concern is that the agreement is not in reality a 'partnership', but a framework detailing the local authority's role in Universal Credit. A lack of agreed service standards on behalf of the DWP leaves local authorities at risk of being unable to cope with demand should there be delays in the assessment process. Furthermore there is a lack of access for claimants, landlords, local authorities and other advice organisations to information relating to claims. Although there are steps to reduce the barriers around data sharing, the systems are not in place to enable information to be obtained, e.g. at present local authorities can use the DWP's IT system to access DWP benefit data, this is not expected to be available under Universal Credit.

This lack of access will restrict the effectiveness of advice given, further frustrate private landlords whose stock is already in short supply for benefit tenants and ultimately put resident's tenancies at risk. Local authorities will potentially be in the position where they are the front face of Universal Credit, but are unable to access the required information to advise claimants on progress or to influence the claims process. The DPA includes the support services DWP expect some Universal Credit claimants to require when they transition across. Two key areas are digital support and personal budgeting advice.

26. DWP has set up a trial digital site in Sutton. This is to test the end to end process for both the customer and the back end systems. The live trial will provide learning on claimants' needs to enable them to transact online, for inclusion in the Universal Services Delivered Locally programme. It is envisaged that at the roll out of Universal Credit demand for digital assistance from claimants will be limited due to the characteristics of the cohort who are single job seekers.

27. Personal Budgeting Support has been considered by DWP in Personal Budgeting Support and Alternative Payment Arrangements Guidance. It states that money advice is to be provided to help claimants cope with managing their money on a monthly basis and paying their bills on time and will be offered online, by phone, or face to face by organisations with the relevant expertise to do this.

28. Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) are made available for some claimants who cannot manage a monthly payment and where there is a risk of financial harm to the claimant or their family. This might include rent paid directly to the landlord, a more frequent than monthly payment, or a split payment between partners.

The guidance document sets out considerations for decision makers on how to assess a need for money advice and/or APA. Claimants will be triaged by their Jobcentre Plus work coach at their Initial Work Focused Interview, or, for existing claimants, at the point at which they migrate onto Universal Credit. Once the claim is in payment, a need for money advice could be triggered by information provided by the claimant, representative or landlord e.g. where rent arrears are accruing. The reasons listed in the guidance as being highly likely/probably resulting in an Alternative Payment Arrangement are:

- Drug/alcohol and/or other addiction problems eg gambling
- Learning difficulties including problems with literacy and/or numeracy
- Severe/multiple debt problems
- In temporary and/or supported accommodation
- Homeless
- Domestic violence/abuse
- Mental health condition
- Currently in rent arrears/threat of eviction/repossession
- Claimant is young: a 16/17 year old and/or a care leaver
- Families with multiple and complex needs

While the DPA acknowledges the role of the local authority in delivering the services identified by DWP, it does not acknowledge the broader impacts Universal Credit will bring to local authorities. To date these have been identified as including:

- Additional demand on local authority customer services by Universal Credit claimants;
- Increased cost of collecting rent as housing costs are paid directly to tenants;
- Managing increased arrears and a rising bad debt provision;
- Additional demands on housing needs services;
- A reduction to an already shrinking private rented sector for benefit tenants as landlords become increasingly nervous about the financial risk benefit tenants bring;
- Increased council tax arrears as residents struggle to manage their monthly payment in arrears;
- Additional demand on other services, such as children's services, due to social impacts of financial pressures on households;
- Rising demand and administration costs on local authority discretionary funds such as Discretionary Housing Payments

(which DWP cut by 40% in Harrow for 2015/16), Emergency Relief and section 17 payments in Childrens Services;

- Loss in Housing Benefit overpayment collection as ability to collect directly from Housing Benefit is lost and local authority will be reliant on DWP for collection from UC and LA will be in competition with other creditors for recovery;
- Delays in Council Tax Support assessment due to delays in notification of UC entitlement by DWP;
- Increase in Housing Benefit overpayments raised due to delays in notification of UC entitlement by DWP

29. Consideration must also be given to the position of the voluntary sector given the levels of cuts to grants. It cannot be assumed that even with sufficient funding that either the VCS or local authority will have the services in place to scale up by the time the Universal Services Delivered Locally is rolled out after year one of UC.

