

SUBJECT: To review the impact of benefit changes upon the Borough

Report to: Scrutiny Committee, 6 March 2014

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 A number of changes have been implemented following the passing of the Welfare Reform Act. This includes changes to housing benefit where tenants in the social sector are deemed to have 'spare' rooms, an overall cap on welfare benefit payments of £350.00 per week for single people or £500.00 per week for families.

2.0 Impact of benefit Changes

2.1 The Borough Council have monitored the effect of these changes both individually as services and corporately with regular Welfare Reform meetings taking place. From these meetings a report on the impact of these changes has been produced and updated by the Employment & Skills Co-ordinator. A copy of the most recent report is attached at Appendix 1 which provides a comprehensive assessment of the impact upon the Borough.

2.2 In addition Services provide quarterly data on key performance areas, including those affected by welfare reform. The key indicators for this area of work are reproduced at Appendix 2 together with additional Service data.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that scrutiny Committee note this report.



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Measuring the impact of welfare reform



November 2013

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Impact on communities



Impact on the economy



Impact on services

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List of Key Welfare Reform Measures

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

The main welfare reform measures*

**Summary taken from Sheffield Hallam University Research, 'Hitting the poorest places hardest' (April 2013).*

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| Housing Benefit – Local Housing Allowance | Changes to the rules governing assistance with the cost for low-income households in the private rented sector. The new rules apply to rent levels, 'excess' payments, property size, age limits for sole occupancy, and indexation for inflation. |
| Housing Benefit – Under-occupation | New rules governing the size of properties for which payments are made to working age claimants in the social rented sector, widely known as the 'bedroom tax'. |
| Non-dependent deductions | Increases in the deductions from Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, and other income-based benefits to reflect the contribution that non-dependent household members are expected to make towards the household's housing costs. |
| Household benefit cap | New ceiling on total payments per household, applying to the sum of a wide range of benefits for working age claimants. |
| Council Tax Benefit | Reductions in entitlement of working age claimants arising from 10 per cent reduction in total payments to local authorities. |
| Disability Living Allowance | Replacement of DLA by Personal Independence Payments (PIP), including more stringent and frequent medical tests, as the basis for financial support to help offset the additional costs faced by individuals with disabilities. |
| Incapacity benefits | Replacement of Incapacity Benefit and related benefits by Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), with more stringent medical tests, greater conditionality and time-limiting of non-means tested entitlement for all but the most severely ill or disabled. |
| Child Benefit | Three year freeze, and withdrawal of benefit from households including higher earner. |

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| Tax Credits | Reductions in payment rates and eligibility for Child Tax Credit and Working Families Tax Credit, paid to lower and middle income households. |
| 1 per cent up-rating | Reduction in annual up-rating of value of most working age benefits. |

Key Findings from Sheffield Hallam University Research for Great Yarmouth

- Great Yarmouth is projected to be the 40th most impacted area across all welfare reforms, based upon the average loss per working age adult and out of a total of 379 areas.
- In cash terms, and for the average working age adult, this represents a £610 income reduction per annum beginning 2014/15.
- This places Great Yarmouth in the bottom 10-11% (ranked 10.55% bottom as a percentage of all areas), and the most impacted district across Norfolk and the New Anglia LEP area.
- Breaking down the likely impact caused by each welfare reform measure, Great Yarmouth is ranked in the bottom 20/379 for areas most affected by non-dependent deductions and 11/379 for areas hit by the 1% up-rating limit.
- Across these two measures, Great Yarmouth is positioned in the bottom 5% and 3% nationally.
- The total amount expected to be withdrawn from the UK economy once welfare reforms have taken their full effect is £19bn.
- Great Yarmouth's economy alone will see a reduction of approximately £36m during the financial year 2014/15.

Other related measures

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| The move towards online services | <p>Not exclusive to welfare reform measures, but very much part of, is a drive to encourage people to move to more online management of their benefit and job seeking transactions. This drive includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging all job seekers to look for vacancies by registering with the national Universal Jobs Match website facility. • The expectation that Universal Credit accounts, when rolled out nationally, will be managed online. • A move to support tenants of social housing to manage |
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| | their rent charges online. |
| Replacement of the Social Fund | From April 2013, the Social Fund (reference here Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans) has been abolished and replaced by reduced funding provided to upper-tier local authorities. In Norfolk, the county council have taken on this responsibility, outsourcing enquiries for the first year to a private supplier. Budget Loans are expected to become advances secured through the Universal Credit process. |
| The phasing in of Universal Credit (UC) | The government's aim for Universal Credit is to, 'make work pay.' It is anticipated that the majority of claimants will make their claim online, with payments made monthly and direct to households. UC looks to simplify payments for people who are looking for work or who are on low incomes. It will bring together a range of benefits including, income based Job Seekers Allowance, income related Employment Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credits, and Housing Benefit. Housing costs will be paid to the claimant, and not the landlord, and the system hopes to incentivise work. |
| Universal Credit Local Support Services Framework | To support the roll out of UC, the government proposes a Support Services Framework, establishing local delivery partnerships to help residents make the transition to UC, enabling greater online account management and to better manage cash flow under a monthly payment system. The government has indicated that it will make resources available to help develop and implement local support functions. |
| The Work Programme | Since April of this year, there has been an off-flow of residents, deemed economically active, from the Work Programme, and who were automatically placed on the programme as a result of their two year or more unemployment status. These residents have now reverted to being customers of Job Centre Plus, and are increasingly seeking support from voluntary employment related supported providers, including those providers commissioned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council. In the main, these job seeking residents are furthest away from the labour market, and are less likely to have undertaken sustained periods of employment or related activity during the last two years. They are more likely to experience complex needs. |

