

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

COUNCILLOR ANDY KAY

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: DENISE PARK**

DATE: 31st JANUARY 2013

WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

- Under Occupation/Bedroom Tax

All Housing Benefit claimants in the Borough who would currently be affected by this legislative change have been identified. The information has been shared with the Registered Social Landlords who are actively working with the individual claimants and their families to explore options available and mitigate the impact where possible from 1st April 2013.

Further meetings are being scheduled for early February with the Landlords to review the progress.

- Welfare Cap

We have recently been notified that the introduction of the legislative change on capping the total amount of benefits received by an individual or family will not now start in April 2013 as expected. Instead, the cap will be piloted in a small number of authorities (London boroughs) from April and will be "phased in" for other areas over the summer with a new completion date of September 2013.

- Social Fund

The proposals for the administration of the localised Social Fund are currently being finalised. The proposal will look to continue Community Care Grants in a similar way to the DWP whilst the Emergency Support element (formerly Crisis Loans) is expected to be delivered in partnership with the Voluntary Sector.

It is anticipated that the full proposals will be considered by the Executive Board in February.

BUDGET

The Leader has updated on the settlement in her report and a number of budget related reports have also been included on this agenda. Work is continuing on developing, further options to close the budget 'gap' in 2014/15 and further reports will be made to Finance Council on 4th March 2013.

2012/13 IT UPDATE

The Council's new internet web site went live in October and has been operating very reliably since then. The IT Service, in collaboration with colleagues across the council is now turning its focus on the next phase of the programme.

This will see increased levels of automation on the internet web site which will support frontline services by reducing the costs of service provision and improving self - serve facilities.

The staff intranet will also be redeveloped to provide better information and collaboration tools for staff. We have shortlisted potential development partners who will help to design and implement the work streams within this new phase of development.

In addition the IT Service continues to support key Council initiatives including, Public Health transition, Welfare Reform, the refurbishment of 10 Duke Street, the BSF programme and the Lancashire Superfast Broadband Project.