



Report to: Cabinet

Subject: Strategy for Housing and Council Tax Benefits and their take up

Date: 5 August 2010

Author: Revenues Services Manager

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report details the reasons for introducing a Strategy for Housing and Council Tax Benefits and their take up and recommends that Members approve the strategy attached at appendix A.

2. INTRODUCTION

Every council that administers the benefit scheme has a responsibility to pay the right benefits to the right people at the right time. This fundamental responsibility and the legal requirements of the national benefit scheme therefore underpin all our benefit assessments. This strategy is designed to help the service achieve these goals.

3. BACKGROUND

The council currently has a strategy for take up only that was last reviewed over 3 years ago. Since this time the economic situation is significantly different and government agencies are putting an increased emphasis on economic stimulus and the need to support those in need. In response to this, the council has written a revised Strategy for Housing and Council Tax Benefits and their take up.

4. CURRENT POSTION

Attached at appendix A is the strategy. This has been subject to limited internal consultation but has been written using a template designed in negotiation with other Nottinghamshire districts. The strategy has been reviewed by Senior Management Team on 2 March 2010 where it was agreed

that the report be forwarded for consultation/review by the Policy Scrutiny committee on 23 March 2010. Scrutiny committee established a working group to scrutinise the strategy with the following scope:-

- i) Range of specific groups for targeted approach
- ii) Detailed wording of the strategy.
- iii) Appropriateness of performance measures and action plan
- iv) Targets set for improvement

A report of the findings and recommendations has been reported to Cabinet on 8 July 2010 which have been incorporated within the strategy.

The strategy itself identifies how further, wider consultation will take place, and also contains an action plan which will form the basis of the section plan for the Benefits section over the next 36 months. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis, with a full review every 3 years.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equalities impact assessment has been completed.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Strategy for Housing and Council Tax Benefits and their take up 2010/11-2012/13 attached at Appendix A be approved.