1: About this Report

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

For the last 12 months, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and partners from across the community, voluntary and other public sectors have been working together to prepare people for the introduction of a range of central government-led welfare reform measures.

This report does not aim to wonder what the impact of welfare reforms might be, but instead, to measure the impact made by preventative measures, and to equip the council and partners with the intelligence needed to inform and better shape their joint approaches.

The data in this report will be monitored and refreshed on a quarterly basis. A further update will be published at the end of 2013/14.

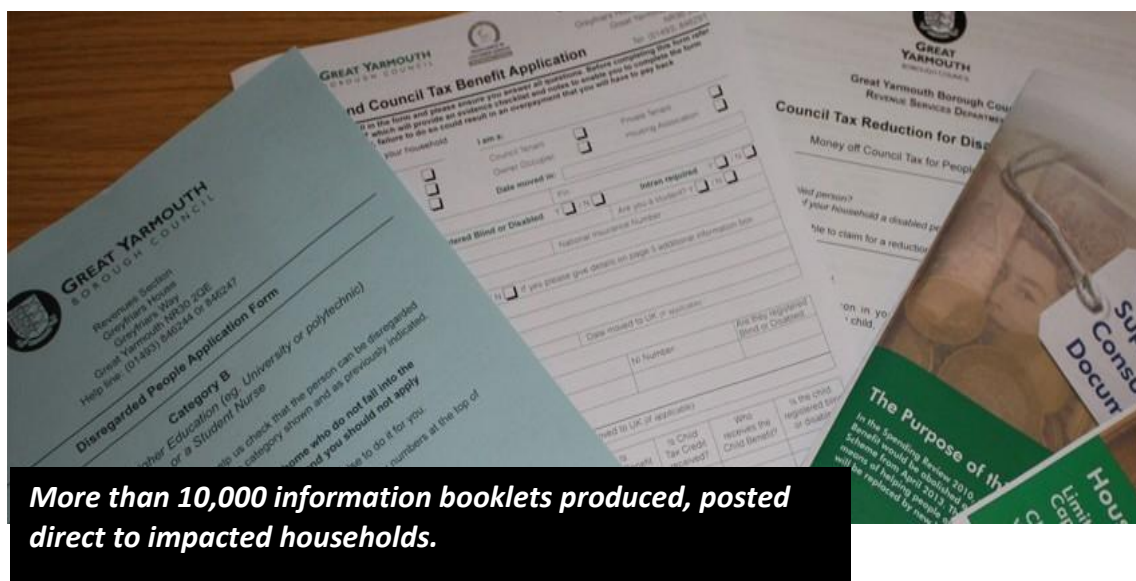
Background

Throughout the last financial year, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and their partners have undertaken the following measures, to understand and safeguard against the most likely impacts of welfare reform, protecting the Borough's most vulnerable residents.

| Measure | Detail |
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| Neighbourhood-based Knowledge and Awareness Raising Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A series of road-shows coordinated by the council, and involving front line advisors and voluntary advice agencies.• Aimed at informing people of forthcoming changes and options for support. |
| Multi-Agency Welfare Reform Summit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-hosted between the council and Great Yarmouth DIAL.• The event was held at the Salvation Army, and aimed to gather grassroots intelligence on the impact of welfare reform. |
| Voluntary and Community Sector Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The second annual survey to be conducted by the council in partnership with Voluntary Norfolk.• The survey revealed that 40% of organisations attributed increased levels of demand to welfare reform measures and / or to the general economic situation. |
| Information Booklets & Posters | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council produced a series of booklets, posted across community venues and sent to residents, most likely to be impacted by welfare reforms.• To ensure the booklets were accessible, they were proofed and amended, as appropriate, by Great Yarmouth DIAL. |