30. The final, and possibly most concerning aspect of the DPA is the funding offer. Based on the grants offered by DWP to a tranche 1 London borough, the forecast financial position for Harrow has been detailed later in this report. Where DWP has identified service delivery needs, the costings are unrealistic. The DPA states that funding will be capped at the forecast demand levels, even if demand exceeds this volume. In addition, as detailed above, DWP has not acknowledged all of the services impacted in the local authority and so these have not been included in the funding.

Funding will be made on a monthly basis when the local authority submits an invoice for the services delivered, up to a pre-stated upper value. This requires the local authority or commissioned service to record all UC contacts made at various access points, adding cost to the administration of the DPA and adding a risk to the local authority that it could under claim. Furthermore with the upper limit set prior to UC rollout, should demand exceed forecasts then the local authority could continue to see residents access services that they will not be reimbursed for.

Potential Impacts / Issues

31. Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support - Staff. The Housing Benefit service incorporates the assessment of Council Tax Support. 40 FTE administer the two benefits. As Universal Credit has been expected to be implemented for a number of years, the service has not appointed to vacant posts, reducing the risk of redundancy for staff. Pensioner and more complex Housing Benefit claims will be retained along with Council Tax Support, requiring Benefit Assessment Officers to administer the claims. DWP are still considering TUPE opportunities

for local authority staff, although their initial view was that TUPE was not an option.

32. Overpayments – Additional Housing Benefit overpayments will be raised when claims migrate on to Universal Credit. This is because DWP have given a 30 day turnaround time to inform local authorities of the change, resulting in a creation of an overpayment once the claim is closed.

Approximately £1.2m Housing Benefit overpayments are collected from ongoing Housing Benefit currently. When Housing Benefit migrates to Universal Credit the local authority will be left with debt which it will struggle to recover without this collection channel. Legislation allows Housing Benefit to be collected from Universal Credit but there will be higher administration costs and it will be in competition with other creditors.

33. Resourcing back office support to Universal Credit Benefit Delivery Centres – DWP require local authority Housing Benefit offices to support the delivery centres in the assessment of more complex housing costs under Universal Credit. The current funding offer is not deemed to be sufficient to cover this cost given the lack of knowledge and experience DWP has in assessment of housing costs

34. Council Tax Support – the local authority will need to know the level of Universal Credit entitlement to calculate Council Tax Support. DWP has stated that this will not be available until the claim is put in to payment at least 30 days after the date of entitlement. Local authorities will not at this stage be able to access this information online in the way they do currently with existing DWP benefits, hence increasing administration costs and delaying assessment of Council Tax Support.

There is also a risk of underclaiming of Council Tax Support as it will sit outside of the Universal Credit system. Claimants currently apply for Council Tax Support at the point they claim Housing Benefit. It is anticipated that many will not understand that they have not made an application for all means tested benefits at the point they submit a claim for Universal Credit and could therefore not receive Council Tax Support they would be entitled to. This will also impact on Council Tax collection rates.

35. Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) – In 2015/16 Harrow has seen a 40% reduction to its DHP fund which was already insufficient to meet demand in the borough. There is no new DHP element to support residents transitioning on to Universal Credit. The roll out of Universal Credit is expected to see a further increase on the DHP fund due to additional sanctions, longer waiting days and an inability to manage financial affairs when housing costs are paid directly to the tenant. DHP will continue to be administered by the local authority and the funding gap will create financial pressures both on residents and other services in the council such as Housing Need.

36. Emergency Relief Scheme - The Emergency Relief Scheme is expected to see an increase in demand when Universal Credit rolls out due to residents finding it difficult to manage their finances once they receive all of their benefits in a single monthly payment. As they move toward the end of their payment period and have spent all of their award, they will turn to discretionary funds such as Emergency Relief for emergency assistance. This will be further exacerbated by the additional sanctions introduced in the Universal Credit scheme and seven waiting days at the start of the claim.

37. Council Tax

As council tax payers who claim Universal Credit may find it difficult to manage their finances, there is a risk to council tax collection. Many social sector tenants will be receiving their housing costs element for the first time and learning to budget the different bills they need to pay from their Universal Credit. As such they could find they do not have sufficient funds remaining to pay their monthly council tax charge. This will be exacerbated if households under claim due to confusion around how to apply for Council Tax Support outside of Universal Credit.

