

APPENDIX F

ROUND UP OF ALL CURRENT WELFARE REFORM RELATED ACTIVITY (19.08.2012)

Service/ org (attendee)	Update given – 15 th August 2012
Southwark Legal Advice Network	Currently piloting rent arrears drop in clinics Working with Revs and Bens & looking at co-location of Revs & Bens officers in advice centres Looking at Council Tax surgeries. Success Big Lottery Bid - £1m over 5years to improve the financial capability of social housing tenants.
DWP national partnerships	Holding awareness training sessions and working with JobCentrePlus
Area Housing Management	Following restructure, AHM have dedicated <u>Income Maximisation/management team</u> , protecting Housing Revenue Account Working in partnership with Revs and Bens with regards to direct payments demonstration Looking at how services can work smarter – moving to a risk based approach to income collection- Lessons learnt from the direct payments project to feed into risk based approach. Officers need WR training, looking at sourcing internally.
Economic Development	<u>Economic development strategy</u> - focus shifting to 'economic wellbeing' and how to get better value from current work. Looking at: What we can commission in relation to employment support and improving data. How to better engage with Southwark Work Primes [<i>private contractors delivering Govt's Work Programme</i>] Issues around the transition from Incapacity Benefit [<i>to Employment and Support Allowance - Work Capability Assessments</i>]
Customer Experience	Call centre and OSS coming back in house in June 2013 (just as effects of April reforms will become clear) Working on customer access strategy – improved digital access/ channel shift. Talks with Post Office re Front office of Government (FOOG) – post office potentially looking at delivery face to face element of government services. If introduction of benefit changes an/or Universal Credit is chaotic likely to see substantial increase in call volumes Also likely to see increase in complaints and members' enquires. Focus needs to be on educating staff, residents and members
Revenue and Benefits	<u>Direct Payment Demonstration project</u> Begun with first payment already made (project will run until June 2013.). Already gaining intelligence eg have found that high proportion of Family Mosaic tenants taking part have set up direct debits while Southwark tenants much more likely to still use cash. <u>Underoccupation /social size criteria</u> Looking at data matching so Revs& Bens can know no of bedrooms in social properties. Start writing to those affected. Looking at current underoccupation scheme – SMART MOVE – should we still offer an incentive to down size if tenants benefit by not have housing benefit cut. <u>Universal Credit</u> – comms hard as still don't know what LA's role in delivery will be.
Children's Services	Worked with Housing Options Private Tenancies Sustainment Team to help identify which of the 1100 households who had benefit cut as a result of 2011 LHA rate reductions had children and or were vulnerable to allow focused assistance. Trouble families agenda Make section 17 payments to ensure child are safe and warm Work with children in care to set up bank accounts rather than dealing in cash to improve their financial capability.
	<u>Current consultation</u> adults and young people with learning disabilities, and their carers on an increase personalised approach Looking at how the council can support personalisation and the use of personal budgets. Key challenge – cuts to benefits coming at the same time as cuts to budgets which we have to deliver services – clients may see as one and the same and not trust the LA to assist with welfare/benefit related reforms that are not the LA's doing. Need to look at the VCS to provide advice as seen as more independent. – have recently commission such advice from Riverside Main focus is shifting patterns of care – more support in home and move away from residential care. Issues already being raised by clients, carers and support workers: Anxiety about money, financial abuse and unwise decision making. Carers with disabled children under stress and options become limited – likely to be severely impacted benefit changes [eg loss of disability element of child tax credit under UC] Looking at supporting adults with disabilities back into work, doing some work with the National Social Inclusion Looking at moving people out of traditional models of care.,. Challenges – with a reduction in benefit will clients be able to continue contribute as much towards their care. Issues around financially vulnerable clients. Has appointmentship/ guardianship? of around 300 residents' finances.

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Housing Strategy and Partnerships	<p>Team undertakes financial assessments for social care – need for a more joined up approach to debt management across the council</p> <p>Drawing together overview of all changes (but complex and much detail still unknown) All members have now had the opportunity to be briefed on the ranged of benefit reforms. Briefings to tenant council and homeowner council on welfare reform. Undertaken strategic review of homelessness in the borough and presented options to members. Drawing up options for localised delivery of social fund/new scheme to be considered by members in September. Undertaken modelling on impacted households.</p>
Community Engagement	<p><u>Reviewing commissioning strategy</u> Recommissioning advice services – looking at whether the services we’re commissioning meet the needs presented in a welfare reform age. (Apologies from Andy Matheson – verbal up dated given by Claire Linnane)</p>
Community Housing Services	<p>Strong at homeless prevention but predicting year on year increases of households approaching the council as homeless. Average 900 pa, last year 1000, expecting increase in 2012/13, 1400 in 2013/14 & 1500 in 2014/15 Welfare reform also likely to have a huge impact on temporary accommodation – currently forecasting a £2.9m budget pressure as a result of benefit changes (HRA & GF) this is likely rather than being a worst case scenario. May have to look at procurement out of borough if in borough simply not affordable. Still no clear policy from Government on reform of temporary accommodation subsidy regime – will have huge impact on how service finances stack up – expecting announcement from Government In November regarding the new regime from April 2013 onwards. Administering Discretionary Housing Payments. Work with Revs & Bens to identify those households with transitional protection ending to offer assistance Preparing solutions paper including TA business model Looking at getting extra funding from HRA/GF to fund post to assist in dealing with tenants affected by the underoccupancy benefit changes as well as potential partnership working with the credit union/ use of jam jar accounts. Currently undertaking a review of our lettings/allocations policy will include looking at underoccupancy</p>