



Notice of a public

Decision Session - Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health

To: Councillor Runciman (Executive Member)

Date: Thursday, 15 November 2018

Time: 12.00 noon

Venue: The Frank Green Room - 2nd Floor, West Offices (S015)

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democratic Services by **4:00 pm on Monday, 19 November 2018**.

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any called in items will be considered by the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5pm on Tuesday, 13 November 2018**.

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member is asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests,
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

- 2. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 2)
To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 14 June 2018.

- 3. Public Participation**
At this point in the meeting, members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **5.00pm on Wednesday, 14 November 2018**. Members of the public can speak on agenda items or matters within the Executive Member's remit. To register to speak please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting, on the details at the foot of the agenda.

Filming, Recording or Webcasting Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this meeting will be filmed and webcast ,or recorded, including any registered public speakers, who have given their permission. The broadcast can be viewed at <http://www.york.gov.uk/webcasts> or, if recorded, this will be uploaded onto the Council's website following the meeting.

Residents are welcome to photograph, film or record Councillors and Officers at all meetings open to the press and public. This includes the use of social media reporting, i.e. tweeting. Anyone wishing to film, record or take photos at any public meeting should contact the Democracy Officer (contact details are at the foot of this agenda) in advance of the meeting.

The Council's protocol on Webcasting, Filming & Recording of Meetings ensures that these practices are carried out in a manner both respectful to the conduct of the meeting and all those present. It can be viewed at https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/11406/protocol_for_webcasting_filming_and_recording_of_council_meetings_20160809

- 4. Welfare Benefits and Financial Inclusion Update** (Pages 3 - 20)
This report provides an update to the report brought to the Decision Session on 14 June with regard to the roll-out and effect of Universal Credit on the citizens of York, the current position of the York Financial Assistance Scheme and the effectiveness of Financial Inclusion sponsored projects in the city.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Fiona Young

Telephone No- 01904 552030

Email- fiona.young@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 **(01904) 551550**

This page is intentionally left blank

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health
---------	--

Date	14 June 2018
------	--------------

Present	Councillor Runciman
---------	---------------------

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Member confirmed that she had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

2. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 15 March 2018 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

3. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the session under the Council' Public Participation Scheme.

4. **Welfare Benefit Update and Financial Inclusion Out-turn Report 2017/18**

The Executive Member considered a report which examined how effectively the council was providing welfare support to residents following the roll-out of 'full service' Universal Credit (UC) in September 2017, and the progress made in delivering financial inclusion activity across the city.

The impact of UC in York had been low to date, due to high employment levels and the gradual transition of customers to UC. However, its effects were starting to be felt, notably in Housing. Digital services had improved service levels, and a pilot appointment scheme had operated for council tax and housing benefits customers since March, reducing waiting times by allocating dedicated time to each customer. Citizens Advice York (CAY) and other agencies had reported an increase in UC-related queries, and in the use of foodbanks by customers moving to UC. There were also concerns around the low take-

up of the council tax discretionary reduction scheme and increased demand on Discretionary Housing Payments. Activities supporting financial inclusion in the city, including those overseen by the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG), were detailed in paragraphs 28 to 45 of the report.

In response to questions from the Executive Member, Officers confirmed that:

- Support was available in the Customer Centre and other venues for those needing assistance with their claims;
- The GP Surgeries Advice project was working well, and the council and CAY were happy to continue funding it;
- The council would also fund the York Advocacy service for a further year when the current funding ended in November.
- CAY were keen to develop their Information and Budgeting Cafe model further;
- Good results had been obtained by the Experience Counts: 50 Plus project.

The Executive Member expressed approval for the work being done in this priority area for the council and

Resolved: (i) That the impact of Universal Credit (UC) to date, and the welfare support provided by the council to residents in 2017/18, be noted

Reason: To confirm that the Executive Member is aware of the impact of UC and of the welfare support available to residents

(ii) That the council continue to work proactively with third sector partners on the wide range of support, early intervention and advice through the activity of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG).

