

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 JUNE 2016	7
UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

This report outlines the details of the current implementation programme for Universal Credit provided by the Department Of Works & Pensions (DWP) and is seeking authority to extend the existing delivery partnership agreement from 1st April 2016 for a further 12 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the current progress of the roll out for Universal Credit.
2. Approve the negotiation with the DWP of the continuum of a Delivery Partnership Agreement to run from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2016 in respect of a number of ancillary services relating to the continuing roll-out of Universal Credit, as detailed within this report.
3. Authorise the Director of Resources to enter into any future agreements of this nature that the DWP might seek.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Cabinet 25th March 2015

1. To note the progress of the roll out of Universal Credit
2. To approve the negotiation with the DWP of a Delivery Partnership Agreement to run from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 in respect of a number of ancillary services related to the roll-out of Universal credit as detailed within the report.
3. To note that a further report would be presented to Members prior to the finalisation of any further agreement beyond 31st March 2016 in relation to services provided in support of the Universal Credit programme.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	✓
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	✓

REPORT

1. Background

Universal credit was introduced in 2013 and continues to be the government's flagship welfare reform. It is expected to be fully implemented by 2021 replacing the following means tested benefits and tax credits:

- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment And Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

2. Current Position

Universal Credit was introduced in Fylde in November 2014 and subsequently across the rest of the UK. The DWP have adopted a policy of phasing in Universal Credit starting with more simple, new cases.

Table 1 – Numbers of claimants in Fylde receiving Universal Credit – both in work/not in work

Service/Month	March 2015	March 2016
Total numbers of claimants receiving Universal Credit in Fylde (in work/not in work)	110 (20/90)	503 (208/290)

3. DWP Delivery Partnership Agreement

3.1 Based upon actual volumes of cases dealt with by Fylde Council staff in 2015/16, the DWP have provided us with estimates of the number of cases that we are likely to deal with between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017. Table 2 provides details of customers visiting Council Offices requiring access to Universal Credit access on DWP systems. This usually takes the form of on-line access to the UC application form.

Two members of the Council's Customer Services team have been provided with training by DWP in providing personal budgeting support.

Table 2 - Actual Volumes of Cases Dealt With By Council Staff 2015/16

Online Access	
Access Required In Council Offices	9
Personal Budgeting Support	
Face to Face Advice Given	8

3.2 Table 3 outlines the breakdown of the assumed total cost of Universal Credit support by Fylde Council. The volume of claimants using services will be reviewed at regular partnership meetings and funding may be increased by negotiation between the DWP and Fylde Council.

Table 3 – Funding Estimates April 2016 to March 2017 (Figures for 2015/16 in brackets where applicable)

DP Costs	Cost/Volume Assumptions to March 2017	Payment Basis	Maximum cost to 31 March 2017 £	Revised costs to include LCTRS £
On-Line supported access (Digital)	33 (144)	volumes	842	842 (3,000)
Personal Budgeting Support	29 (12)	volumes	1,465	1,465 (8,900)
Support for UC Service Centre	228 (600)	volumes	1,465	1,465 (11,900)
Support for Complex cases	11	volumes	75	75
Management Costs	£814 x 12 months	Reimburse agreed cost on a monthly basis	9,770	9,770 (TBC)
LCTRS				898
Total (excluding VAT)			13,615	14,515 (30,700)
Total (including VAT)			16,338	17,418 (36,840)

3.3 The DWP have provided the Council with a draft Delivery Partnership Agreement. The purpose of the agreement is to set out the relationship between DWP and the Council in supporting the continual roll-out of Universal credit.

3.4 The agreement describes the commitments made by both DWP and the Council in relation to the delivery of Universal credit support, including the funding arrangement, the management information required by the DWP, governance arrangements and the service provision to be delivered by DWP and the Council. The service provision the Council is expected to deliver (between the Revenues & Benefits Shared Service and Fylde Council Customer Services staff) is described as follows:

- Provide support to UC Service Centre staff around housing cost issues that may arise.
- Support for claimants to make a UC claim on-line.
- Support for claimants who require personal budgeting support to manage their UC payments.

- Work with DWP locally in supporting landlords.

3.5 The DWP have renewed their commitment to provide funding to enable Fylde Council to provide these service in support of Universal Credit until 31st March 2017. The DWP's model for calculating funding has taken into consideration the real levels of support provided by the Council in 2015/16 (see table 2) and estimated client volumes for 2016/17. Average salaries have been used to estimate costs.

4 Summary

4.1 Universal Credit will continue to be expanded using a 'test and learn' approach across Fylde.

4.2 The key elements of the support provided by Council Staff have been agreed in discussions between Council officers and the DWP along with the Delivery Partnership Agreement until 31st March 2017.

4.3 The cost of providing these services will be reimbursed by the DWP.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no additional financial implications to the Council as a result of the recommendations in this report. The nature of the agreement with the DWP is that any costs incurred by the Council are reimbursed in full. The reduction in funding for 2016/17 compared to 2015/16 reflects the number of actual Universal Credit clients using Council facilities.
Legal	Both parties are Data Controllers under The Data Protection Act 1998 and are joint controllers for the purposes of Universal Support. Data protection will be set out in a separate Data Sharing Agreement signed by both the Council and DWP.
Community Safety	None arising directly from this report.
Human Rights and Equalities	The DWP have produced an Equality Impact Assessment available online at www.gov.uk
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising directly from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no additional H&S or risk implications to the Council as a result of the recommendations in this report.

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Universal Credit local support services framework	Updated 27/03/2016	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-local-support-services-framework
Minutes of Cabinet	25/03/2015	http://www.fylde.gov.uk/meetings/details/1192

