

Agenda Item No:

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny (Resources)

Date of Meeting: 21 February 2012

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Review of the Payment of Housing Benefits Management Update

Report By: Peter Grace
Head of Financial Services

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the progress made with the recommendations as requested.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the management update be noted

Reasons for Recommendations

Considerable progress has been made in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the service provision over the last 18 months. The recommendations in the original scrutiny review have been substantially addressed.

Introduction

1. A scrutiny Review of the Council's Payment of Housing Benefit was undertaken as part of the 2010/11 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The Final report was presented to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 June 2011.
2. The Review Team undertook a thorough review and made 17 recommendations.
3. The recommendations were approved by Cabinet on 11 July 2011.
4. A request was made that a progress report be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2012.

Scrutiny Review Recommendations Update

5. A full progress report on each of the 17 recommendations is attached at Appendix A.
6. It is encouraging to report that the excellent performance has been maintained whilst at the same time keeping costs down. (Appendix B)
7. With regards to the introduction of new technology, you will note that any potential savings are outweighed by the costs incurred. (Appendix C). This, together with the uncertain future of the service, means that any investment would need to be carefully considered.

Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings, East Hastings, North St. Leonards, South St. Leonards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Equalities and Community Cohesiveness | No |
| Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17) | No |
| Risk Management | No |
| Environmental Issues | No |
| Economic/Financial Implications | Yes |
| Human Rights Act | No |
| Organisational Consequences | No |
| Local People's Views | No |

Background Information

APPENDIX A - Schedule of Recommendations Update

APPENDIX B - Family Audit Group Comparison Table

APPENDIX C - Northgate products

Officer to Contact

Jean Saxby

jsaxby@hastings.gov.uk

01424 451556