Additionally, the delay to Council Tax Support assessments will result in uncertainty of how much council tax liable parties owe as the local authority will not have access to Universal Credit details for a month after entitlement begins. This will further hinder the recovery process impacting on the Council's income.

38. Resident Services

The initial feedback and findings from projects around the country show a harrowing prospect in store for rent collection rates and arrears levels. A report into the Direct Payment Demonstration Projects showed that rent arrears had risen by an average of 33% during the migration to the new benefit system. In addition tenants will need additional support, close monitoring of rent accounts, on-going support assessment processes or other intervention. In pilot areas the total support associated with supporting customers rose from £14.61 per case per month for those outside the pilot to £60.51 per case per month for those taking part. The vast majority of the large cost increase was related to staff time.

39. Landlord transaction costs and rent collection costs will increase as may the resource required to manage direct payment. IT Systems may need to be upgraded or renewed.

Tenants will require help to manage the transition and sign posting to support voluntary agencies may increase as may the foot fall to the one stop shop. Tenants will need access to on line facilities to complete the Universal Credit form.

Initial reports have suggested that the web based form may take an hour to complete and it does not have any save functionality. If a tenant does not have all the necessary information to hand when completing the form it cannot be saved in a draft format to be completed later. Payments under Universal Credit will be paid monthly in arrears to the

claimant so this will also have a negative impact on rent arrears and collection rates.

It is anticipated that as the roll out of Universal Credit expands to include households other than single claimants this will in turn increase the pressure on the existing team responsible for rent collection in terms of managing accounts with a higher level of debt and an increasing caseload. Resources in the team may need to be increased in the short to medium term to help with the transition to Universal Credit. As debt levels increase it is anticipated that in the long run Harrow will see the number of evictions increase.

40. Housing Needs

From Housing Needs point of view there are a number of serious challenges as UC is rolled out.

- a) As in most cases rent element of UC will be paid to the tenant, private landlords are going to be less willing to work with benefit dependent households. This won't necessarily be a practical issue straight away as only a few single people will be on UC, but it is not clear at what point private landlord sentiment will change, and this reluctance to accommodate benefit dependant households will become significant. When it does, this will cause a rise in homelessness as families find it difficult to obtain their own accommodation, and more homeless households will remain in short term expensive temporary accommodation as it becomes harder to procure suitable accommodation to move families on.
- b) When the largest families who are currently affected by the overall household benefit cap set at £500 migrate onto UC, they will see their income drop. Currently the cap operates only by reducing HB, so many large families get no HB but their other benefits still exceed £500. Under UC they will only receive £500 per week (or less if the cap is reduced, which is a Government proposal). So to prevent homelessness, larger top ups from DHP or Housing Needs' resources will be required to prevent homelessness. It will also make it more difficult to find accommodation in other areas that capped households can afford without on-going subsidy.
- c) The pilot studies showed increased rent arrears when the rent element of UC is paid to the tenant, rather than the landlord. We expect that this will happen in relation to our temporary accommodation with significant increase in arrears which will generally be irrecoverable (and enforcement leading to us ending our homelessness duty would still incur costs to the council as many families would then need support from Children's Services). We also expect to see a rise in evictions from the Private Rented Sector due to rent arrears.
- d) The tight conditionality requirements under UC may well cause a rise in sanctions, so families will struggle to pay their rent, again leading to homelessness.

- e) UC will impact the subsidy arrangements for our temporary accommodation. At present we are able to use that accommodation (with subsidy) to prevent homelessness without taking on the full homelessness duty, under UC and we will not get the subsidy in that situation. The size criteria also becomes less generous so will reduce the accommodation we can use. Overall the subsidy we receive is likely to drop.

41. Economic Development

If Universal Credit provides an incentive for residents to enter employment, and for low paid workers to increase their skills (in the expectation this will increase their earnings), then there should be an increased demand for the services for the council's Xcite project. Xcite will have the capacity to deal with any additional demand from residents seeking support with job search, careers advice, access to funds for training (that meets the needs of employers). This is because the council has recently secured funding from the New Homes Bonus Top Slice and the Transformation Challenge Award.

It is difficult to assess whether Universal Credit will bring a net increase in the income of Harrow's benefit claimants, what the net value of that increase could be, and therefore its economic impact.