Reason: To ensure that residents and groups are aware of financial inclusion activity.

Cllr C Runciman, Executive Member
[The meeting started at 12.00 pm and finished at 12.20 pm].



**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Adult Social Care and Health****15 November 2018**

Report of the Assistant Director, Customer & Digital Services

Welfare Benefits & Financial Inclusion Update**Summary**

1. This report provides an update to the June 2018 paper (Welfare Benefits Update & Financial Inclusion Outturn Report 2017/18) with regard to the rollout and effect of Universal Credit (UC) on the citizens of York. The report updates the current position of the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS). It also reviews the effectiveness of the Financial Inclusion sponsored projects to date in addressing the issues giving rise to financial inequality in the city.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - a) note the impact of UC to date on citizens and the actions being taken by the council and its partners in mitigating any negative financial and social affects caused by its rollout.
Reason: to make the portfolio holder aware of the impact of UC and welfare benefit support available to residents.
 - b) approve the progress made by projects sponsored through the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) funding to work proactively with third sector partners, on a wide range of support, early intervention and advice projects.
Reason: to ensure residents and groups are aware of financial inclusion activity.
 - c) note the position of the YFAS scheme at the end of September 2018.
Reason: to make the portfolio holder aware of the YFAS support funded to date in 2018/19.

- d) Recommend that the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CCSSMC) considers the council motion on food poverty (see Paragraph 26 below) in their review of welfare benefit/financial inclusion.

Reason: to help mitigate food poverty in the city.

Background

- 3 The council provides a broad range of support to welfare benefit customers through the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS), Council Tax Support (CTS) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). In addition the council provides digital support and personal budgetary advice in respect of UC claimants until the responsibility is transferred to the Citizens Advice Bureau nationally in April 2019. This paper looks at the current effects of the rollout of UC, support provided by YFAS and the work of FISG which was set up in January 2013 with the aim of addressing the root cause of financial inequality.¹

Latest UC Statistics

Table 1 – Number of customers on UC by month May 2018 to date

UC Claimant Numbers 2018/19										
Months	April		May		June		July		August	
In Employment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	1917	1569	2057	1698	2182	1775	2232	1919	2292	1908
Total	3486		3755		3957		4151		4200	
Movement by Month (Emp)			140	129	125	77	50	144	60	-11
Total Movement by Month			269		202		194		49	

Table 2 – Number of customers supported by the council April 2018 to date

UC figures from Full Service Go Live 2018/19	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2
	Self Service at West Offices	11	10	9	30	3	3	2
Self Service York Explores	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ADS* appointment single	15	14	10	39	8	11	19	38
ADS appointment couple	3	3	6	12	4	1	6	11
ADS appointment total	20	20	25	65	16	13	25	54
PBS** Appointments	10	4	4	18	7	3	2	12

*ADS = Assisted Digital Support

**PBS= Personal Budgeting Support

¹ Membership includes council directorate representatives, Citizens Advice York (CAY), Advice York (AY) and South Yorkshire Credit Union (SYCU) as well as the Executive Members for Adult Social Care and Health, and Finance & Performance.

4. Table 1 above shows the number of residents claiming UC since April 2018 provided by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). The numbers increased in May by 269, June by 202, July by 194 and in August by 49. There is not enough data to see any emerging trends as yet and seasonal employment may greatly affect the figures. Whilst over the four months May to August 714 new claims have been made only 74 customers requested assisted digital support and 18 personal budgeting support.
5. In addition to the above local data national statistics show that the transfer or migration of customers from housing benefit to UC slows substantially after the 1st year of full service as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Full Service Migration Rates over time		
Measure	Year 1	Year 2
Lowest	6%	1%
Median	19%	5%
Highest	36%	14%

6. It is too early to predict this trend at York as 'full service' has only been in place for a year. The DWP migration plans could also see all working age qualifying customers in York been migrated from 2019 onwards.

