

Meeting of the Full Council - 16 July 2020

Report of the External Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 February 2020

Chair: County Councillor Edward Nash psc

The agenda and minutes of the meeting may be viewed on the county council's web site via the following link:

[External Scrutiny Committee](#)

25 February 2020

Universal Credit in Lancashire

The committee received presentations from Citizens Advice on the Universal Credit Help to Claim service and from the Lancashire County Council Welfare Rights Service on their findings and the impact of Universal Credit on Lancashire County Council services.

Resolved: That;

- i. The External Scrutiny Committee highly commends the work of the Lancashire County Council Welfare Rights Service and the Citizens Advice in supporting the most disadvantaged people in Lancashire.
- ii. The committee note the burden put on to these services through the roll out of Universal Credit.
- iii. Cabinet give consideration to review and monitor the impact of the social security system (legacy benefits and Universal Credit) on Lancashire County Council front line services in order to identify the problems encountered and the cost to the county council.
- iv. Following the evidenced based review Cabinet give consideration to approaching the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ask for additional resources to enable the most disadvantaged in Lancashire to be properly supported.
- v. Cabinet give consideration to:
 - a. Identifying innovative place based partnership working opportunities with Citizens Advice, District Councils and the local NHS (primary care and clinical commissioning groups) to strengthen the welfare benefit support available to vulnerable people.
 - b. Commissioning a report to look at how the Lancashire Welfare Rights Service might be improved and options to invest in the service.

- vi. The Chief Officer of Rossendale and Hyndburn Citizens Advice be invited to attend a future meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee to present the findings of their research and recommendations to the Department for Work Pensions on digital support, conditionality and complex needs.

Chair's Update

The committee was informed that the Chamber of Commerce had given its support on helping businesses go green with the recent launch of its Chamber Low Carbon programme.

The Chair was awaiting receipt of written responses from the Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Rural Affairs and Waste Management on the recommendations of the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness Task and Finish Group.

An informal meeting had been arranged with representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions to meet with the Chair and the support officer to discuss the principles of Universal Credit implementation.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

County Councillor Edward Nash psc
Chair