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| Training Sessions for Housing Estate Managers and Front Line Advisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council provided regular team training sessions for front line advisors throughout 2012/13. • These training sessions were supported by voluntary providers, based upon their projections of likely impact and most vulnerable groups. |
| Partnership Working and Targeted Outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council commissioned Great Yarmouth DIAL to provide targeted support to Community Housing (social housing) tenants, most at risk of changes to housing benefit under-occupancy rules. • Referrals were made by Estate Managers, and by 31 March 2013, more than 300/553 (55%) of affected households had accessed face to face or telephone support. All households had received information through the post or by contact made by their Estate Manager. |
| Maintaining Core Voluntary Sector Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council provides voluntary sector grants to Norfolk CAB, Centre 81, Great Yarmouth DIAL, the Salvation Army and First Move Furnishaid. • These grants have not been affected by the cuts made to the council's budget, and in addition, the council continues to provide development support to voluntary groups to help them access new and more sustainable sources of funding. |
| Investing in Grassroots Employment Support Related Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2012/13, the council pooled budgets with Job Centre Plus to facilitate a community budget at a neighbourhood-level in the South and Central areas of Great Yarmouth. • These areas include the most employment deprived neighbourhoods in the country, (bottom 1% for overall deprivations), and along with the voluntary sector, they supported more than 70 people to find sustainable employment, outperforming nationally commissioned programmes. This work has now been maintained and extended, following a successful application to the Big Lottery's Coastal Communities Fund. |
| Co-hosting multi-agency support sessions with Norfolk Community Advice Network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has co-hosted support sessions with the Big Lottery funded, Norfolk Community Advice Network. • These sessions were available to all front line practitioners working in the Great Yarmouth area, and attended by more than 50 representatives. |
| Supporting the implementation of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Yarmouth made a successful partnership application to the Big Lottery's Improving Financial |

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| Great Yarmouth's Big Lottery funded Improving Financial Confidence Programme. | <p>Confidence Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme provides just over £500,000 for three years, to support social housing tenants to better manage their finances, and who are in and out of work due to their dependency on the seasonal economy. The work includes support provided by Business in the Community to engage with mainstream banks, so that they can work together to provide more affordable financial products. |
| Supporting Great Yarmouth's Application to the Advice Services Transition Fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Yarmouth has secured almost £350,000 as part of the Big Lottery administered, Advice Service Transition Fund. Set to launch in September 2013, this grant award provides for 25% front line delivery, with the remainder focussed upon helping advice agencies to make the step change to a new funding environment and to become more financially resilient. |



2: Impact on communities

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

The following key impacts have been sourced using council data sets and intelligence provided by neighbourhood teams and the voluntary sector. Unless otherwise stated, numerical data is taken from the first six months of 2013/14. Comparisons are made with the same period last year.

Basic Need

- Great Yarmouth DIAL and the Salvation Army both report an increase in requests for food parcels, provided by the Great Yarmouth Food Bank.
- These increases currently stand at 10% and 25% respectively.
- Herring House Trust report a significant increase in the number of presentations made to their direct access hostel from people who are already housed, but who are in need of basic items, including clothing.
- Both DIAL and Norfolk Rural Community Council report higher levels of people experiencing fuel poverty, with the latter of these two organisations also reporting more known incidents of fuel theft.

Income, General Benefits and Debt

- DIAL have seen an 11% increase in the number of people requiring money and debt advice.
- More specifically, the organisation has seen a 21% increase in the number of people requesting support to understand or appeal decisions made about their benefit entitlements.
- Herring House Trust report a 32% increase in the number of their direct access hostel residents who are experiencing debt related issues.
- Neighbourhood Teams report that Community Development Workers are spending more time providing emotional support to residents, as a result of pressures caused by financial hardship.
- All Neighbourhood Teams are now supporting more residents to access credit unions and the debt advice services provided by DIAL.
- Great Yarmouth Community Housing have seen an increase in rent arrears, which for the first 14 weeks of the financial year are up from £275,452 (2012/13) to £324,275 (2013/14).

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

- DIAL report that a significant number of their new enquiries are linked to changes to housing and council tax benefit.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Customer Service Team have seen a 46% increase in the number of telephone calls made to their housing and council tax benefit lines.
- In real terms, these additional telephone calls total 4809 compared to the same 3 month period last year.

- In Great Yarmouth, 791 households are impacted by the changes to housing benefit entitlement and relating to under-occupancy.
- At the other end of the spectrum, 225 social rented properties are affected by over-occupancy.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council report no significant variations in the total number of housing and council tax benefit claims in payment.
- By contrast, there has been a 26% increase in the number of reminders being issued for non-payment of council tax, incorporating a 147% increase in June.
- Overall, there has been a 13% increase in the number of liability orders issued.

