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| To: POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE | Subject: FIRST STOP SHOP SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT INTRODUCTION. |  |
| From: HEAD OF E-GOVERNMENT & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT                     |   |  |
| Date: 22 January 2015  | Ref: IMcK/PT  |  |

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- To seek approval to extend 6 temporary posts by six months to support the introduction of Universal Credit.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The report "First Stop Shop Support for Welfare Reform Introduction" approved by the Policy and Resources (Finance & Customer Services) Committee in November 2013, created 6 temporary posts in our network of First Stop Shops to support the introduction of welfare reform for up to 18 months, subject to review after 12 months.
- 2.2 These posts were budgeted for the full 18 months with the costs being met from the one-off Welfare Reform Fund (£1m) established by the Council in February 2013;
- 2.3 These posts have been used very successfully to mitigate the impact of welfare reform at our first stop shops dealing with the increased demand but meeting our targets in terms of waiting times etc.
- 2.4 It might have been possible to release these staff however with the imminent introduction of Universal Credit in North Lanarkshire from March 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 it is likely that demand in our First Stop Shops will once again increase. This increase could be temporary but until the full impact of this new service is understood, this cannot be assumed.

## 3. Universal Credit introduction

- 3.1 The DWP have requested that a joint DWP/NLC operational group is set up to support the introduction of Universal Credit within North Lanarkshire. The first task of this group will be to develop the proposed training packs which will cover areas such as signposting, evidence handling and change of circumstances.
- 3.2 Although DWP expect customers to be directed to them, there is recognition that during the transition period there will be a significant impact on FSS and thereafter Scottish Welfare Fund as the roll out moves forward.

## 4. Proposal

- 4.1 To address this anticipated increase in demand it is proposed that we extend the posts by 6 months to the full 18 month period originally proposed. Demand levels will be continuously monitored throughout this period.

- 4.2 Indicative costs over the full 18 month period were agreed in the original committee report. These are included below for information and have not changed.

| Staffing                                 | Cost<br>2013/14 | Cost<br>2014/15 | Cost<br>2015/16 | Total          |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 6 x Customer Services Officers<br>@ NLC5 | 32,247          | 128,988         | 32,247          | <b>193,482</b> |

Salary costs are based on grade mid-point and include on costs at 26%

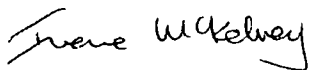
## 5. Corporate Considerations

- 5.1 Proposals contained within this report have been the subject of consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Customer Services, the Head of Human Resources and the appropriate Trade Union representatives.

## 6. Recommendations

6.1 That the Committee:

- Notes the progress made to date;
- Approve the extension of the 6 temporary posts of Customer Services Officer (NLC5) for a further 6 months; and
- That the report be remitted to the Policy & Resources (Human Resources) Sub Committee for consideration.



### Head of E-Government & Service Development

*Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact Irene McKelvey, on tel. 01698 302532 or Peter Tolland, Customer Services Manager on 01698 274385*