

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 2015

### WELFARE REFORM SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP – DRAFT SCOPE

1	SUBJECT	Welfare Scrutiny Review
2	COMMITTEE	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3	REVIEW GROUP	Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick (Chair) Councillor Ghazanfar Ali Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Marilyn Ashton Councillor Margaret Davine Councillor Josephine Dooley Councillor Ameet Jogia Councillor Barry Kendler Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane Councillor Vina Mithani Councillor Chris Mote Councillor Janet Mote Councillor Phillip O'Dell Councillor Christine Robson
4	AIMS/ OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES	<p>To understand the experiences of benefit claimants and those who have needed to claim benefits in the past or may need to in future.</p> <p>To understand what services are available and what policies are in place to help people come off, live better on, or avoid needing benefits and how effective they are.</p> <p>To propose robust recommendations which are accepted and implemented by Cabinet that will help people come off, live better on, or avoid needing benefits.</p>
5	MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF REVIEW	Acceptance and implementation of recommendations.
6	SCOPE	<p>This Review will consider the impact the welfare reforms are having on certain cohorts with a view to influencing the budget process for 2016/17 and beyond by way of recommendations of impactful action the Council could take to help people come off, live better on, or avoid needing benefits.</p> <p>The cohorts to focus on are those who are/ were/ may become:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• subject to the Benefit Cap</li><li>• claimants of Working Tax Credits.</li></ul>

7	SERVICE PRIORITIES (Corporate/ Department)	This Review relates in particular to the Corporate Priorities 2015 - 19 of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making a difference for communities</li> <li>• making a difference for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• making a difference to families</li> </ul>
8	REVIEW SPONSOR	<i>Tom Whiting, Corporate Director for Resources</i>
9	ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER	Rachel Gapp (Head of Policy)
10	SUPPORT OFFICER(S)	Edward Smith and Rebecka Steven (Policy Team)
11	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	Business Support Service and Policy Team
12	EXTERNAL INPUT	The input of the following may be useful for the review: <p><b>Stakeholders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Council Manager(s)</li> <li>• Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)</li> <li>• Residents</li> </ul> <p><b>Experts/advisers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative interest groups</li> <li>• Local community groups</li> <li>• Local voluntary and community sector organisations</li> </ul>
13	METHODOLOGY	This review will involve <b>four</b> phases: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Evidence Phase</b> – including literature review and evidence gathering from local and national studies around the impact of the welfare reforms, other written/oral evidence from senior managers, ward councillors, residents and experts. This will inform the structure and lines of questioning for the next phase of the review.</li> <li>2. <b>Evidence Gathering/ Out and About</b> – Councillors making direct contact with residents to understand their issues and perspectives, meeting relevant community groups and case studies. Expert witnesses to be invited to participate in information sessions at a meeting of the group.</li> <li>3. <b>Solution Phase</b> – discuss findings, investigate and test potential solutions.</li> <li>4. Writing up of <b>final report and recommendations</b> - for the approval of the Overview and Scrutiny</li> </ol>

		Committee on 19 April 2016, and Cabinet on 24 May 2016.
14	EQUALITY 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. In carrying out the Review, the Review Group will also need to consider its own practices and how it can facilitate all relevant stakeholders in the borough to have their voices heard.
15	ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS	Whilst further Welfare Reforms are planned for the future, this review will focus primarily on benefit recipients in the current context. This will provide insight into what the consequences of future reforms may be.
16	TIMESCALE	<p>June 2015 – April 2016 to ensure that the review concludes and reports to O&amp;S in the 15/16 Municipal Year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June – August 2015: Scoping and Planning</li> <li>• Mid-October: Benefit Cap ‘Evidence Phase’</li> <li>• November: Benefit Cap ‘Out &amp; About’ Phase</li> <li>• December: Benefit Cap ‘wash-up’ and recommendation formation meeting</li> <li>• January: Working Tax Credit/ Low Pay ‘Evidence Phase’</li> <li>• February: Working Tax Credit ‘Out &amp; About’ Phase</li> <li>• March: Working Tax Credit ‘wash-up’ and recommendation formation meeting</li> <li>• April: report to Overview &amp; Scrutiny</li> <li>• May 2016: Report to Cabinet</li> </ul> <p>The Review Group may produce an interim report should wish to make recommendations to be considered as part of the budget process.</p> <p>At the end of the financial year, should the group wish to continue this review, it will discuss this at the Scrutiny Leadership Group.</p>
17	RESOURCE COMMITMENTS	To be met from existing Policy Team budget. No significant additional expenditure is anticipated. It should be noted that the capacity of the Policy Team is limited.
18	REPORT AUTHORS	Edward Smith/ Rebecka Steven

19	REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS	Outline of formal reporting process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The relevant Divisional Director(s) and Portfolio Holder(s) will be consulted in the drafting of the final report and recommendations</li><li>• Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li><li>• Report to Cabinet</li></ul>
20	FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS	It is anticipated that Cabinet would respond to any recommendations made at the Cabinet meeting in May 2016.