Housing Costs

- Last year, Great Yarmouth Borough Council used 62% of its Discretionary Housing Payment to meet eligible need to help meet the cost of rents and deposits.
- Although provided with a larger discretionary fund this year, the council has already had to draw upon 55% of its allocation.
- In total, there have been 327 decisions made so far this year, with 80% of those being approved.
- 105/327 requests have been made by residents living in the private rented sector.
- The range for weekly rent awards made through the discretionary fund is £5.00 to £40.00, with the majority covering a period between 1 and 26 weeks.
- A total of 49 requests have related to deposits and rent in advance for residents trying to access accommodation in the private sector.
- Awards have been agreed for 39 of these requests, with a range between £34 and £600.

Unemployment

- All voluntary providers surveyed identified greater demand on employment related support services.
- One such service, Target Opportunities, has experienced more than a 100% increase in the number of long term unemployed people (more than 2 years unemployed) accessing its service.
- Amongst this client group, two thirds experience additional support needs.
- This rise is attributed to the first tranche of referrals now exiting the Work Programme, after the maximum allowed support period of two years.
- There are some reports emerging of people leaving the Work Programme with insufficient skills to make independent job searches, including the IT skills needed to access the Universal Jobs Match website.
- Neighbourhood and Rural Teams also report increasing demand for job clubs, as residents struggle to make the transition to more online management of their job searches.

Other Recorded Impacts

- Most voluntary organisations surveyed and Neighbourhood Teams report more signs of homelessness and / or of residents who are vulnerably housed with multiple support needs.
- Herring House Trust have identified a 20% increase in the number of referrals made to them direct from prison, along with a 48% increase in presentations made by people with mental health support needs.
- The Housing Trust has also seen a 34% increase in the number of 25-35 year olds who are looking for private rented accommodation, as a result of changes to housing benefit rules for under-35's.
- There has also been a 30% increase in the number of presentations made by 18-20 year olds, but no noticeable increase in relocations from other local authority areas.



Great Yarmouth DIAL report that the average time spent on individual cases is increasing, as more of their clients now experience multiple and complex needs.

3: Impact on the economy

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

At present, there is limited hard data available to measure the direct impact of welfare reform and related measures on the local economy.

Recommendations on how to address this gap are included in section 5, key actions.

Employment data is taken from the Office of National Statistics (nomis).

Broad Economic Impact

- The Sheffield Hallam report, 'Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest', projects that on average, Great Yarmouth's working age residents will experience a £610 reduction on their annual incomes.
- Collectively, and if all other factors remain the same, this represents a £36m withdrawal of available income from the local economy.
- Making sense of this in a local context, the collective reduction would be equivalent to a 7% fall in the value of tourism to the Great Yarmouth economy from next year onwards.
- If this plays out, it is likely that there will be a direct correlation between the impact of welfare reform, and the ability of some local key sectors, including tourism and retail, to grow and create future job opportunities.
- Evidence supports the assertion that these sectors are more likely to provide job opportunities for people who are furthest away from the labour market, consequently, compounding the issues of long term unemployment.
- There is no evidence at present that welfare reform is leading to migration from other local authority districts.
- If this should happen, there are potential economic factors to consider, including greater competition for private rented accommodation and the impact of this on local market rents.

Specific Economic Impact

- Across partnerships and neighbourhood teams, there are anecdotal reports of increased levels of theft relating to basic personal and household items.
- Some areas of the town show a degree of economic vibrancy in their ability to maintain a multitude of convenience stores; however, it is clear that many of these stores are trading heavily on discounted alcohol purchases.
- St Peter's Road alone, which acts as a key feeder road between the seafront and the emerging cultural hub of King Street, is home to more than half a dozen convenience stores.
- Most of these stores do not stock any significant fresh produce, but do trade well on cheap alcohol, with two of the stores having, and using, extended licences.
- St Peter's Road is referenced here because it is the main shopping area for the Nelson Ward, which experiences the highest rates of income and employment deprivation in Norfolk, along with some of the most visible signs of unmet multiple and complex needs.

- Going forward, it may act as a valuable barometer for better understanding, and responding to, the interdependency between the social and economic health of the Borough, and which is caused by, or resultant of, welfare reform and similar measures.
- The issue of fuel poverty and fuel theft, cited by rural teams, is likely to have some impact on local supply businesses.
- There is also a potential, but hitherto unexamined, link between the reported reductions in donations to charity shops, as people make do for longer, and the economic health of Great Yarmouth Town Centre and Gorleston High Street.
- In particular, the impact on Great Yarmouth Town Centre is worthy of examination here, as it is immediately fed by footfall created by the Borough's two most employment and income deprived wards.
- The increased interest in credit unions, as identified and facilitated by Neighbourhood Teams, could suggest better planning for special occasions, and facilitate more spending during holiday periods, including the main Christmas retail period.