UC Support

7. The Council and Citizens Advice York (CAY) met in September 2018 to review the current support been provided to residents claiming UC for the first time and those existing Housing Benefit (HB) customers migrating to UC through a change in their circumstances. This meeting also discussed the initial plans to manage the full migration of HB customers to UC that DWP is indicating will start in 2019.
8. In terms of supporting new UC claimants the council has updated its publicity materials in relation to assisted digital support and personal budgeting support. This updated information has been disseminated to partner agencies and community locations. The revised information is also in the latest issue of 'streets ahead'.
9. Customer Services including income services and together with housing services are working to update resources and training for all relevant staff. This is to ensure staff and residents are clear about the services available, that referral routes are effective and that UC information and support is delivered consistently no matter where the customer makes contact with the council. This should increase the take up and quality of

support provide by the council whilst making this support as effective as possible within the limited resources available.

10. These updated resources will include providing information about other support available across the city; particularly those services funded by FISG (*Improving Finances Improving Lives* Fund), Ward Committees, 4 Community Growth Projects and Local Area Coordinators.
11. These services will continue to be reviewed to ensure they are meeting customer needs and that continuing good practice and proactive planning can be developed when more information about the UC migration rollout is available.
12. There is currently a York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS) officer review being undertaken and this is looking at applications from customers who are receiving UC. The YFAS scheme does not support customers who need assistance only on the basis of reduced income due to UC rules (payment in arrears). This is because this is welfare policy and not an exceptional circumstance under the YFAS criteria as they are receiving their UC benefit entitlement and can access an advance payment. The early officer review findings include looking at other ways in which we can provide support and assistance to UC customers who apply for YFAS. This includes looking at how we manage Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Encouraging applications to the Council Tax Support Scheme

13. Over that last few years the council has worked with Advice York (AY) and other partners to promote the DCTR scheme amongst member organisations and support workers. This work is continuing however the scheme is still under utilised by residents.
14. To try and improve take up changes were made on the council website to make information about the scheme clearer. This will be reviewed again shortly as part of ongoing work to update information for people with money problems or in financial hardship.
15. In May 2018 a new on line application was introduced for DHP and the opportunity was taken to combine applications for DHP and DCTR into one application form. This change means that applicants can now be considered for both discretionary benefits at the same time, without making separate applications.
16. There is further investigation planned on increasing the take up of DCTR as part of the work on improving UC support and advice. Information about the scheme will be included in updates for support workers and partner agencies including CAY & AY.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

17. There was an initial increase in applications for DHP following introduction of UC full service due to waiting days and the delay in payments arising from the monthly payment. The increased level of applications has reduced since the introduction of same day benefit advances and the cessation of the waiting period.
18. The problem the council has had with such applications is that it cannot award a DHP unless the customer is in receipt of UC housing costs information.
19. A current higher level of applications seems to be arising from people who are having large deductions taken from their UC payments. The deductions are for rent arrears, utility arrears, overpayments and budgeting loans. The scale of these deductions is leading to a considerable shortfall in income for the applicants.
20. The majority of DHP cases continue to be as a result of the shortfall between a customer's rent and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate so are not specific to UC cases. Where UC is involved and DWP make a direct payment to the landlord at a rate higher than the LHA rate the customer is left with insufficient money for their day to day living expenses. DWP treat rent as a priority and this is giving rise to an increasing number of customers who say they cannot afford to live of the residual UC payment.
21. Overlapping benefit when a customer moves from one property to another and had dual liability does not exist in UC as it did in Housing Benefits so we are seeing an increase in claims from people who need help with rent at the original property as UC only covers the new one.
22. The customer's lack of understanding of how UC works is causing hardship and as a consequence leading to DHP applications. An example of this is where a claimant receives two four weekly wages in the same assessment period which nils them out of UC. This leads to budgeting issues and as a result customers fall into arrears and try claiming DHP to help with the arrears. There has been an increase in this type of application recently.