People with low disposable incomes, have a greater propensity to spend additional income, than people with a higher disposable incomes. Logic would suggest an increase in money to residents on low incomes would be spent. That additional spend is more likely to occur in district centres located in the boroughs most deprived wards. It is difficult to suggest that any increase spend in those areas would have anything more than a marginal impact on the local economy.

42. Access Harrow

The One Stop Shop has recently been refurbished increasing the number of self-serve PCs available for customers to access digital services themselves with floor-walking support. Increased demand for Universal Credit will be handled in a similar way with claimants being directed to the self service area.

If the new process drives an increase in demand for financial advice then additional staffing and potentially extra facilities will be required. Aside from assisting new claimants, or existing claimants with a change in circumstances, the volume of enquiries will be regarding progress chasing. It is currently unclear what the expected turnaround times will be and how customers will be notified of delays which will potentially increase demand and levels of avoidable contact.

There will be additional costs to Resources from an IT perspective: Customers currently access Housing Benefit information through the MyHarrow (MHA) account, therefore the Universal Credit account will need to be available through the single sign-on of the MHA. This functionality may be available through web services which would be considerably cheaper than integration.

The queuing system within the One Stop Shop will need to be reconfigured to account for any new services available face to face. This will include work to be scheduled in re-coding the website calendar pages to reflect the changes.

The existing call centre telephony platform allows customers to ascertain processing times of claims without having to talk to an advisor. The 1,200 automated calls per month saves the Council over £40,000 per year as the data is available in-house. Once the DWP pick up this work, a digital feed of processing times will need to be available to maintain this functionality or additional revenue will be required to handle telephone calls.

43. Voluntary Sector

Voluntary sector organisations are likely to have limited capacity to scale up due to proposed reductions in voluntary sector funding. Currently commissioned services could be extended if funding was available. Commissioning and monitoring of services requires staff time. Commissioning of services could be undertaken jointly with other departments if organisations are funded by more than one department however there is still a cost in terms of staff time administering the monitoring, undertaking visits and preparing reports.

Summary & Conclusion

44. Applications for Universal Credit will need to be made online. Universal Credit is available to people who are in work and on a low income, as well as to those who are out of work.

Universal Credit is administered as one monthly payment, paid in arrears, into a claimant's bank or building society account. In most cases Universal Credit claimants will have to pay their rent and housing costs to their landlord.

There are some key areas where claimants will need to prepare themselves for Universal Credit;

- i. Claimants need to make sure they have a bank or building society account. It is suggested that an account with a direct debit facility may be useful for paying bills, rent and Council Tax.
- ii. If the claimant is part of a couple, living together, they will need to open a joint bank account as the Universal Credit payment will be for the whole household and will only be paid into one account.
- iii. People who are likely to become Universal Credit claimants need to make sure that they have the skills and confidence to use a computer to make a claim. If they need to improve their IT skills there is some basic IT training available across the Borough.

- iv. People who are already struggling to manage their money, or who are likely to struggle to manage a single monthly household benefit payment should seek money advice and budgeting support as soon as possible. There is some provision of this across the borough.
45. Officers have been engaging with DWP to understand the numbers and flow for the first phase and agreeing how Harrow can best meet DWP requirements and support residents who will be affected. The focus for this first phase of the roll-out has been on ensuring that Harrow understands the impact on residents, the support activity required and the funding that might be available. However our policy at the moment is clear; we will not sign a DPA unless Harrow receives sufficient funding and can fully recover all its costs. Any agreement entered into must therefore give certainty regarding cost recovery and be sustainable into the long term.

Financial Implications

As this is a new burden on local authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have committed to providing funding to enable Harrow to provide these services. However it is for the authority to evaluate if any funding offered is sufficient to cover potential expenditure as the general fund will otherwise pick up the difference.

DWP have proposed a model for calculating funding which is based on estimated claimant volumes and assumed levels of support needed, and an estimate of the volume of housing and Local Council Tax Support Scheme processes required. Average salaries are used to estimate costs. Schedule 2 to the Delivery Partnership Agreement includes an element of funding for set up costs, and this is yet to be identified and agreed.

