

**Report to** Cabinet  
12 September 2018  
**Report of** Director of business services  
**Subject** Scrutiny committee recommendations

**Item**

10

**Purpose**

To consider the recommendations from the scrutiny committee held on 19 July 2018.

**Recommendation**

To ask cabinet to:

- 1) consider the cost implications for residents to call the council free of charge; and
- 2) endorse the National Housing Federation recommendations outlined in paragraph 10 of the report and write to the two Norwich MPs to ask them to do the same.

**Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet all the corporate priorities.

**Financial implications**

None

**Ward/s:** All wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Kendrick - Resources

**Contact officers**

Anton Bull, Director of Business Services

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**Background documents**

None

# Report

## Background

1. The council's scrutiny committee is constituted of councillors who do not sit on cabinet. They are expected to review/scrutinise and oversee decisions made by cabinet. They can 'call in', for reconsideration, decisions made by cabinet or an officer which have not yet been implemented. The main functions of scrutiny are to hold cabinet to account by examining their proposals; evaluating policies, performance and progress; ensuring consultations, where necessary, have been carried out; and highlighting areas for improvement.
2. The committee makes recommendations for cabinet, the wider council and other stakeholders based on evidence on the issues scrutinised at their meetings.
3. The following is a summary of the topics the committee has considered with the recommendations that were made accordingly.

**19 July 2018**

The committee considered the following reports:

- Scrutiny committee work programme 2018-19
- Update of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee representative
- The impact of universal credit on vulnerable groups of people

## **The impact of Universal Credit on vulnerable groups**

4. The committee welcomed Kim Wright and Alison Fearn from the Norwich Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) office and Paul Corney (Anglia Revenue Partnership).
5. The committee heard about the work of the DWP and the steps being taken to prepare for the roll out of Universal Credit. There would be a re-positioning of signposting resources and agencies, with work coaches who could look into lessons learnt from other agencies. Partners and colleagues including MAP, Citizens Advice and local authorities could have a presence in the job centre so claimants did not have to be referred out of the building.
6. Digital support was ongoing and had been in place for over a year. Claimants were being taught the skills to be able to make a claim and staff would be available to help those without the requisite digital skills.
7. Members discussed the potential increase in uptake once Universal Credit was rolled out, the cost to the council of administering Universal Credit and work being undertaken to identify vulnerable claimants.
8. Members were concerned that claimants would not be able to call the various agencies needed, including Norwich City Council, if they did not have enough credit on their mobile phone and included a recommendation for cabinet to consider the cost of telephone calls to Norwich City Council.

9. Members referred to the recommendations of the National Housing Federation (set out below) and decided to include these in their recommendations:

10. The National Housing Federation has made the following recommendations to government ahead of the national roll out of full service:

- (1) To allow housing association staff and agencies, such as Citizens Advice, to sort out problems with Universal Credit as advocates for tenants
- (2) To scrap the “two child policy” and “benefit cap limit” which are pushing families into poverty
- (3) To ensure Universal Credit is paid to people and their landlords on time, at the same time
- (4) To adapt Universal Support to cope with greater numbers and more complex cases, and provide the funding to support more tenants
- (5) To restore the in-work allowances and revise the rules so that the self-employed, those with fluctuating pay packets or those who are not paid monthly do not lose out.

**RESOLVED** to;

Ask cabinet to:

- (1) consider the cost implications for residents to call the council free of charge; and
- (2) endorse the National Housing Federation recommendations outlined in the report and write to the two Norwich MPs to ask them to do the same

## Integrated impact assessment



**NORWICH**  
City Council

### Report author to complete

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Committee date:</b>	12 September 2018
<b>Director / Head of service</b>	Anton Bull
<b>Report subject:</b>	Scrutiny Committee Recommendations
<b>Date assessed:</b>	28 August 2018
<b>Description:</b>	A summary of scrutiny committee discussions and recommendations from 19 July 2018

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Recommendations from impact assessment**

**Positive**

**Negative**

**Neutral**

**Issues**