York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS)

23. The YFAS scheme was established in April 2013, following the transfer of responsibility (and initially funding) from central government. The former national scheme, delivered by the DWP, was part of the Social Fund. YFAS is now fully funded and locally administered by the council

and can assist residents to stay or move into the community or with emergencies.

24. A review in 2014 resulted in a revised scheme from April 2015 which largely removed the 'cash element'. It now provides essential household goods (delivery and fitting) such as beds, cookers, and fridges, directly through the Community Furniture Store as well as supermarket food vouchers, fuel top-ups for emergencies and pre-paid cards in exceptional circumstances. Food bank vouchers are issued through other supporting agencies.
25. There have been no changes to the scheme since 2015 and feedback from stakeholders has been positive. The last internal audit of the scheme completed in February 2017 gave an opinion of 'Substantial Assurance' as an overall assessment of controls present within its processes. The scheme is currently been looked at again in the light of UC rollout and the figures for the first 6 months of 2018/19 are set out below:

Table 4

Household category helped

Category	Number
Couple no children	19
Couple with children	66
Lone Parent	195
Pensioner	23
Single no children	298
Total	601

Table 5

Type of Support

Category	Spend
Furniture, appliances & household items	£91102
Supermarket vouchers	£4980
Help with energy bills	£1291
Other	£1201
Total	£98574

Table 6

Category of Spend

Category	Spend
Emergency	£4,980
Community	£91,102
Total	£96,082

26. At the six month point it is difficult to predict the eventual outturn of the YFAS fund in 2018/19. The growing pressure of UC can skew the eventual funds spent during the final 6 months of the financial year. Extrapolating the current figures provides an outturn of:

Table 7

YFAS Forecast Outturn

Overall Spend Totals							
Category	Current Spend	Budget	%	Extrapolation full year	%		
Emergency	£ 4,980	£ 14,000	36%	£ 9,591	69%		
Community	£ 91,102	£ 135,590	67%	£ 175,456	129%		
Council Tax Su	£ 15,921	£ 60,000	27%	£ 30,662	51%		
Total Spend	£ 112,003	£ 209,590	53%	£ 219,857	105%		

Council Motion on Food Poverty

27. There was a council motion at the 19 July 2018 Full Council meeting in respect of food poverty. Part of the motion requested the following:

To request a report to Executive setting out:

- the background to food poverty in York including any available local statistics and how local measurement might be improved;*
- the current role of crisis support in York in mitigating food poverty;*
- and a range of options for the Council and its partners to improve the city wide response to food poverty in York.”*

28. This paper recommends that the Executive Member refers this to scrutiny and specifically CCSSMC to consider in their current review of welfare benefit/financial inclusion, and report back to Executive on their findings.

Effectiveness of activities funded by FISG

29. This section of the report covers activities carried out by or funded by the council that have supported financial inclusion during 2018/19 as well as noting the more detailed outcomes of projects funded in 2017/18.
30. The council's Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) is responsible for overseeing the delivery of financial inclusion work including the award of grants to partners to deliver projects that meet the group's objectives. It has an agreed base budget of £100k per year for 2017/18 and 2018/19. In February 2017 Council agreed a further £100k per year ongoing to be allocated to projects with an additional £25k per year for two years to fund specific debt advice related support work.

The group's purpose is:

'To ensure that local people have the knowledge of and access to appropriate services, allowing them to make more informed choices to achieve and maintain financial stability'.

The aim of the group is to secure the following outcomes:

- Ensure that residents have the knowledge to manage their finances effectively
 - Better coordination of advice services across the city
 - Advice givers and those 'sign posting' better understand the welfare benefits system
 - Explore opportunities to reduce general living expenses.
31. The Group also has responsibility for the strategic oversight of the council's DHP, YFAS and CTS schemes.
 32. To target resources effectively to those who most need support, bids are invited from partners for projects that promote financial inclusion. These are subject to panel selection with bidders making a presentation about their proposals. Rigorous selection is made against a range of criteria. Successful schemes are subject to the council's Financial Regulations and a Service Level Agreement is put in place for each project. Grants are paid by instalment with reporting on progress built in to ensure delivery.

