
Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	23 June 2016
Subject:	Customer Experience of Claiming Council Administered Benefits and Financial Support	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To present formally the final report of the Customer Experience of Claiming Council Administered Benefits and Financial Support Working Group.

Recommendations: That

- (1) the Cabinet supports the contents of the Customer Experience of Claiming Council Administered Benefits and Financial Support Working Group Final report and approves the recommendations as set out in paragraph 12 of that report; and
- (2) the Head of Corporate Resources be requested to submit a monitoring report to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 17 January 2017, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report and that thereafter, monitoring reports be submitted to the Committee on a six monthly basis.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
3	Environmental Sustainability		√	
4	Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Children and Young People	√		
6	Creating Safe Communities		√	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	√		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Working Group has made a number of recommendations that require approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) and the Cabinet.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) established the Working Group to better understand the customer experience of claiming Council administered benefits and financial support with various objectives and the Working Group performed this task.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

As above

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial		
Legal		
Human Resources		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

The implementation of the recommendations will help Sefton’s citizens to receive an improved service not only in their engagement with Sefton Council but with partner agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions and One Vision Housing. As an example, the Final Report has been developed from the learning that has emerged starting from the case studies etc. However, particular regard was given to the interaction between centrally administered benefits, such as Universal Credit, Job Seekers allowance and the locally administered Housing Benefit and Council Tax support. Recognition was also given to the demands placed increasingly on the local Council by the Government’s welfare reform agenda and how many low income working families in

the Borough are seeking further support from the Council simply to meet their day to day needs, for example by the use of the Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.4192/16) has been involved throughout the review work and would wish to add her appreciation of the support of Members and officers in throughout the review.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.3475/16) have been consulted and has no comments to add to the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

Introduction/Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) established a Working Group to better understand the customer experience of claiming Council administered benefits and financial support with the following objectives:-

1. To improve access to consistent and high quality information.
2. To improve customer satisfaction with access to our services
3. To increase the resolution of customers' needs with one visit or call,
4. To simplify access to services by streamlining the whole process from first contact to resolution - thereby reducing the need for multiple return contacts.
5. To reduce failure demand by ensuring robust processes and accountability between front-line hubs and service areas, and clear ownership of complex cross-service enquiries.
6. To increase access to "self-service" information and automatic transactions where appropriate.
7. To reduce costs through eliminating duplication.

Accordingly, the Working Group has met on numerous occasions to undertake such review and its Final Report, together with associated recommendations, is attached.

The Final Report will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) at its meeting to be held on 21 June 2016 and the decision of the Committee will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

The Cabinet is therefore requested, subject to any amendments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to support the contents of the Working Group Final report and approve the recommendations as set out in paragraph 12 of that report.