Using the cost model and information given by DWP to a tranche 1 London site, the following forecasts have been calculated for Harrow. The first column shows the expected funding offer from DWP to deliver services identified under the DPA, the second column is Harrow's forecast expenditure against those services within the DPA and additional service delivery where it could be quantified. These are based on forecasts of a year 1 caseload of 2,600 UC claimants; 30% of which will have Housing Benefit/UC Housing Costs; 20% on Council Tax Support; 5% requiring digital support; 5% requiring personal budgeting support.

Service Requirement	DWP funding offer	Harrow estimated cost
Support to the UC delivery centre for Housing cost cases and impact on LA Benefit administration including appeals, overpayments, DHP requests and CTS claims	£21,565	£67,000
Digital Support to claimants accessing UC electronically	£3,360	£33,750
Personal Budgeting Support (no commissioning element)	£10,079	£89,000

Social/Private Landlord support including additional demand on Housing Needs	-	£67,000
UC claimant support for front line advice, noting JCP staff will not be trained in UC Housing Costs	-	£33,175
Management /Miscellaneous including project management, publicity, training	£18,174	£68,666
Total exc VAT	£53,176	£358,591
Total inc VAT	£63,811	£430,309

The difference between the DWP's funding offer and the local authority's forecast expenditure is very stark, particularly considering this is for a small year 1 cohort that will expand, increasing costs and the funding gap will be expected to widen. It also needs to be recognised that Harrow's forecast expenditure is based on the current position and if services are reduced or withdrawn as part of the council's savings programme, then service delivery could either become unviable or require additional funding to cover set-up costs.

Although DWP has already suggested that the Housing Benefit Administration Grant will be reduced due to Housing Benefit processing work migrating over to DWP under UC, (a risk that is being mitigated by MTFs growth of £250k in 2015/16 and £500k in 2016/17), there is additional risk that the grant could be reduced even further and that Harrow sees no reduction in work as the Revenues and Benefits teams need to continue to process Local Council Tax Support Scheme applications, but also takes on new responsibilities emerging from the Delivery Partnership Agreement.

Whilst funding is likely to continue beyond 2015/16, this is yet to be confirmed. The Council will need to negotiate with DWP to agree the level of funding to be paid to meet the specification of services provided in the Delivery Partnership Agreement as well as any other cuts in grant that may occur above what is expected.

Legal Implications

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced Universal Credit, which is being implemented pursuant to further legislative provisions and rolled out on a staggered basis, as noted earlier in this report.

Data sharing arrangements will need to be formalised between DWP and the Council and between the Council and other providers of services.

When DWP refers a claimant to the Council for personal budgeting support they will need to ensure that processes are implemented which will enable the claimant's information to be shared with other providers. The providers will also need to share information about the claimant and the outcomes of the personal budgeting support with the Council, who will in turn share the information with DWP.

Legal advice will be sought in relation to any proposed Delivery Partnership Agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions.

Performance Issues

None

Environmental Impact

None

Risk Management Implications

Loss of information – Harrow will not necessarily be aware of who is receiving UC. Residents will be required to make a claim for Council Tax Support rather than it being awarded automatically as at present.

Impact on collection (council tax / rent) – Universal Credit is not paid until five weeks after someone becomes unemployed and the award is not automatically notified to the Council. It may be some time after the date of entitlement that we become aware of a need for Council Tax Support (CTS). The current CTS scheme only permits backdating with good cause for up to three months. Failure to claim in itself would not normally be considered to be good cause. Whilst this could have a positive impact on the amount available to collect, the collection of this initial period of liability, before the CTS claim is made, will be difficult.

Alternative Payment Arrangements -The default position is that the housing element of UC will be paid directly to the claimant rather than the landlord with only the most vulnerable having payments to landlords. This is called an “Alternative Payment Arrangement” (APA). Whilst paying all of UC directly to the claimant, remains the preferred option there is a clear softening of the DWP stance on this and it is likely that in the medium term a greater percentage of APAs will be agreed during the period of migration. There is currently no provision for any landlord to be informed when someone claims UC. If a tenant accrues 8 weeks arrears then the landlord can apply to the DWP for an APA. If UC is in payment then the APA will be put in place. This has implications for rent collection levels.