Current outcomes of projects funded in 2017/18

33. Under the grant scheme (known as the '*Improving Finances, Improving Lives*' fund) nine grants were awarded and this table summarises outcomes:

Table 8: Key project outcomes to date for 2017/18 funded projects

Organisation / Project Title/Duration/Funding/ Current status	Aim/Key Outcomes to date
<p>(1) <i>Citizens Advice York – Specialist Debt Support Service</i></p> <p>(2 yrs: July 17 – June 19, £48,875)</p> <p><i>Project on-going</i></p>	<p>Aim - Provide a specialist debt caseworker to support residents to manage debts / budgets / build confidence in money management for future. Appointments at CAY, community venues and via phone.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 70 clients accessed 140 appointments ○ 435 debts valued at £301,476 being managed ○ 3 clients had total of £15k (annual) benefit income increased ○ 12 charity applications made, generating £940. ○ 26 clients referred from other advice agencies ○ Continues to be high demand for services.
<p>(2) <i>Experience Counts – 50 plus project</i></p> <p>(6 months: Sept 17 – Mar 18, £5,647)</p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met, funded again for 2018/19</i></p>	<p>Aim - Deliver workshops for residents aged 50+ /unemployed /at risk of redundancy/ returning to work, to help with employment prospects e.g. work on self esteem, CVs, mock interviews</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivered 3 x 5 half-day workshop programmes over 5 week periods starting in Sept/Nov/Jan. ○ 1:1 sessions offered to all participants <p>Of the 21 residents who attended the programmes, 9 gained employment, 1 became self-employed, 7 are volunteering, 2 have interviews, 1 into functional skills training, 1 considering options.</p>
<p>(3) <i>Citizens Advice York – GP Surgeries Advice Service</i></p> <p>(12 months: July 17 – June 18, £33,361)</p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met, funded again for 2018/19</i></p>	<p>Aim: Continue and develop previous project to provide an advice service within GP surgeries for 30 hours per week. 2 full day sessions at Priory Medical Group plus sessions at 2 new practices.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appointments at 3 surgeries through Priory Medical Group at Rawcliffe, Cornlands Road and Heworth Green surgeries. ○ New relationship with York Medical Group with appointments now set up at 2 surgeries - Acomb & Tower Court. ○ 150+ clients attended, 578 advice issues dealt with ○ 125 clients with welfare reform issues supported ○ 10 debts managed (£17k) ○ Increased income of 38 clients by £118k (annualised)
<p>(4) <i>The Blueberry Academy – My Choice Plus</i></p> <p>(12 months: July 17 – June 18 £6,000)</p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met</i></p>	<p>Aim: To work with people with learning difficulties, raising their financial confidence / skill levels to increase financial independence / giving them knowledge to access future support.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 staff members trained on UC ○ 40 trainees accessed information & advice ○ 15 people reduced living expenses through on line activity ○ I & A delivered on-site for 20 people (in home or community settings)
<p>(5) <i>Citizens Advice York – Information & Budgeting Cafes</i></p> <p>(12 Months: July 17 –</p>	<p>Aim: Run ‘information and budgeting cafes’ in Tang Hall / Acomb to increase people’s financial capability to help people help themselves through support with IT, signposting, finding useful information etc.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 63 weekly sessions run in Tang Hall (22 until Jan 18), Acomb (33) and Bell Farm (8 from Jan 2018).

