

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)

Report to Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 13th February 2017

Subject: Update on impact of welfare reforms

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Government's programme of welfare reforms started in 2011 with changes to the amount of Housing Benefit that could be paid to private rented sector tenants. The subsequent programme of welfare reforms has seen reforms to nearly all aspects of working age benefits, covering, amongst others, social sector tenants, claimants with disabilities and people in low-paid work.
2. The changes appear to have led to an increase in rent arrears, extra challenges in collecting Council Tax and an increase in demand for appeals to the Tribunal Service. The statistics for the success rate in having decisions overturned on appeal show that 60% of decisions are overturned. The Welfare Rights Unit success rate with having decisions overturned is even higher at 81% for ESA cases in the current year
3. There is also information to support a conclusion that there has been an increase in the number of people approaching foodbanks for help with the main reasons being delays in benefit or changes to benefit, including sanctions.
4. Further reforms are due to be implemented in 2017 and beyond, including the ongoing roll out of Universal Credit.

Recommendations:

5. That the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board notes the information in this report and continues to monitor the impact of the welfare reform programme.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The report sets out to provide information that shows how the Government's programme of welfare reforms has affected residents in Leeds.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Government's programme of welfare reforms began with an announcement in the Emergency Budget of 2010 that changes to Housing Benefit would be introduced during 2011. These changes, which were focused on the private rented sector, were followed by a number of other welfare reforms. These are briefly explained below.

2.2 Housing Benefit changes:

- 2011: extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) in the private rented sector to single tenants up to the age of 35. Previously SAR applied only to single tenants up to the age of 25. The effect of this was that single tenants aged between 26 and 35 had their Housing Benefit reduced from around £100 a week down to £60 a week;
- 2011: Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were reduced across the board. Previously LHA rates, which are set by the Valuation Office, were set at the 50% percentile of rental values achieved by private landlords; this figure was reduced to the 30% percentile of rental values achieved by private landlords;
- 2011: the ability for tenants to retain 'excess' LHA payments up to £15 a week was removed. Tenants who sourced rents that were less than the value of the LHA were allowed to keep a maximum of £15 of the difference between the actual rent and the LHA
- 2011: new national maximums for LHA levels were introduced, none of which had an impact in Leeds as all LHA rates were below the national averages
- 2011: the 5-bed rate of LHA was abolished meaning that families were restricted to the 4-bed level of LHA. The difference in value between the 4-bed rate and the 5-bed rate in Leeds was around £160 a week.

2.3 Other changes came into effect in 2013.

- Council Tax Benefit: replaced by local Council Tax Support schemes with Government funding for schemes reduced by 10% - around £500m.
- Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans abolished: responsibility for provision of Local Welfare Support schemes passed to local councils. Funding provided for 2 years and then withdrawn

- Social Sector Housing Benefit: new rules around under-occupancy came into effect from April 2013 and saw HB reductions of 14% for tenants who were under-occupying by 1-bedroom and 25% for tenants under-occupying by 2-bedrooms or more.
- Benefit Cap: the initial Benefit Cap of £26k a year was introduced in 2013 and was rolled out to Leeds in August 2013
- Universal Credit was introduced in the North West of England
- Personal Independence Payments brought in to replace Disability Living Allowance. Roll out programme delayed meaning main impacts in Leeds were not felt until 2015.

2.4 There were also changes introduced in 2013 that removed Child Benefit entitlement from families where an individual earned more than £50,000 per annum and changes to Tax Credits that limited or removed entitlement for some families. It is very difficult to estimate the overall financial impact of welfare reforms in an area. However, a 2014 report by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research for Sheffield Hallam University estimated the financial loss in Leeds at £228m a year

Table 2: Financial loss arising from welfare reform: core cities Estimated loss £m p.a.		Loss per working age adult £ p.a.
Liverpool	226	700
Glasgow	258	620
Birmingham	415	600
Manchester	214	600
Nottingham	120	560
Newcastle	94	490
Cardiff	112	470
Bristol	140	480
Sheffield	169	460
Leeds	228	450