Pressure on resources – A requirement of claiming benefit is the “Claimant Commitment” which requires people to spend 35 hours per week job searching. Much of this is on-line. The need to claim UC on-line will add to the demand for IT access from unemployed people. The DWP is providing on-line access via “Web Access Devices” in the Job Centres but there is likely to be increased pressure on Access Harrow and other council buildings access points and services.

Funding – The Council will receive some funding but this appears at first sight to be well under what Harrow will need to spend to fund the support activities required. The funding must be spent on the activities described and commissioned in the DPA and unspent funds are expected to be returned. There is no information on the long term funding.

Equalities Implications

There are no equality/community issues arising from this report. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken by the Local Authority as the implementation of Universal Credit is a DWP initiative. DWP have produced an Equality Impact Assessment which is available online at www.gov.uk.

Council Priorities

UC will bring challenges to residents and has the potential to detrimentally affect our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents if DWP does not commission adequate support for residents. Any strategy adopted by the Council to support roll out of UC in Harrow has to consider that ultimately the Council will be the first port of call for the majority of residents; regardless who DWP commissions to deliver resident support activity. As such there is also a risk of existing services being overwhelmed by enquiries as residents present themselves at Harrow offices / services.

Communication and engagement with DWP will be crucial in the coming months as well as the agreement of an acceptable DPA and adequate funding, both of which are key to mitigating the risks, improving the customer experience and ensuring the vulnerable are supported throughout the transition and beyond.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert....	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: ... 10 March 2015.....		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: ... 11 March 2015.....		

Ward Councillors notified:

NO

** Delete as appropriate.*

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background

Papers

Introduction Presentation – Appendix 1

Contact:

Fern Silverio (Divisional Director – Collections & Housing Benefits),
Tel: 020-8736-6818 / email: fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

DWP guidance as per links

Local Support Services Framework

https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en-GB&source=hp&q=dwp+universal+credit+local+support+services+framework&gbv=2&oq=dwp+universal+credit+local+support+services+framework&gs_l=heirloom-hp.12...0.0.1.1531.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.msedr...0...1ac.34.heirloom-hp..1.3.467.xOio-y1ssfl&safe=active

Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA)

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=dwp+UC+Delivery+Partnership+Agreement&safe=active&hl=en-GB&gbv=2&oq=dwp+UC+Delivery+Partnership+Agreement&gs_l=heirloom-serp.12...43110.44125.0.45813.4.4.0.0.0.0.235.672.0j3j1.4.0.msedr...0...1ac.1.34.heirloom-serp..3.1.235.kbnmqc1Rqa8

Local Support Services Update and Trialling Plan

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=DWP+Local+Support+Services+Update+and+Trialling+Plan&safe=active&hl=en-GB&gbv=2&oq=DWP+Local+Support+Services+Update+and+Trialling+Plan&gs_l=heirloom-serp.12...127422.134375.0.135984.41.15.0.0.0.4.172.1204.3j7.10.0.msedr...0...1ac.1.34.heirloom-serp..36.5.689.4S6La-0hBtE

Universal Credit At Work report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-at-work>

Personal Budgeting Support and Alternative Payment Arrangements

Guidance.

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Personal+Budgeting+Support+and+Alternative+Payment+Arrangements+Guidance+&safe=active&hl=en-GB&gbv=2&oq=Personal+Budgeting+Support+and+Alternative+Payment+Arrangements+Guidance+&gs_l=heirloom-serp.12...2297.6375.0.7547.31.9.0.0.0.3.203.765.0j4j1.5.0.msedr...0...1ac.1.34.heirloom-serp..30.1.203.RsWzeBDpUWo

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

5 FEBRUARY 2015

Chair: * Councillor Mrs Rekha Shah

Councillors: * Michael Borio * Mrs Vina Mithani
* Niraj Dattani * Chris Mote

Advisers: * Julian Maw - Harrow Healthwatch
* Dr N Merali - Harrow Local Medical Committee

* Denotes Member present

32. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

33. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

All Agenda Items

Councillor Mrs Vina Mithani declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was employed by Public Health England. She would remain in the room whilst all matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Chris Mote declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his daughter was employed at Northwick Park Hospital. He would remain in the room whilst all matters were considered and voted upon.

34. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

35. Public Questions, Petitions & References

RESOLVED: To note that none were received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

36. Harrow and Barnet Public Health annual report

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Public Health which looked back over 50 years at a selection of topics which were public health issues fifty years ago and remained issues currently and contained proposals to address these.