<p><i>June 18, £19,089)</i></p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met, funded again for 2018/19</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detailed advice given to 129 clients (others signposted) ○ 88 welfare reform related issues dealt with ○ 33 assisted with making benefit claims ○ 6 switched energy suppliers; 34 charity applications ○ £58k income gains / £9,600 debts handled ○ 203 referred to foodbank
<p><i>(6) York Foodbank – Making More of your Money</i></p> <p><i>(12 months: Oct 17 – Sept 18 £8,340)</i></p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met, funded again for 2018/19</i></p>	<p>Aim: Deliver information, advice and guidance to Foodbank (FB) users to tackle barriers to financial inclusion. IAG training for Foodbank volunteers. Delivered through partnership with Peasholme Charity.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoted via volunteers and co-ordinators, CYC Local Area Coordinators and through Peasholme Charity contacts. ○ Support available at all FB sessions – 93 provided. ○ 99 individuals accessed support, 18 attending more than once and 11 seen outside FB hours.
<p><i>(7) Peasholme Charity – My Money, My Life...</i></p> <p><i>(21 months: July 17 to Mar 19 £17,663)</i></p> <p><i>Project on-going</i></p>	<p>Aim: Help people improve their skills around managing their money through online information/advice through social media, drop in support in community venues, benefits advice, crisis interventions, referral and support to access existing community resources.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial Capability Coach delivering full Financial Capability pathway services, 30 hours p/w. ○ Active caseload of 46 clients, 22 clients signed off the service (total contact = 75). ○ Community event on UC and Employability advice. ○ Weekly drop-in sessions (34) at specific locations accessed by 68 individuals. ○ Increasing engagement with children’s social services (4 cases) and notable increase in complexity of clients affected by welfare reform. ○ 7 events held in the community
<p><i>(9) Changing Lives – Financial Inclusion Champion</i></p> <p><i>(12 months: Sept 17 to Nov 18, £25,000)</i></p> <p><i>Project on-going (extended by 3 mths to recruit new postholder), funded again for 18/19</i></p>	<p>Aim: Work with clients across the Changing Lives service to improve ability to deal with and understand their financial situation and their access to financial products and services. Delivered through 1:1 appointments and weekly drop ins for clients.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 110 clients had a better understanding of the benefits system and took steps towards financial independence included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 7 attended workshops ▪ 21 given benefits advice/support ▪ 12 provided with support by phone ▪ 3 engaged and attended job fair with staff ○ 17 clients were supported into training ○ 8 client supported into volunteering ○ 7 pre-employment training sessions

<p><i>(10) Welfare Benefits Unit – Universal Credit Focus</i></p> <p><i>(12 months: June 17 – May 18 £16,070)</i></p> <p><i>Project completed, aims met, funded again for 18/19.</i></p>	<p>Aim: Second tier support service to provide support to front line advisers for the roll out of UC full service. The project provided updates, factsheets, support with UC queries and briefings on UC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 90 UC queries on advice line ○ 3 factsheets issued ○ 6 briefing sessions for advisers delivered ○ 9 email briefings.
--	---

34. The nature and intensity of involvement with individual residents varies from project to project and is reflected in the outcomes noted so it is not possible to make straight comparisons between them. However, overall headlines include over 800 residents received support, 445 debts valued at £318k were handled and £58k of increased income was recorded.

Projects funded in 2018/19

35. The 2018/19 bidding round generated the highest interest to date with 15 bids coming forward with a total value well exceeding the funds available. Nine projects were successful with grants totalling £166k. Seven were bids that built on existing projects and two were new, summarised in the table below. All are in very early stages or have yet to start so progress will be shared in future.

Table 9: New project grants awarded in 2018/19

Provider	Project Title	Description	Duration/Period	Grant
Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAAY)	Benefits advocacy	Deliver comprehensive advocacy (emotional and practical) support to residents who are at risk of not receiving their full entitlement to welfare benefits and falling into poverty. Will help to manage the difficulties experienced by making claims, which can aggravate existing health difficulties e.g. assist with form filling and supporting at appointments.	12 mths 1/10/18 – 30/9/19	£4,091
Experience Counts	Experience Counts: 50 plus project	Skills and training programme for over 50s. Will provide 6 X 6 week programmes (a 2.5 hour workshop per week with wraparound support). Each programme can take up to 10 participants.	15 mths 1/10/18 – 31/12/19	£28,892