2.5 Further reforms have been introduced since. These include:

- April 2016: Removal of family premium from Housing Benefit. This means that working families and those not on jobseekers allowance or employment support allowance are entitled to £10 a week less Housing Benefit
- April 2016: Removal or reduction of work allowances within Universal Credit
- April 2016: 4-year freeze on working age benefits
- April 2016: 1% pa reduction in social sector rents

- Lower Benefit Cap: the Benefit Cap has been reduced from £26k a year to £20k a year in Leeds and came into effect for some families in November 2016 with the remaining families affected from 23rd January 2017

2.6 More reforms are scheduled to be implemented in the coming years.

- April 2017: the 2-child cap comes into effect from April 2017. This will apply to most new claims and to families who have another child from April onwards. These families will not be entitled to claim Child Tax Credits or the relevant premium in Housing Benefit for more than 2 children
- April 2017: removal of automatic housing costs entitlement for 18 – 21 year olds
- ESA changes that see ESA rates for the ‘work related activity group’ reduced from £105 a week to £73 a week
- April 2018: social sector rents to be limited to Local Housing Allowance levels. Most Housing Leeds cases will be unaffected by this although single u35s will find themselves limited to the Shared Accommodation Rate of Local Housing Allowance of £61 a week. Implications for Housing Associations likely to be more significant
- April 2019: Specialist accommodation (Supported Housing, women’s refuges, hostels etc.) will have their housing costs support limited to the Local Housing Allowance rates with local authorities provided with a fund to ‘top up’ housing costs support. There is a joint DWP/DCLG consultation currently underway seeking views on how this proposal might work.

3 Main issues

3.1 Each month, the Welfare & Benefits Services provides information on the number of tenancies affected by the under-occupancy, Benefit Cap and local Council Tax Support changes. This information provides a snapshot picture of the numbers affected at a point of time. However, this snapshot does not provide a full picture of the impact of the welfare reforms and, short of monitoring every single claim over the last 4 years, it is difficult to accurately state what the impacts of the reforms have been. Nevertheless, there is other information that can help to estimate the impact of the reforms.

Rent arrears

3.2 In March 2010, the percentage of Housing Leeds/ALMO rent arrears stood at 3.13% and the value of debt was £5.25M. In March 2013, the percentage of arrears had reduced to 1.86% and the value of debt had reduced by was £3.6M, a reduction of £1.65M.

3.3 2013-14 was the first year to see an increase in rent arrears since at least 2010 and it is more likely than not that some of this increase can be attributed to the impact of the Welfare Reforms and the economic climate. There were 1300 new arrears cases of tenants who are affected by Under Occupation. At the end of Q1

2014-15 there was approx. £682,000 worth of arrears relating to Under Occupation. Rent arrears have increased every year since under-occupancy and the Benefit Cap were introduced as shown in the table below.

Year	% Arrears	Value of Arrears
2013	1.86	£3.6M
2014	2.2	£4.5M
2015	2.64	£5.72M
2016	2.78	£6.13M

- 3.4 The average aggregate weekly reduction in Housing Benefit for ALMO/Housing Leeds tenants has been in excess of £61k a week since 2013. This represents an estimated additional £12.5m that ALMOs/Housing Leeds have had to collect in the 4 years from 2013 just in relation to under-occupancy. When taking into account Housing Associations, this figure rises to around £17.5m.

Despite the growth in arrears, the number of evictions has not increased compared to pre-welfare reform years. The number of Notices of Intention to Seek Possession (NISPs) has reduced as a % of the average number of tenants with arrears. This reflects an approach which recognises the impacts of the welfare reforms on individuals and sees officers working more with tenants to help improve their ability to pay their rent.