4: Impact on Services

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

As per section two, key impacts here have been sourced using council data sets and the intelligence provided by neighbourhood teams and the voluntary sector.

This section includes responses on how services are managing a range of operational impacts.

Levels of Demand

- All voluntary organisations surveyed report higher levels of demand, and in particular, higher levels amongst people requiring additional support.
- At least one organisation cited that their own staff teams were experiencing financial difficulties, as a result of welfare reform and related measures.
- All organisations reported increased costs from utilities and other overheads, as a proportion of the funds available to them.
- The Target Opportunities project is incorporating additional job clubs into its delivery model, and has secured new partnership arrangements with Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Libraries.
- DIAL Great Yarmouth are increasingly moving towards a model of community based support, recruiting more local resident volunteers and now outreaching to 2/3 Neighbourhood Team localities.
- Herring House Trust is providing more drop-in services to people who are vulnerably housed through its Pathway project.
- Neighbourhood Teams are increasingly looking to build the resilience of local residents and their communities by facilitating a range of neighbourhood fairs and gatherings.

Resources

- Great Yarmouth Borough Council's contact centre has received 46% more calls this quarter, compared to the same period last year, and relating to housing and council tax benefit enquiries.
- Last year, the contact centre was able to respond to 87% of these calls, but as a result of volume, this initial handling figure has now reduced to 65%.
- To meet, and coordinate, the demand for food parcels, the Salvation Army is now working with other faith groups to establish a Great Yarmouth Food Bank.
- This food bank is working closely with local businesses to secure regular donation supplies, harnessed by the use of a single point of contact.
- All Neighbourhood Teams report having to put more of their resources into supporting local residents who are experiencing urgent financial pressures.
- Although a strain on resources, all teams report working more closely with local credit unions and the East of England Illegal Money Lending Team.

Partnerships

- Encouragingly, all organisations surveyed reported greater partnership working

with other agencies.

- Herring House Trust is establishing a multi-agency forum to better support people with multiple and complex needs.
- DIAL are working closely with local partner agency GYROS on Great Yarmouth's Advice Service Transition Fund project, aimed at helping advice agencies to make the transition to a new funding environment over the next two years.
- Great Yarmouth has also just launched its Improving Financial Confidence project, involving partners from across the voluntary, public and private sectors.
- This project aims to support social housing tenants, who are in and out of work, to better manage their finances.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Job Centre Plus continue to work in partnership to develop a community budgeting approach, aimed at supporting longer term unemployed residents into sustainable employment.
- DIAL, along with other local voluntary agencies, are working hard to lever new funds into the Borough, including funds available through the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities programme.
- To support this, Great Yarmouth Borough Council continues to fund dedicated Voluntary Sector Development Support, from Voluntary Norfolk.



The Herring House Trust Pathway project provides a drop-in service for Great Yarmouth residents who are vulnerably housed or rough sleeping, supporting between 10 and 14 people every week.

5: Summary & Key Actions

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

Communities

| Key Impact | Existing Measures | New Measures |
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| Basic Need, including food parcels and fuel poverty. | The Borough Council and faith groups have worked together to create a Great Yarmouth Food Bank, based upon an agency referral system. | To continue to monitor demand on a quarterly basis, including demand for fuel buying schemes. To work with Norfolk County Council to inform the future development of the Local Assistance Scheme (replacement for the Social Fund), considering more preventative approaches. |
| Income, General Benefits and Debt including rent arrears. | The Borough Council have referral and support arrangements in place with Great Yarmouth DIAL and provide a core grant to the CAB. | To monitor demand for money and debt advice and to continue engagement with Great Yarmouth's Improving Financial Confidence Programme and the Advice Services Transition Fund. |
| Housing and Council Tax Benefits | A temporary staff shortage in the contact centre has been addressed. It is expected that calls made have now reached their peak and will return to a more manageable level. | Although the Borough Council are already working closely with voluntary advice agencies, there may be a need for more targeted support for residents who have so far declined to engage. |
| Housing Costs including Discretionary Housing Payment | DHP recipients are already supported to access DIAL and related services, in preparation for the ending of their award. | The council may want to consider supplementing the existing measure with some form of tapering, to encourage improved financial planning. |
| Unemployment including Work Programme exits and the move to online management. | The council already work in partnership with voluntary groups and Job Centre Plus to deliver the neighbourhood-based | The high level of support required for some residents who are required to access Universal Jobs Match, |

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| | Target Opportunities project, which now includes the provision of job clubs to support improved IT skills. | <p>indicates that additional IT and advisor support will be required to manage the introduction of Universal Credit.</p> <p>To prepare a support framework.</p> <p>To maintain and further develop opportunities for partnership working with Job Centre Plus.</p> |
|--|--|--|