Changing Lives	Financial Inclusion and Pre-employment	Continue to help clients address financial difficulties and support them to develop skills to avoid future crisis. Both 1:1 appointments and drop ins.	12 mths 1/9/18 – 30/8/19	£24,500
York Advocacy	Advocacy Support – benefits and debt advice	Work one-to-one with people to access benefits /debt information / advice to help them make informed decisions, maximise their income and manage existing debts. Will help increase confidence and skills to reduce the risk of being in poverty in the future.	12 mths 1/12/18 – 31/11/19	£15,587
Peasholme Charity and York Foodbank (FB)	Community Advice Service	Provide an Advice Worker at each weekday FB; a Community-based advice and guidance drop-in service. Will build on the learning from previous partnership projects, both in York and nationally; aiming to reduce reliance on FB provision. This will include referring repeat clients to mainstream support services, and signposting clients to appropriate service providers.	12 mths 1/10/18 – 30/9/19	£9,484
Citizens Advice York	Advice York Network	Provide a part time coordinator for the Advice York Network to deliver key priorities and objectives of the JRF funded review of the ongoing coordination and running of AY. Promote closer working of advice agencies in the city through meetings, directory, and service development fund raising.	12 mths 1/6/18 – 30/5/18	£10,390
Citizens Advice York	Information and Budgeting Cafes	Building on the well-received 17/18 project and to continue presence (at Sanderson Court in Chapelfields, and Bell Farm) to extend to two other venues (St. Luke's in Clifton and Travellers' Trust in Falsgrave Crescent). Will increase resident's financial capability through support with IT, signposting, finding useful information etc.	12 mths 1/7/18 – 30/6/19	£38,452
Citizens Advice York	GP Surgeries Advice Project	The project will deliver advice to clients and continue to develop co-ordinated advice services delivered within GP surgeries in York. Clients will be referred by GPs in the practises or via the CVS-run 'Ways to Wellbeing' project.	12 mths 1/7/18 – 30/6/19	£24,054

Welfare Benefits Unit	Universal Credit Focus	It will build on and continue to offer general and case-specific support to advisers dealing with issues from their clients about UC. It will offer in-depth advice to advisers as well as providing support with complex issues and challenging decisions. The project will use evidence of problems facing residents to bring issues to the attention of the DWP and other stakeholders.	12 mths	£10,908
TOTAL				£ 166,358

36. Once the projects have had time to bed in we now set up 'Project Exchange' meetings for all the funded projects to make connections, raise awareness and profile of each other's work, encourage collaboration, provide shared feedback, identify common themes and provide an opportunity to hear about other community based activity.

Other activities

37. Successful efforts continue to actively encourage partners to become more visible in delivering their services locally and to work collaboratively with other providers, reflecting the way that the council itself is delivering its own services. For example the CAY GP surgery advice sessions now cover five practices; several organisations provide support in a coordinated and complementary manner in various locations across the city and Ward Committees have bought in specific advice/support services for local delivery.
38. We work together to take a coordinated approach to supporting those residents affected by Welfare Reform, in particular the move to Universal Credit. This has included working with colleagues across CYC and throughout the city to ensure a coordinated city wide approach is adopted.
39. The Credit Union has been involved in FISG for several years. It has rebranded itself as 'Community First Credit Union'. It has two branches in York – the main one in Acomb and a one day a week presence in West Offices. It has changed the way it deploys their staff and is engaging in more outreach work in other community locations – for example we have facilitated them trialling holding weekly community outreach sessions at Chapelfields, Foxwood and Bell Farm and are currently exploring other potential opportunities.

Area-Based Financial Inclusion - A targeted programme to support Inclusive Growth

40. Outside of the FISG funding stream this is a £250k, two year multi agency project that supports people in Westfield and parts of Clifton, Guildhall, Heworth and Hull Road. It aims to increase financial resilience

within these communities, with the guiding principles that project activities offer small steps, are delivered at a very local level and on a multi-agency basis.