Notice of Intention to Seek Possession (NISPs)

Year	Average no of tenancies in arrears	No of NISPs served	% of NISPs served
2011/12	17,945	4,889	27.24
2012/13	19,400	5,521	28.46
2013/14	19,095	4,165	21.81
2014/15	20,456	4,807	23.50
2015/16	20,723	3,948	19.05

Evictions

Year	No of Evictions
2012	181
2013	173
2014	156
2015	178
2016	152

The Benefit Cap

- 3.5 The new lower Benefit Cap of £20k came into effect in November 2016 for those already affected by the £26k cap and from 23rd January 2017 for newly affected cases. Details of those affected are shown below

Tenure	Number affected	Average weekly reduction	Aggregate weekly reduction	Equivalent aggregate annual reduction
Housing Leeds	273	£52.51	£14,336	£745,472
Housing Assocs.	80	£50.41	£4,033	£209,716
Private landlord	432	£60.22	£26,015	£1,352,780
	785	£56.54	£44,384	£2,307,968

3.6 When the Benefit Cap was first introduced in 2013, there were 312 families in Leeds affected. Of these 312 families, only 226 remain in receipt of Housing Benefit in Leeds. The other 86 families are no longer getting HB. This could be because they have moved out of the area, started work or had a household change that means they no longer need to claim Housing Benefit.

3.7 The average weekly reduction in Housing Benefit because of this Benefit Cap in 2013 was £47 in LA tenancies, £58 in Housing Association tenancies and £76 in private rented sector tenancies. The table below shows the range of reductions faced by families:

Average weekly reduction	No. of families	% of total families affected by the Benefit Cap
£9.50	76	24%
£37.89	67	21%
£61.90	51	16%
£86.40	45	14%
£111.06	26	8%
£138.05	12	4%
Over £162	35	9%

3.8 Of the 226 still in receipt of Housing Benefit, 58 are still affected by the Benefit Cap and 168 are no longer affected by the Cap. A breakdown of the 168 families no longer affected by the Benefit Cap shows

- 72 now have fewer dependents;
- 65 are now claiming as in-work claimants;

Of the remainder, it appears most have reduced their housing costs so that the Benefit Cap no longer applies. 24 tenants have now moved from private sector rented property to social sector rented property

Discretionary Housing Payments

- 3.9 The use of Discretionary Housing Payments has been important in helping to manage rent arrears and support tenants affected by the welfare reforms, particularly the changes around under-occupancy.
- 3.10 The table below shows the DHP spend in each of the last 3 years alongside the Government's contribution:

	Govt contribution	Spend	Council contribution
14/15	£2,053,229	£2,307,247	£254,018
15/16	£1,531,192	£2,016,081	£484,889
16/17 to date	£1,888,013	£2,137,053*	£249,040*
Total to date	£5,472,434	£6,460,381	£987,947

* both these figures will increase following further implementation of Ben Cap in Jan 17

Council Tax

- 3.11 As part of the Board's recent review of the Council's Council Tax Support scheme, information was provided on the impact of the Council Tax Support scheme on the ability of residents to pay their Council Tax. This information is repeated here.
- 3.12 This analysis looks at those currently getting CTS who would have been entitled to 100% support under the old Council Tax Benefit system.

	Previously 100% cases now getting reduced support	Amount to collect £m	% collection rate as at March 2016	Comments
2013/14	18,920	2.68	88	12% have a balance outstanding > £10 with aggregate balance being £498k
2014/15	15,860	3.08	68	32% have a balance outstanding > £10 with aggregate balance of £1.17m
2015/16	13,032	2.48	37	63% have a balance outstanding > £10 with aggregate balance of £1.77m

- 3.13 Both the 14/15 accounts and the 15/16 accounts have had less time to pay than the 13/14 accounts so the situation is likely to improve as time progresses. However, it is also worth noting that those cases that have an outstanding balance in 13/14 will also owe Council Tax for 14/15 and 15/16. Similarly, those that have an outstanding balance in 14/15 only will also owe Council Tax for 15/16.
- 3.14 A more in-depth look at the 14/15 cases where there is an outstanding balance shows that 35% are having their Council Tax recovered by deductions from their

national benefits. The average balance where there is a deduction from national benefits is £148 and, at £3.70 a week which is the maximum deduction, will take 40 weeks on average to recover. 34% of these have an order for deductions from national benefits 'queued up' waiting for another debt to be cleared – the average Council Tax debt to be cleared by these deductions is £286 and will take around 77 weeks to clear once the deductions start.

