



To: Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources:
Councillor George Owers
Report by: Alison Cole: Head of Revenues and Benefits
Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy & Resources
18/1/2016
Scrutiny
Committee
Wards affected: All Wards

UNIVERSAL CREDIT DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the Delivery Partnership Agreement with the Department of Work & Pensions which is needed for the provision of services required as a consequence of the roll-out of Universal Credit.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to authorise the Chief Executive to enter into these arrangements provided she is satisfied that the full terms of the agreement are acceptable.

3. Background

3.1 On 16 February 2015, the national rollout of Universal Credit began. Universal Credit is a new benefit which combines Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment & Support Allowance, Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. The Government's aim in rolling out Universal Credit is to simplify the benefits system and improve work incentives.

3.2 The DWP will be administering Universal Credit from its regional service centres and supporting claimants to get into work through the Jobcentre Plus (JCP) network. Local Authorities (LAs) have been asked to help

support those who need extra help with their claims, although this is not a statutory duty.

3.3 DWP requires local JCP offices and LAs to enter into local Delivery Partnership Agreements (DPAs) which set out the roles of each organisation in delivering Universal Credit and provides for payments to be made to LAs in respect of the activities they carry out to support the DPA. This report is seeking approval for the Council to enter into a Delivery Partnership Agreement with the local Jobcentre Plus.

3.4 Universal Credit will be introduced in Cambridge on 29th February 2016 for single claimants without children. The trigger for applying for Universal Credit will be the need to make a claim for Jobseekers Allowance, i.e. where someone loses their job, or leaves the education system. Where Universal Credit has been rolled-out elsewhere, the majority of claimants are young (under 30) single men, a third of which have housing costs.

3.5 The eligibility criteria for Universal Credit in Cambridge in year one means that there will be a small number of claimants. DWP are forecasting up to 82 applications a month in Cambridge, although experience in other areas shows that actual numbers of applications are much lower than those forecast.

3.6 This estimate is the DWP's current forecast and very much depends on when Universal Credit will be expanded to couples and families.

3.7 Schedule 1 of the DPA outlines the responsibilities of the City Council. These include:

- Providing support to the Universal Credit Service Centre on housing cost issues
- Supporting customers to make claims online
- Providing access to personal budgeting support to customers identified as having a need for it
- Processing claims for Council Tax Reduction
- Supporting landlords to prepare for Universal Credit
- Providing Management Information to DWP
- Supporting DWP with the evaluation of the first phase of national Rollout

3.8 DWP has advised that they expect there to be fewer than 12 customers per month requiring support. Providing this support in-house will help inform the decision on how to provide these services if and when Universal Credit is rolled out to a wider customer base.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The Council will receive payments for undertaking the activity outlined in the DPA and DWP have indicated that the maximum that is likely to be granted, is £30,000 plus VAT.

(b) Staffing Implications

Limited in initial roll-out, due to very low numbers.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken by the Local Authority as the implementation of Universal Credit is a DWP initiative. The DWP has produced an Equality Impact Assessment which is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/welfare-reform-act-2012-equality-impact-assessments>

(d) Environmental Implications

None

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Sample Delivery Partnership Agreement

6. Background papers

None

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