The Economy

| Key Impact | Existing Measures | New Measures |
|--|--|--|
| Broad economic impact including the impact of welfare reform on key sectors, retail and tourism. | The Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority, Great Yarmouth Town Centre Partnership and Gorleston Traders Association can already provide intelligence on spending / purchasing patterns. | <p>To consider the benefits of creating a barometer of local retailers and related businesses, to assess impact on key sectors.</p> <p>This sample of businesses can also report on changing levels of theft, relating to basic food items.</p> |
| Specific economic impact including access to affordable credit. | <p>Neighbourhood teams are already supporting residents to access local credit unions.</p> <p>The Improving Financial Confidence programme is considering the merits of establishing a Community Bank of Great Yarmouth.</p> | <p>To bring together the two existing measures, so that access to credit unions can be more coordinated.</p> <p>To consider how to engage with convenience stores and similar, which fall outside of the Town Centre and other partnerships.</p> |

Impact on Services

| Key Impact | Existing Measures | New Measures |
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| Levels of demand including demand for money, benefit and debt advice. | Neighbourhood Teams already work in partnership with a range of advice and related agencies, supporting them to share back office functions and to manage demand at source. | <p>To review all grant arrangements with voluntary organisations to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of local residents.</p> <p>To build upon an asset based approach to service provision, generating greater resilience amongst local communities.</p> <p>Linked to the above, to explore the transferability of Community Advocates and similar approaches, as a mechanism for increasing grassroots prevention.</p> |
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| Key Impact | Existing Measures | New Measures |
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| Resources and partnerships, including financial pressures. | <p>Great Yarmouth Borough Council continues to fund dedicated development support for voluntary and community groups, supporting them to access new funds and to consider shared arrangements.</p> <p>Great Yarmouth Borough Council has coordinated Community Budgeting at a Neighbourhood –level in partnership with Job Centre Plus and local communities, to better manage resources.</p> | <p>To fully take into account this support as part of the above referenced review of voluntary sector grants.</p> <p>To facilitate, through cost sharing groups and similar vehicles, opportunities for shared back office support.</p> <p>To work with Job Centre Plus and local communities to accelerate Neighbourhood Budgeting, considering how best to engage other public sector bodies.</p> |

More Information

Measuring the impact of welfare reform

Related reports:

‘Hitting the poorest places hardest’

Sheffield Hallam University

http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/hitting-poorest-places-hardest_0.pdf

‘Annual Impact Report, Neighbourhood Budgeting, 2012/13’

CoSocial and Comeunity

<http://www.cosocial.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Neighbourhood-budgeting-Impact-Report-2012-13.pdf>

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Other organisations:

Great Yarmouth DIAL

W: www.dial-greatyarmouth.org.uk

Herring House Trust

W: www.herringhousetrust.org.uk/

Norfolk Rural Community Council

W: www.norfolkkrcc.org.uk

Salvation Army (Herbies)