- 3.15 The majority of cases for 13/14 and 14/15 where there is an outstanding balance will also have recovery costs included as part of the outstanding balance. It is also the case that many of those who have paid in full will have paid costs where recovery action was taken and a liability order secured. The value of costs levied has increased since the changes to Council Tax Support came into effect in 2013. In 2012/13, the last year before the changes, the value of costs levied was £2.3m. This increased to £3.8m in 13/14 and £3.4m in 14/15. Not all costs are recovered and a number are cancelled where residents make contact to arrange affordable repayment options. Nevertheless, the value recovered from 13/14 costs is around £840k higher than that recovered from 12/13 costs
- 3.16 There is a requirement to get a liability order in order to take further recovery action for unpaid Council Tax, including requesting an attachment to someone's benefit. The Council has previously written to the Government to have this requirement looked at again but was not successful with the request.
- 3.17 The CTS scheme costs were also discussed with the Board during the recent review. Following the Government's recent announcement that Councils can increase Council tax by 3% for Adult Social Care purposes for the next 2 years instead of 2% for the next 3 years, the Board requested a new costs comparison. This has been provided below. The costs assume no change to the nature of the current caseload or the numbers.

Estimated Council Tax Support costs

	Current costs	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Option A	Increase:	4%	4%	4%	2%
Elderly	£18,876,955	£19,632,033	£20,417,314	£21,234,007	£21,658,687
WA protected	£17,213,132	£17,901,657	£18,617,723	£19,362,432	£19,749,681
WA 25% reduction	£11,364,210	£11,818,778	£12,291,529	£12,783,190	£13,038,854
Total	£47,454,296	£49,352,468	£51,326,567	£53,379,629	£54,447,222

	Current costs	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Option B	Increase:	5%	5%	2%	2%
Elderly	£18,876,955	£19,820,802	£20,811,842	£21,228,079	£21,652,641
WA protected	£17,213,132	£18,073,788	£18,977,478	£19,357,027	£19,744,168
WA 25% reduction	£11,364,210	£11,932,420	£12,529,041	£12,779,622	£13,035,215
Total	£47,454,296	£49,827,011	£52,318,361	£53,364,729	£54,432,023

Difference between options		£474,543	£991,795	£-14,901	£-15,199
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Appeals

- 3.18 The appeals process changed in 2013 so that more disputes against DWP decisions could be resolved without the need for referral to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service. This change means that when someone disagrees with a decision, they now have to ask the DWP to reconsider their decision before they can appeal to HMCTS. This request is known as a **Mandatory Reconsideration (MR)**. The change was introduced to resolve disputes earlier without the need for an appeal.
- 3.19 Following the introduction of MRs, the number of appeals initially declined. However, since September 2014 the number of appeals has been gradually increasing. From July 2016 to September 2016, 52,311 appeals were received nationally; this was an increase of 47% when compared to the same quarter in 2015. Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independent Payments accounted for 83% of these appeals.
- 3.20 For the period July to September 2016 45,406 appeals were disposed of, 87% of these being cleared at a hearing. More decisions were overturned in favour of the customer than were upheld for the DWP. The 'overturn' rate for those cleared at a hearing was 60%. The overturn rate varies dependent upon the benefit type:
- 65% of PIP appeals were overturned in favour of the customer
 - 62% of ESA appeals were overturned in favour of the customer
 - 59% of DLA appeals were overturned in favour of the customer
 - 43% of JSA appeals similarly; and
 - 24% of Housing/Council Tax support being revised in favour of the client.
- 3.21 In June 2013 Personal Independence Payments replaced Disability Living Allowance - the process to migrate all those awarded DLA to PIP is ongoing. As at Oct 2016 41% of the total PIP caseload nationally were made up of DLA migration cases. 48% of those reassessed from DLA to PIP had their benefit decreased or disallowed altogether.
- 3.22 Employment Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit in 2008. The high volume of ESA appeals is due to clients failing a medical assessment either on their first application or subsequent renewals.
- 3.23 The majority of requests for appeal are dealt with by the Welfare Rights Team. This is because the Welfare Rights Team is seen, rightly, as expert in disability benefits.
- 3.24 On average each appeal takes 4.5 hours to deal with, this includes reading the bundle of papers (approx. 100 pages), either a face to face or telephone interview, gathering supporting documents, researching the client's condition and case law if necessary and producing a submission. The client also receives a phone call a few days before the appeal hearing to run through what will happen on the day and to give them the opportunity to ask any further questions. Following the

appeal further work takes place to ensure other benefits they may be entitled to as a result of the award are claimed. If unsuccessful at appeal it is sometimes appropriate to request a statement of reasons and ultimately it may be necessary to go to the Upper Tribunal.