Following a brief overview of the report, an officer responded to the following questions from Members:

- Obesity had a number of other conditions such as type 2 diabetes associated with it. What strategy was in place to deal with the high levels of diabetes among residents in Harrow?

There was an obesity strategy in place. Local analysis had shown that Harrow had one of the highest rates of diabetes nationally, which was prevalent mainly among those residents of South Asian origin. However, GPs provided excellent advice and services which were focussed on prevention. Harrow had the lowest complication rates for diabetes in the Country.

- Had the take up rate for NHS Health Checks trialled by Barnet and Harrow improved and had these been sufficiently publicised to the residents of both boroughs? Harrow had the highest rate of TB in London. What screening process was there for migrants who came to the UK who may be carriers?

The take up rate for Health Checks in both boroughs had improved since 2014. Point of care testing equipment had been rolled out to local pharmacies, where only a single visit, (as opposed to two or three visits to a GP) was required. These were also being offered at community venues.

Health checks for TB were required under visa conditions for travellers coming to the UK from south Asian countries. However, this would not eliminate those who had latent TB which could be exacerbated by a poor diet and living conditions and may be expressed at a later stage. Public Health England was rolling out a latent TB test which was being trialled at the clinic in Wealdstone.

- What was the strategy in relation to smoking cessation and deterring young people from starting smoking in the first place. Was there any evidence that e-cigarettes were less harmful than tobacco products?

The evidence base for or against e-cigarettes was not sufficiently strong to provide a definitive answer. Officers carried out test purchases of e-cigarettes and prosecuted any one found to be selling them to those under age. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence had set up London-wide and nationwide initiatives to look into this and was working in partnership with ASH and the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT).

- Were home STI testing kits being promoted?

The home testing kits were being promoted and were available for a number of different STIs. Early HIV testing was being promoted at clinics.

- Had the take up rates for the measles vaccination improved in Harrow?

In recent years there had been a national decrease in the take up rates for the measles vaccination. The take up rate in Harrow in percentage terms was in the low 90s. There was a targeted programme to ensure improved take up.

- What were the take up rates for the HPV vaccine and did the vaccine have any side effects?

The side effects for the vaccine were not major and the take up rate in Harrow was 80%.

- What was being done to ensure that GPs captured information from patients regarding their tobacco, shisha and e-cigarette smoking habits? What were the risks associated with shisha smoking?

It was a fallacy that Shisha was not harmful. There were a number of different ways shisha could be smoked and the level of risk would depend on the type of pipe and tobacco used as well as the heating method used. She added that hospitals should be encouraged to routinely ask questions regarding smoking and provide cessation support if required. Most smoking cessation information was delivered by Pharmacists, which reduced the pressure on GPs as the cessation programme lasted 5 weeks. Harrow was working closely with CNWL in this area.

Brent Council had recently undertaken an awareness raising campaign regarding the dangers of shisha smoking and Harrow would be looking to Brent for advice and support in designing its campaign. Additionally, there were plans to inspect every venue in Harrow where Shisha was available to ensure the premises were aware of their legal obligations. The university of Westminster campus would also be targeted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

37. NWLHT A&E / Winter pressures

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Chief Nurse at London North West Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWHT) which provided an update on the Trust's emergency pathway and the action it was undertaking to address the underperformance of the core A&E performance targets.

Following a brief overview of the report by the Chief Operating Officer at LNWHT, he responded to the following questions from Members:

- Had the recent introduction of a Golden Hour ward round helped to improve weekend discharges and reduce the length of stay or had this led to patients being discharged at odd hours, i.e. late at night?

Patients were not discharged at odd hours. The high rate of re-admissions at Northwick Park Hospital was average in comparison to other hospitals but this figure was rising. High re-admission rates may be due to patients being discharged too early, patients' difficult home circumstances and inadequate community based support.

- Why were the current levels of A&E waiting times so high?

This had been due to winter pressures i.e. illnesses such as flu outbreaks. However, the levels had not been as high as in previous years.

- Had penalty clauses for delays in delivering the construction of the modular unit been written into the building contract?

Penalty clauses had been written into the contract as there were inherent risks associated with working on such a complex site, however, he did not anticipate any major challenges which would lead to delays in completion by December 2015.