W: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ang/Great_Yarmouth

Voluntary Norfolk


W: www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk

Appendix 2 - KEY INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM

CORPORATE MEASURES

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| CM08 | Unemployment figures | 2012/13 | 3,513 | 3,282 | 3,681 | 4,093 | Monthly count averaged over Qtr | ↑ |
| | Corporate Priority: Promoting economic growth and job creation. | 2013/14 | 3,485 | 2,957 | | | | |
| Commentary: | | | | | | | | |
| CM09a | Average time to assess Housing & Council Tax: Benefit new claims | 2012/13 | 32 days | 29 days | 26 days | 26 days | Year to date, cumulative | ↑ |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | 25 days | 26 days | 27 days | | | |
| Commentary: Average processing times have been impacted by staff turnover and maternity within the team. New assessment officers have been recruited but are still gaining training and experience. Workloads remain high. Target outturn for 2013/14 is 25 days. The national average last published was 24 days. | | | | | | | | |
| CM09b | Average time to assess Housing & Council Tax: Change in circumstances | 2012/13 | 11 days | 9 days | 9 days | 9 days | Year to date, cumulative | ↓ |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | 14 days | 14 days | 15 days | | | |
| Commentary: Average processing times have been impacted by staff turnover and maternity within the team. New assessment officers have been recruited but are still gaining training and experience. Workloads remain high. Target outturn for 2013/14 is 13 days. The national average last published was 11 days. | | | | | | | | |
| CM10a | No of tenants affected by Social Sector Size Criteria (Under occupancy) | 2012/13 | New measure no comparable data available as legislation only came into force from 1 April 2013 | | | | Snapshot at | N/A |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|-----|
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | N/A | 779 | 771 | | 30/09/13 | |
| Commentary: Although a number of customers have moved either within Social Housing or into a private tenancy, the overall number of customers affected remains similar. | | | | | | | | |
| CM10b | No of tenants affected by the Benefit Cap | 2012/13 | New measure no comparable data available as legislation only came into force from 1 April 2013 | | | | Snapshot at 30/09/13 | N/A |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | N/A | 70 | 34 | | | |
| Commentary: Initial number of tenants affected by the benefit cap was based on information provided by the DWP. The actual amount of customers affected is approximately half that was expected. | | | | | | | | |
| CM11 | No of evictions from GYCH properties for: a) Rent b) ASB c) Other | 2012/13 | New measure no quarterly comparable data available Total evictions for 2012/13 were; a) 2 b) 2 c) 0 | | | | Year to date, cumulative | N/A |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | a) 4 b) 1 c) 1 | a) 7 b) 1 c) 1 | a) 10 b) 1 c) 4 | | | |
| Commentary: The number of evictions has increased this year this is despite ensuring that support is available and that this action is a last resort. In some cases the reasons are multiple so these have been registered under the main reason for eviction. Other reasons include non occupation, false declaration to obtain a tenancy and persistent refusal to allow access for gas servicing. No evictions have taken place where the household is subject to the SSSC or benefit cap. Two households evicted included children and appropriate safeguarding protocols were followed. | | | | | | | | |
| CM14 | No. of households in temporary accommodation | 2012/13 | 75 households in TA for Q3 2012/13 | | | | Snapshot at 31/12/13 | N/A |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | 97 | 107 | 104 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|---|
| Commentary: The number of households in temporary accommodation includes those who are in GYCH non secure tenancies which have risen to 26 by 31.12.13. This is an unusually high number and will decrease following the implementing of Introductory Tenancies. We continue to minimise the use of B&B accommodation. | | | | | | | | |
| CM15 | Number of a) Homeless acceptances b) Homeless preventions | 2012/13 | For Q3 2012/13 a) 12 b)166 | | | | Quarterly | N/A |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | a) 18 b) 58 | a) 28 b) 76 | a) 35 b) 87 | | | |
| Commentary: Homeless acceptances have risen quarter by quarter but this can reflect an increased number of decisions made rather than an increase in homelessness overall. Our historic data is not complete however we will be able to compare year on year from this date forward. | | | | | | | | |
| CM16 | a) Number of Social housing applicants in allocation pool b) Number of Social housing new applicants awaiting assessment | 2012/13 | No comparable data available | | | | Snapshot at 31/12/13 | N/A |
| | Corporate Priority: Protecting and supporting vulnerable people. | 2013/14 | a) 330 b) 459 | a) 337 b) 481 | a)365 b)385 | | | |
| Commentary: The trend continues to be an increase in scored cases, i.e. those assessed as requiring a social housing allocation and a reduction in unscored cases, i.e. those applicants awaiting a decision. | | | | | | | | |
| CM24 | Collection rates Council Tax | 2012/13 | 30.6% | 58.3% | 85.9% | 97.5% | Year to date, cumulative |  |
| | Corporate Priority: Being an enterprising and ambitious Council. | 2013/14 | 30.5% | 57.8% | 85.9% | | | |
| CM26 | a) GYCH rent arrears collection rate b) as a % of rent roll c) £ value | 2012/13 | | a) 98.72% b) 1.16% c) £252,485 | a) 99.59% b) 0.99% c) £215296 | | Year to date, cumulative | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------|
| | Corporate Priority: Being an enterprising and ambitious Council. | 2013/14 | | a) 98% b) 1.48% c) £335,267 | a) 99.07% b) 1.27% c) £288687 | | | ↓ ↓ ↓ |
|--|--|---------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------|

Commentary: These figures are traditionally the lowest rent arrear figures/highest collection rates of the year as it follows the two non-payment weeks. The new rent income team is now fully staffed and will begin to meet the challenge of reducing rent arrears against a background of welfare reform.

Service measures;

Telephone calls to GYBC Customer Services concerning Benefits & Council Tax

| | October 12 | | | October 13 | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Calls offered | Calls answered | Service level | Calls offered | Calls answered | service level |
| Benefits: | 1890 | 1650 | 87% | 1606 | 1281 | 80% (decrease) |
| C/Tax | 2219 | 1910 | 86% | 2488 | 1926 | 77% (increase) |
| | | | | | | |
| | November 12 | | | | | |
| | Calls offered | Calls answered | Service level | Calls offered | Calls answered | service level |
| Benefits | 1745 | 1594 | 91% | 1802 | 1478 | 82% (decrease) |
| C/Tax | 2160 | 1921 | 89% | 2332 | 1792 | 77% (increase) |
| | | | | | | |
| | December 12 | | | | | |
| | Calls offered | Calls answered | Service level | Calls offered | Calls answered | service level |
| Benefits | 1169 | 1094 | 94% | 1384 | 1168 | 84% (increase) |
| C/Tax | 1382 | 1267 | 92% | 1735 | 1319 | 76% (increase) |