- 3.25 The table below shows the volume of appeals dealt with by the Welfare Rights Team since April 2015 and shows the very high % of decision that are overturned following Welfare Rights team involvement.

Appeals	2015/16	2016/17 to date
Appeal requests:		
- PIP	275	366
- ESA	237	333
- DLA	25	-
- Other	28	36
% 'overturned' of cases heard		
- PIP	70%	63%
- ESA	68%	81%

Appeals from a client's perspective

- 3.26 Many clients will have been in receipt of DLA for many years, some will have had lifetime or indefinite awards but everyone of working age will need to make a new claim for PIP so it can be a very anxious period of time for people.
- 3.27 PIP is different to DLA, there are only two rates for daily living and mobility – standard and enhanced – many therefore have lost their Motability vehicles and this can have implications for their independence
- 3.28 Those claiming ESA are required to attend a medical to see if they are capable of work. Those found incapable of work are placed in either the work related activity group or the support group. Those clients who are turned down for ESA may have to claim JSA whilst they appeal their case.
- 3.29 Clients requesting a MR have one month to do so from the date of their decision letter. The DWP, however, have no timeframe in which to reconsider the claim and MRs can take weeks or months to complete. The next stage is an appeal to a Tribunal and this in itself can be lengthy, most take several months. More recently, however, dates for hearings have been coming through quicker. The client needs to attend the hearing in person and for many this can be a daunting experience.
- 3.30 If the client loses the appeal and no award of PIP is made other benefits can also be reduced due to losing certain premiums.

Action being taken to deliver more assistance with appeals

- 3.31 Clients seeking assistance with appeals are currently being offered appointments in March however many clients are now getting a date for their hearing prior to the

date we are able to meet them. In these cases we can only give very basic guidance over the phone and explain what they need to do.

- 3.32 Appeal work has generally been undertaken by the 4 Senior Welfare Rights Workers each holding 1 appeal surgery per week, seeing 3 clients. Unfortunately however this resource is no longer sufficient to deal with the demand.
- 3.33 Although some of the more experienced Welfare Rights Workers do the occasional appeal case between them they also provide 88 general advice appointments per week, 153 hours of telephone advice and home visits for those who have more complex enquiries. The 2 Assistant Welfare Rights Workers provide 24 form filling surgery appointments per week plus home visits for those who are unable to leave their homes.
- 3.34 The volume of calls to the Welfare Rights Team has also increased by 8% this year compared to last year and overall the team have dealt with 1997 more enquiries.
- 3.35 To enable some of the more experienced Welfare Rights Workers to assist with appeals the following action has been taken:
- Authorisation has been given to appoint an additional Assistant Welfare Rights Worker.
 - The WRU has been working with Law Students from the University of Leeds Law School. These students have been trained to complete PIP forms and now provide 2 form fillings surgeries per week at the Compton Centre offering 8 appointment slots per week.
 - Housing Leeds' Housing Advisors (Benefits) are now able to provide some form filling surgeries and will provide 4 half day surgeries per week with 8 appointment slots available. This will help relieve some pressure on the WRU. This arrangement will need to be looked at again as Universal Credit rolls out and demand on Housing Advisors increases.
 - Consideration is also being given to how voluntary organisations might be supported to provide more expert support for clients needing to claim disability benefits.
 - A general information leaflet and pro-forma letter have been produced to inform clients how to request an MR and links to websites have been provided on the initial letter which is sent to clients on receipt of a bundle of appeal papers. This is to try and reduce the number of calls coming through to the team and to better equip those clients who are able to take action for themselves.

