
**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 27 JULY 2015 AT 7.30 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Griffiths (Chairman), Ferguson (Vice-Chairman), Fowler, Hones, Massey, Pemberton, M Skeels (Jnr) and Yallop.

Also Present: Councillor Hughes (Portfolio Holder for Revenues and Benefits).

In Attendance: Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Revenues and Benefits Manager (Harry Bates) and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice).

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Miles (with Councillor Massey substituting)..

15. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 27 July 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made on behalf of Members:

- (i) Councillor Yallop declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No.4 (Universal Credit – Update from the Revenues and Benefits Manager), by virtue of the fact she was a Tendring verified, registered landlord.
- (ii) Councillor Hughes declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No.4 (Universal Credit – Update from the Revenues and Benefits Manager), by virtue of the fact his spouse was a registered landlord.
- (iii) Councillor Massey declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No.4 (Universal Credit – Update from the Revenues and Benefits Manager), by virtue of the fact he managed a number of properties within Clacton.
- (iv) Councillor Ferguson declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No.4 (Universal Credit – Update from the Revenues and Benefits Manager), by virtue of the fact she worked within the supporting housing environment and regularly encountered concerns around Universal Credit.

9. UNIVERSAL CREDIT – UPDATE FROM THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS MANAGER

The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Council's Revenues and Benefits Manager who advised Members that, as the preferred option, Citizens' Advice Bureaus had received additional funding for supporting Universal Credit claims and that the Council had no local influence on it.

Councillor Ferguson spoke on the matter, in the context that she worked within the supporting housing environment and regularly encountered concerns around Universal Credit.

Following discussion, it was **COMMENTED TO CABINET** that the Committee was concerned that:

1. The roll-out of Universal Credit could bring about associated wide-ranging problems in that it would leave vulnerable 16 to 18 year olds in limbo and that cash paid to claimants may be unwisely spent;
2. Tending Citizens' Advice Bureau would become overwhelmed by the knock-on effects of the introduction of Universal Credit on its services; and
3. The Council would have no direct influence over the implementation of Universal Credit but the Committee hoped that the Council would continue to liaise proactively with its homeless people.

It was also **AGREED** that:

- (i) The Portfolio Holder for Revenues and Benefits and its Revenues and Benefits Manager be invited to address and update the Committee in six-months' time and that this matter be reflected within the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/2016;
- (ii) The Committee consider, at that meeting, an example of a good case study compared to that of a less favourable case study in order that the Committee could better understand how Universal Credit worked.

12. ANY NEW ITEMS TO BE ADDED TO THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee requested that the following item be put forward for inclusion within the Committee's Work Programme:

Universal Credit – April 2016

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee was to be held on Monday 2 November 2015 but reminded the Committee that a special meeting would be arranged to further consider Universal Credit in April 2016.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.18pm.

Chairman