Rent Collection

Balance on rent accounts affected by the Benefit Cap:-

| 29-Jul | 26-Aug | 30-Sep | 4-11-2013 | 5-12-13 | 3-1-14 | 6-2-14 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Before Welfare Reform £89.97 | £1,234.75 | £1,821.05 | £1604.65 | £2621.84 | £2446.99 | £2080.01 |

Local Authority Properties affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC)

The figures show how many cases affected by the SSSC. The overall amount of cases have reduced, the figures fluctuate as changes occur in the household. 3rd Feb 2014 figures show an increase, although this could relate to no cash being posted to rent accounts when the information was collected.

| <u>Cases 2013/14</u> | <u>ALL</u> | <u>14%</u> 1 BED | <u>25%</u> 2 BED | <u>Total Arrears</u> | <u>Number of accounts in arrears</u> |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| End of March | 580 | n/a | n/a | £29827.62 | 156 |
| May | 582 | 478 | 104 | £37363.51 | 349 |
| June | 575 | 474 | 101 | £42732.52 | 303 |
| July | 553 | 453 | 100 | £42635.17 | 323 |
| August | 533 | 439 | 94 | £40354.93 | 280 |
| September | 525 | 436 | 89 | £41005.85 | 255 |
| October | 537 | 453 | 84 | £42316.77 | 277 |
| 5 th December | 532 | 441 | 91 | £53565.94 | 303 |
| 3 rd January 14 | 530 | 441 | 89 | £51676.81 | 296 |
| 3 rd Feb 14 | 526 | 430 | 96 | £58856.23 | 283 (No cash posting due to server down) |

- 67 Notices to seek possession have been served

Rent Arrears Figures for financial years 2012/13 & 2013/14

| <u>End of Month Figure</u> | <u>2013/14</u> | <u>2012/13</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| April 2013 | £276,194(1.22%) | £268,197 (1.23%) |

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| May 2013 | £323,914 (1.43%) | £268,042 (1.24%) |
| June 2013 | £324,275 (1.43%) | £275,452 (1.27%) |
| July 2013 | £324,460 (1.43%) | £271,950 (1.25%) |
| August 2013 | £346,235 (1.52%) | £272,479 (1.25%) |
| September 2013 | £335,267 (1.48%) | £252,485 (1.16%) |
| October 2013 | £362,268 (1.61%) | £296,369 (1.36%) |
| November 2013 | £343,812 (1.51%) | £298,015 (1.37%) |
| December 2013 | £288,687 (1.27%) | £215,296 (0.99%) |
| January 2014 | £294,059 (1.30%) | £223,908 (1.03%) |
| February 2014 | | £257,606 (1.18%) |
| March 2014 | | £269,855 (1.23%) |

The total amount of cases showing arrears as at the end of each month for 2013

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| January 2012 | 1584 | January 2013 | 1450 |
| February 2012 | 1469 | February 2013 | 1579 |
| March 2012 | 1489 | March 2013 | 1496 |
| April 2012 | 1710 | April 2013 | 1845 |
| May 2012 | 1686 | May 2013 | 1994 |
| June 2012 | 1748 | June 2013 | 2010 |
| July 2012 | 1689 | July 2013 | 1904 |
| August 2012 | 1667 | August 2013 | 1933 |
| September 2012 | 1554 | September 2013 | 2003 |
| October 2012 | 1798 | October 2013 | 2011 |
| 24 th Nov 2012 | 1772 | 25 th Nov 2013 | 2019 |
| 7 th January 2013 | 1475 | 6 th January 2014 | 1572 |
| 28 th January 2013 | 1450 | 27 th January 2014 | 1633 |
| 4 th February 2013 | 1723 | 4 th February 2014 | To be collected on 20/2/14 |

Rent Collected as % of the Rent Roll

| <u>Week 52 Year</u> | <u>%</u> |
|---------------------|----------|
| 2008/09 | 97.71 |
| 2009/10 | 97.99 |
| 2010/11 | 98.59 |
| 2011/12 | 99.23 |
| 2012/13 | 99.67 |
| So far as at wk 44 | 99.22 |

Previous years rent collection

| <u>Week 52</u> | <u>Arrears in £</u> | <u>% of rent debit</u> |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 2005/6 | £434,657 | 2.87 |
| 2006/7 | £385,576 | 2.45 |
| 2007/8 | £393,872 | 2.36 |
| 2008/9 | £377,209 | 2.14 |
| 2009/10 | £354,223 | 1.94 |
| 2010/11 | £280,211 | 1.51 |
| 2011/12 | £251,270 | 1.25 |
| 2012/13 | £269,855 | 1.24 |
| So far 2013/14 – wk 44 | £294,059 | 1.30 |