Food Banks

- 3.36 As part of the Government's package of welfare reforms, Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants were abolished and, instead, funding was provided to local councils to run local Welfare Support Schemes. £2.8m in funding was provided to Leeds in 2013/14 and 2014/15. This funding was used to provide direct support to residents in need, to support initiatives in Leeds City Credit Union and the advice and voluntary sectors and to assist with hardship schemes in Children's Services, Council Tax and Housing Benefit. In 2015/16, the Government ceased funding for local Welfare Support Schemes
- 3.37 The Council continues to provide a Local Welfare Support scheme, providing £1.1m in 2015/16 and £800k in 2016/17 and for the coming year. Some of this funding supports the presence of Fare Share (Yorkshire) in Leeds and helps to manage the demand for emergency food in the city with a small amount going to support the Food Aid Network in Leeds.
- 3.38 Fare Share (Yorkshire) provides food to the food banks in Leeds and, in 2015/16, provided 30 Food Aid providers with a weekly supply of food. Fare Share also supported 12 School Clusters, covering 102 schools, with access to breakfast cereals and fresh fruit. Schools received 25,545 boxes of cereal, enough for 383,175 portions. In total, Fare Share (Yorkshire) provided 103 tonnes of food in Leeds in 2015/16.
- 3.39 In the six months from April 2016 to September 2016, Fare Share has provided 58.4 tonnes of food.
- 3.40 The Food Aid Network is a network of voluntary organisations providing food aid to people in need. It includes Food banks as well as organisations such as St Georges Crypt. Leeds FAN exists to help bring different people, initiatives and institutions together who are involved in tackling food poverty in the city of Leeds. There are 6 food banks and 6 organisations doing food parcels as an added service in Leeds. To add to this there are 11 drop ins / soup kitchens, 4 Street Outreaches, 2 specialised services providing food for Asylum seekers / Refugees, a number of informal parish pantries and certain forms of Social Enterprise run on a community café/pay as you feel model e.g. The Real Junk Food Project.
- 3.41 The information provided below is from the Food Aid Network.

Table 6.1: Foodbanks

Leeds	Apr 1st – Mar 31st 2015-16*	Jan 1st - Dec 31st 2014*	12 month change	
			No	%
Different Individuals referred to Food bank provision	25,327	20,306	5,021	+24.7%
Estimated total: meals/sandwich batches	54,546	56,481	-1,935	-3.4%
Estimated total for Food Parcels given from a variety of sources	28,986	26,182	2,804	+10.7%
*Unfortunately, data is not available at the same 12 month period for an exact annual comparison; however this table provides an indication of annual demand for emergency food provision across Leeds. Source: Leeds Food Aid Network (FAN), June 2016				

3.42 The Food Aid Network also report that:

- 25,327 different people have been referred to a food bank or food parcel provider in 2015. This is almost a 25% increase on 2014.
- 54,546 meal packs were handed out through a drop in / Soup kitchen or through Street Outreach. These 2 types of support usually benefit people who have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Food provision via this route fell from 56,481 in 2014 by around 3%. Unfortunately, the reason for the fall is not likely to be because of reduced demand, but due to the fact more demand is being met via other food provision routes.
- Charity workers and volunteers have handed out 28,986 emergency food parcels in a year – provided by referral or allocated informally. Provision via this route has increased by over 10% since 2014.

3.43 It is difficult to ensure that a wide range of voluntary organisations are consistently and accurately collecting information about the reasons why people use food banks. However, the Food Aid Network suggests that the main reason why people access food banks is due to Benefit delays (32%) and Changes to benefit (including sanctions) (23%).

3.44 Welfare & Benefits will continue to work with Fare Share (Yorkshire) and the Food Aid Network in 2017/18.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 The report is for information only and does not require consultation.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 Not applicable.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 Tackling poverty and deprivation remains a key council priority

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The report itself does not require any resource allocation.

4.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The report identifies impacts arising from the Government's welfare reform programme. With further reforms to be implemented there is a risk that the

impacts, both on the Council and on residents, may be significant. The issue of welfare reform is a key risk on the Corporate Risk Register and continues to be monitored.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council has taken steps to mitigate some of the impacts on residents of the Government's welfare reform. The use of Discretionary Housing Payments has been critical in this regard but there remains significant pressure on Council Tax collection and Housing Leeds rent collection.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board notes the information in this report and continues to monitor the impact of the welfare reform programme

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.