41. It focuses on a number of key strands: jobs & skills; business & enterprise; financial resilience and community capacity building². The lead officer sits on FISG to ensure that work across the various strands is complementary and co-ordinated.
42. Some examples include the holiday hunger projects reflecting a strong multi-agency partnership approach. The Tang Hall Big Picnics served 1,027 people over twelve, one day a week sessions with freshly cooked food alongside benefits, adult social care and budgeting advice and support for families. The Tang Hall Big Local is now looking to support a regular Friday session to create a hub alongside CAY and Housing support and to expand their volunteer coordination and development offer.
43. Following on from the success of last year's Acomb Jobs Fair the next one is on 7 November and will be coordinated by York Learning and supported by volunteers from the Chapelfields and Foxwood Community Hubs. A spring Jobs Fair event is planned for Tang Hall.
44. Also on the employment front York Learning has been commissioned to provide community outreach for 1 year to reach deep into communities to connect people with skills and employability offer.

Consultation

45. Consultation is ongoing with all the council's third sector partners including CAY, WBU & AY. There is also consultation with the DWP regional contact in terms of any changes to UC process, claimant numbers, assisted digital support and future migration.

Analysis

46. There is no further analysis other than the existing information provided in the report.

Council Plan

47. Outcomes achieved through the council and its third sector partners welfare benefit support contribute to the commitment to achieve 'a prosperous city for all' including promoting financial inclusion by supporting the Living Wage, supporting voluntary organisations and developing financial inclusion work with measurable outcomes.

² Separate reports on this project have been made to Executive and the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement.

Implications

48. (a) **Financial** – The direct financial implications relate to the funding of both FISG bids and the YFAS scheme which are funded within approved budget allocations. Indirectly the ability and support required to ensure customers pay their council tax affects the overall council budget.
- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications
- (c) **Equalities** – There are no direct implications
- (d) **Legal** – There are no implications
- (e) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications
- (f) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications
- (g) **Property** - There are no implications

Risk Management

49. The key risks are in relation to YFAS & DHP and include:
- Managing the costs of the service (both service delivery and administration) within a fixed budget for 2018/19.
 - Managing the budget to ensure that customers get the same service irrespective of when they apply in the financial year.
 - Minimising opportunities for abuse, whilst ensuring that customers who need help can access scheme easily and quickly.
 - Any failure to provide an appropriate service will have a negative impact on the wellbeing of vulnerable people and the reputation of the council.
 - The council should not be complacent that UC will not have a severe impact on residents and should continue to monitor developments closely. The impacts in other local authorities have not been felt for 12 months following implementation of Full Service a period we are now approaching. There is anecdotal evidence from third sector organisations and the growing HRA debt hat indicates there could be a growing challenge around managing the impacts of UC.
50. These risks are managed through constant monitoring and review. The actual figures for YFAS & DHP are reported to each FISG meeting to allow early intervention.

Contact Details

Author:

David Walker
Head of Customer &
Exchequer Services
Tel: 01904 552261

John Madden
Principal Strategy & Policy
Officer, Health, Housing &
Adult Social Care
Tel No.01904 551132

Susan Wood
Welfare Benefits &
Strategic Partnership
Manager
Tel No.01904 553564

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Pauline Stuchfield
Assistant Director, Customer & Digital
Services
Tel No.01904 551706

Report Approved



Date 22nd November 2018

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



Background Papers:

Welfare Benefits Update & Financial Inclusion Outturn Report 2017/18

List of Abbreviations

ADS Assisted Digital Support

PBS Personal Budgeting Advices

AY Advice York

CAY York Citizen's Advice York

CCSSMC – Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

CTS Council Tax Support

CYC City of York Council

DCTR Discretionary Council Tax Reduction

DHP Discretionary Housing Payment

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

FISG Financial Inclusion Steering Group

HB Housing Benefit

HRA Housing Revenue Account

k Thousand

LHA Local Housing Allowance

UC Universal Credit

WBU Welfare Benefits Unit

YFAS York Financial Assistance Scheme

This page is intentionally left blank