



AGENDA ITEM: 8(c)

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
3 February 2011**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

**Contact for further information: Mrs J Denning (Extn. 5384)
(E-mail: jacky.denning@westlancs.gov.uk)**

**SUBJECT: CALL IN ITEM – CHANGES TO HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX
BENEFIT**

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the reason for the call in of the decision on the above item, as set out in Minute No. 118 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 January 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee determines whether it wishes to ask for a different decision.

2.2 That if the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, the Committee indicates which of the options set out at paragraph 5.1 below, it wishes to pursue.

3.0 DETAILS RELATING TO THE CALL IN

3.1 The report attached as an Appendix to this report was considered at a meeting of Cabinet on 18 January 2011.

3.2 The decision of Cabinet 18 January 2011 reads as follows:

“118. CHANGES TO HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

Councillor Westley introduced the report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the implications of the Government’s recently published White Paper ‘Universal Credit: Welfare that Works’.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: A. That the current position, as outlined in the report, be noted.
- B. That the Assistant Chief Executive report back when more details are known about the impact on the Council, its customers and staff.

3.3 The following reason for call in was given in the requisition:

“The report fails to fully explain the financial impact on customers faced with a reduction in their benefits, from changes being implemented on 1 April 2011.”

3.4 The requisition also provided an alternative decision which was:

“That the Assistant Chief Executive report back and provide a detailed account of the financial impact faced by customers from the changes being made on 1 April 2011. And that a further report is brought back when more details are known about other changes which impact on the Council, its customers and staff.”

3.5 The following Members of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee signed the requisition for call-in in accordance with the provisions of Overview & Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 15:

Councillor C Mawdsley
Councillor I Moran
Councillor R A Pendleton
Councillor J Fillis
Councillor N Furey

4.0 COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

4.1 At this moment in time a complete and accurate picture of the financial impact of the changes affecting customers is not available. Estimated impacts could be produced, should Members so wish, but this would involve some officer time.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Following consideration of the decision of Cabinet, the requisition for call in and the comments of the Assistant Chief Executive, the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide if it wishes to ask for a different decision. If the Committee does not wish to ask for a different decision then the decision of Cabinet takes immediate effect. If the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, it may:

- a. refer the decision back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration, setting out the different decision; or
- b. refer the matter to Council. If the matter is referred to Council and Council does not object, then the decision of Cabinet will take effect immediately from that Council meeting date. If the Council does object, then the decision and

the objection will be referred back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration.

- 5.2 The Secretary of State in his Guidance recommends that Overview & Scrutiny Committees should only use the power to refer matters to the full Council if they consider that the decision is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive.