

3 April 2018

BROOKE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 APRIL 2018

A meeting of the Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 12 April 2018 in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Rugby.

Councillor Claire Edwards
Chair of Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2018.

2. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of:

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

4. Rugby Youth Council – update on the work of the Rugby Youth Council (RYC), Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) and VOX Youth Council
5. Universal Credit – update from the Community Advice and Support Manager
6. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed via the website.

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors Claire Edwards (Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Mrs Bragg, Cranham, Keeling, Mrs New, Pacey-Day, Srivastava and Dr Williams

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533591 or e-mail veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

<i>Name of Meeting</i>	Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<i>Date of Meeting</i>	12 April 2018
<i>Report Title</i>	Universal Credit Update
<i>Ward Relevance</i>	All
<i>Contact Officer</i>	David Wortley, Community Advice and Support Manager, Tel: 01788 533440
<i>Summary</i>	This report updates the committee on The impact of Universal Credit within the Borough
<i>Financial Implications</i>	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
<i>Risk Management Implications</i>	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
<i>Environmental Implications</i>	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
<i>Legal Implications</i>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
<i>Equality and Diversity</i>	No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.

Public Report to the Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 April 2018

Universal Credit Update

Summary

This report updates the committee on the impact of Universal Credit within the Borough.

1. Background

The implementation of Universal Credit commenced in November 2013, initially this was for claimants who were single and making a new claim for benefit. Since then both the number of cases and the complexity of cases has increased along with the impact on local residents. In May 2016, Universal Credit Full Service commenced. This means that most residents who make a new claim for benefit or have a relevant change of circumstances are now required to apply for Universal Credit.

2. Current Position

The Department for Work and Pensions has published the following data for Rugby. This information was as at December 2017:

2,944 households have a current live application for Universal Credit, of these cases 2,562 households are receiving payments. The following breakdown is also provided:

Single applicants	1,089
Single applicants with a child	1,022
Couples	77
Couples with a child	371
Households in receipt of Housing Element	1,873
Households not receiving Housing Element	691

(the reason for the discrepancy in numbers is not reported)

3. Impact of Council Tenants

The rollout of Universal Credit continues to have an impact on our own tenants who need financial help with housing costs or day to day living expenses.

The table overleaf shows the impact of Universal Credit on Council Tenants during the last year:

	April 2017	August 2017	November 2017	March 2018
Tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	422	523	554	634
Accounts in Credit	69	74	58	87
Accounts in Arrears	353	449	496	547
Total Arrears*	£284,210	£370,109	£403,975	£455,747
Average Arrears	£802	£824	£814	£852

*This figure includes any arrears prior to receiving Universal Credit.

The Housing Service continue to work proactively with tenants to address issues that are being experienced. In addition a review of the Housing Service Team will be looking to ensure that the service can identify potential issues earlier and identify additional support for tenants either internally or by referring them to external partners.

4. Universal Support

Although the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the administration of Universal Credit, the Council provides assistance to residents who need help/support to make their initial claim or manage their account online, or who require additional help to move from weekly to monthly based budgeting. Funding for this is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. Funding is based on the anticipated numbers of residents who will require support.

Following a procurement exercise in 2016, this support has been provided by the Benn Partnership Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau.

The following tables shows the anticipated number of residents requiring support, compared the actual number of residents who have been supported:

Assisted Digital Claim Support

Quarter (2017)	Anticipated	Support Provided
1	84	71
2	88	88
3	73	69

Budgetary Support

Quarter (2017)	Anticipated	Support Provided
1	71	16
2	76	37
3	57	55

The number of residents taking up budgetary support has not been as high as anticipated. Meetings are held on a regular basis with our partners to look at ways of increasing take-up. Representatives from Citizen Advice Bureau now have a regular presence at the JobCentre and this has resulted in an increased take-up in Quarter 3.

5. CHANGES TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A number of changes have been announced with regards to the administration and payment of Universal Credit:

- **Advance Payments**

An advance payment can be requested at the start of a claim and is designed to provide a loan to cover the period until the first payment is received. This was previously limited to 50% of their estimated entitlement, this has been increased to 100% of estimated entitlement and should be paid within five days of applying. The repayment period has also been increased to 12 months.

- **Waiting Period**

The seven-day waiting period has been removed. This means that the award will now start from the date of application and the first payment will be made five weeks after applying rather than six weeks previously.

- **Direct payments**

It is to be made easier for claimants to have the Housing Element of Universal Credit paid directly to their landlord.

- **Two week run for Housing Benefit claimants**

Where a claimant applying for Universal Credit was in receipt of Housing Benefit, this will be paid for an additional two weeks and will be paid directly to the claimant.

6. SUMMARY

The Housing Service and Community Advice and Support Team continue to work in partnership with our external partners to identify issues affecting not only our own tenants but all residents of the Borough and identify action that we can take to resolve issues as they arise.

Name of Meeting: Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 12 April 2018
Subject Matter: Universal Credit Update

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

<i>Name of Meeting</i>	Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<i>Date of Meeting</i>	12 April 2018
<i>Report Title</i>	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
<i>Ward Relevance</i>	None
<i>Contact Officer</i>	Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01788 533591
<i>Summary</i>	This report updates the committee on items for future meetings. The content of each committee's work programme is agreed jointly by the Chairs and Vice Chairs but committee members are invited to suggest items for inclusion.
<i>Financial Implications</i>	There is a budget of £500 available in 2017/18 to spend on the delivery of the overview and scrutiny work programme.
<i>Risk Management Implications</i>	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
<i>Environmental Implications</i>	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
<i>Legal Implications</i>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
<i>Equality and Diversity</i>	No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.

Public Report to the Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 April 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Summary

This report updates the committee on items for future meetings. The content of each committee's work programme is agreed jointly by the Chairs and Vice Chairs but committee members are invited to suggest items for inclusion.

1. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLANS

It is the responsibility of the scrutiny committees to monitor progress against the scrutiny review action plans arising from reviews for which they have been responsible.

The committee is asked to note there are no 'live' action plans for which this committee has responsibility.

2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The annual overview and scrutiny work programme workshop took place on 7 March. The Chairs met on 21 March to discuss the outcomes. The topics identified for inclusion in the 2018/19 work programme are appended.

The Chairs are scheduled to meet on 23 May to agree the forward overview and scrutiny work programme for 2018/19. The committee will receive a report on any work allocated to it at its next meeting on 28 June.

Name of Meeting: Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 12 April 2018
Subject Matter: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18
Annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop 2018 – Outcomes

The following topics were identified for inclusion in the 2018/19 work programme:

Topic	Description	Comments
<i>Access for disabled people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities for disabled people – particularly toilet facilities for adults • Full changing room facilities • Access to parks and council owned or run facilities including the Town Hall and Benn Hall • Consider the types of surface materials used in parks • Include facilities for all disabilities, including the blind, deaf and wheelchair user 	Review to be refined and scoped
<i>Parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of provision for family friendly • Space abutting the bowling club locked and unavailable as relief parking • Other land adjacent to the car park is underutilised 	
<i>Waste and Recycling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on education only • Look at ways of increasing recycling levels • Link to work of WCC Education Team 	Light touch
<i>Trees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the Tree Policy within the Green Space Strategy • Protection of trees on urban roads • Effect of tree works on the street scene 	Light touch
<i>Employee Wellbeing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at best good practise at other authorities • Look at the Human Resources Strategy and Policies • Dealing with sickness levels • To include Council staff and councillors • Include mental health aspects 	
<i>Special Expenses Scheme – Council Tax</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current scheme has not been reviewed for a few years • Assess the purpose of the scheme 	
<i>Commercialisation, Collaboration and Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the Commercialisation Strategy • Explore commercial activity, subscription packages of services, collaborating with other public-sector bodies, shared service and trading • Look at RBC relationships with partners and their value 	Review to be scheduled toward the end of the municipal year

Topic	Description	Comments
<i>Informing and Engaging our Communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we involve communities in decisions that affect them, in ways that suit them?• Can we provide information and tools to council teams and to Members, so that they can inform and engage communities where relevant?	One-page strategy approved by Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 October 2017