- What was being done to ensure better signage for and access to the A&E unit?

The estates service at Northwick Park was aware of the situation and was working to resolve it.

- What measures were in place to ensure that those patients who were not eligible for free treatment were being charged accordingly?

There was a well-developed income protection policy in place. However, this would not apply to emergency care as it was the ethos of the NHS to provide emergency care to everyone.

- What would be the net increase in bed capacity after the building works were completed at Northwick Park Hospital?

There had been an increase of 40 beds in the current financial year and there would be 66 additional beds once the modular build was complete. Although this increase represented an increase in capacity that would bring the hospital on par with other A&E provision in London, it should be noted that demand at peak times would continue to exceed bed capacity, though this would occur with less frequency than previously.

- Ealing Hospital had recently extended the level of consultant cover at weekends. Was there sufficient weekend consultant cover at Northwick Park Hospital?

Yes, as it was the Trust's policy that working arrangements and working conditions for staff at all three hospital sites should be the same.

- The Capita report of May 2014 suggested that an additional 100 beds were needed at Northwick Park Hospital – would this be sufficient?

The figures quoted in the report were a snapshot in time and this figure would increase as the local population continued to both increase and age. The increase in bed capacity would bring the hospital in line with other UK hospitals, however, this was not a one-off fix. Northwick Park continued to be in the top decile nationally for rates of occupancy and length of stay. This was due in part to the rise in chronic cases and increased number of acute beds. There were additional challenges in terms of community bed capacity and community services to support patients after they had been discharged.

- Had there been any cases where the discharge of patients had been delayed because care packages were not in place?

The number of delayed transfer of care cases had reduced during the winter, but there was room for improvement. The hospitals' merger and the creation of a Community Services Director had helped to mitigate against this.

- Was the current workforce adequate and why did the Trust need to employ more consultants?

The increase in bed capacity meant that additional consultants had to be deployed. This was an area of challenge nationally and there were difficulties in recruiting and retaining Emergency consultants. There were plans to recruit more sub-consultants.

- An adviser stated that GPs had the capacity to reduce hospital workloads and noted that although the number of attendances had not increased, the number of admissions had. Good risk assessment and

management by senior consultants would lead to fewer admissions and earlier discharges would reduce the pressure on beds. He asked how many patients were currently waiting to be discharged pending a care package being implemented.

This figure was 10%, however, 10% of 600 beds was a high figure. In such cases patients were delayed awaiting care packages or support from social services and/or family members as well as due to logistical issues.

The Rapid Access and Treatment (Ratting) policy was designed to alleviate these pressures by helping identify those individuals who were medically fit for discharge.

- Had the Trust considered providing GP cover at Hospitals as a means of relieving pressure on A&E or looked at alternative models of provision, for example, opening 7-days a week between 8.00 am to 8.00 pm, allowing GPs to accompany consultants on ward rounds?

Northwick Park received around 500 patients per day. Half of these were urgent care cases. It was not a question of the volume of individuals who visited the hospital but related more to the number of medical admissions and how to ensure fewer repeat admissions.

- An adviser stated that the number of referrals by GPs to A&E had increased despite recent efforts to reduce them. Community units, for example, the Denham unit and contracts with other social care providers should also be considered as step-down units.

There was a campaign to ensure that the Alexandra Clinic remained open 7-days a week. The Trust was considering all of the measures mentioned above.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

38. CQC inspection of CNWL Mental Health and Community Services

At its meeting of 24 November 2014, the Sub-Committee Members had indicated a desire to submit evidence and comments from the Sub-Committee to be fed back to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in relation to its inspection of the CNWL planned for 23 February 2015.

An adviser from Harrow Healthwatch stated that Harrow Healthwatch had already forwarded comments to the CQC, which would inform the work of the inspectors. Patients' groups and user groups had also fed back to the CQC regarding improvements they would like to see made to local services.

In view of the above, the Sub-Committee decided not to send any additional comments to the CQC and requested that a copy of the inspectors findings and any subsequent compliance action plan be forwarded to Sub-Committee Members as soon as they were available.

RESOLVED: That the CQC be requested to forward a copy of the inspector's findings and any subsequent compliance action plan to Sub-Committee Members as soon as they were available.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.10 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MRS REKHA SHAH
Chair

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