

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	16 September 2015
Subject:	Draft Scope for Welfare Reform Scrutiny Review Group
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Policy Lead –Councillor Steven Wright Performance Lead –Councillor Primesh Patel
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Draft Scope for Welfare Reform Scrutiny Review Group

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the draft scope for the scrutiny review of welfare reforms.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Consider and agree the scope for the Review
- Agree or provide a steer as to the membership of the Review Group
- Agree that the Chair of the Review will be Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick
- Agree upon the timing of this Review and consider the comments review members have made to date in this regard.

Section 2 – Report

The Scrutiny Leadership Group asked that a Scrutiny Review of the welfare reforms form part of the scrutiny work programme for 2015/2016.

The attached scope has been drafted with input from officers and Scrutiny councillors who have already met twice in taking part in this Review. The draft scope suggests that this Review will consider the impact that the benefit cap is having/ will have on residents in Harrow and how the Council or others can help relevant residents (those impacted by the cap, or at risk of being impacted in the future) to come off, live better on or avoid needing benefits. Upon completion of this part of the Review, members would like to consider the same questions in relation to working tax credits and low paid residents in Harrow.

Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick has chaired the first two meetings of the Review, which has considered the draft scope and remit. Members in attendance at the first two meetings have been of the opinion that this Review should continue into the 2016/17 financial year.

However, the scope of the project as drafted (ie consideration of the impacts of the benefit cap and working tax credits) should be completed by the end of this financial year, and any decision as to extend the work of the Group beyond this scope into the next financial year would need to be agreed by Scrutiny Leadership Group, through conversations about the scrutiny work programme and how to best use the available Member and Officer capacity in 2016/17.

Financial Implications

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

Performance Issues

There is no specific performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Equalities Implications

The review will consider 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.

Council Priorities

- Making a difference for communities

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory clearances not required.

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

Contact:

Edward Smith, Policy Officer, 020 8424 7602

Rebecka Steven, Policy Officer, 020 8420 9695

Background Papers:

- Draft scope for the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Review Group