

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 7th October 2014

Subject: Council Tax Support Scheme Challenge Panel

Responsible Officer: Alex Dewsnap
Divisional Director, Partnership Development and Performance

**Scrutiny Lead
Member area:**

- Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane (Chair)
- Cllr Paul Osborn
- Cllr Jerry Miles
- Cllr Barry Kendler
- Cllr Pamela Fitzpatrick

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Scope for Council Tax Support Scheme Challenge Panel

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Enclosed in this report is the scope for the Council Tax Support Scheme Challenge Panel.

Recommendations:

Councillors are asked to:

- Consider and agree the scope for the challenge panel.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

For the 2014/15 municipal year members of the Overview and Scrutiny Leadership group decided that they would like to look at the council's current local council tax support scheme. The main objective of this work is to determine the impact the scheme is having on Harrow's residents.

The review will address the impact of the scheme on our residents and inform the development of future local council tax support schemes.

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane has been nominated as the Chairman for the challenge panel. The challenge panel will be held in late October 2014 and will hear evidence from Council officers, the portfolio holder, local housing associations and voluntary sector orgs. The review would also like to gather evidence from ward councillors as to the reality faced by their constituents.

The timescales for delivering the Review are extremely tight, but there will be an opportunity to pick up any issues that the review concludes require further research as part of the more in-depth scrutiny review of the impacts of welfare reform.

Financial Implications

The costs of delivering this project will be met from within existing resources.

Performance Issues

There are no specific performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There are no specific environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Equalities Implications

The introduction of the local council tax support scheme has implications on some of the most vulnerable members of the community including those from minority ethnic groups and those who are disabled. The local economy, health and social care facilities in the borough could also be affected as a result of the council tax scheme if residents have less to spend.

A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken in the development of our local council tax support scheme. The challenge panel will consider the findings of this EqIA during the course of its work, how equality implications have been taken into account in current policy and practice and consider the possible implications of any changes it recommends.

In carrying out the challenge panel, Members will also need to consider its own practices and how it can facilitate all relevant stakeholders in the borough to have their voices heard.

Council Priorities

This review relates to all four of the Corporate Priorities 2014/15, including:

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

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

N/A

Ward Councillors notified:	N/A
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mohammed Ilyas, Policy officer. 0208 424 1322

Background Papers: Council Tax Support Scheme Challenge Panel Scope.