

Welfare Reform Draft Action Plan

April 2013 Benefit Changes - ~~v6-v7~~ 10/0113/02/2013

Council Tax Support Scheme FINANCE

CTS: Introduce the CTS to supersede the Council Tax Benefit system: From April 2013 Council Tax Benefit will be abolished and replaced by local discount scheme called Council Tax Support. The Act will replace the current system of central government support for council tax benefit with a localised support mechanism. Funding for council tax benefit will come from a grant which will encompass a 10% saving on the current Council Tax Benefit bill. The budget for CTS will be determined following the Chancellors Autumn Statement and included in the WG Financial Settlement in December 2012. Local authorities will be responsible for adopting their own scheme in Wales using the Default Scheme or a Local Scheme with discretions for the provision of Council Tax Support and will be expected to consult with the public and precepting authorities on the local discretions prior to their adoption (no later than 31st January 2013).

Low income residents will be expected to contribute to their Council Tax. The council tax liability for low income residents who are currently receiving council tax benefit is likely to increase by up to 20%.

Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Interpret & Understand the Enabling Legislation	M	The basis to create the framework scheme for CTS is developed	H	CT	Oct 2012	March 2013	Officer interpretation Within existing resources	<p>Draft Regulations distributed in Sept 2012 Enabling Regulations were laid in Dec 2012.</p> <p>The UK Bill received Royal Assent on 1st November 2012.</p> <p>The financial transfer figure is £222m. The figure was included in the Chancellors Autumn Statement which was announced on 5th December. The Vale's share is £7.94m.</p> <p>Finalising the Welsh Regulations has been complex. Default scheme is in draft, now with 3 discretions –</p>

								<p>War pensions, backdates and extended payments – regulations still in draft. The Assembly is due to meet to consider the regulations in December</p> <p>National Assembly for Wales approved regulations on 19 December 2012. Regulations approved for 2013/14 scheme only. New regulations will be required for 2014/15 onwards.</p> <p><u>Regulations were amended on 22 January 2013. Funding level was increase from 90% to 100%. Additional funding of £22m was provided by WG for the 2013/14 scheme. Vale's share is £787k, giving total funding of £8.74m</u></p>
Determine the CTS Scheme discretions	M	Council to decide on discretionary options	H	CT	Oct 2012	Jan 2013	<p>Officer report to T&F of options including financial implications. T & F recommendations to be referred to Scrutiny Corporate Resources and to Cabinet</p>	<p>Officers to advise on impact of discretions Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process</p> <p>The WLGA commissioned legal advice to support local authorities in adopting the new scheme and this is also expected to cover ed requirements for local consultation. This was received on 14 November.</p>

								<p>Approach to consultation has been discussed agreed with the council's consultation officer.</p> <p>Proposals will be included in report to Task and Finish/cabinet.</p> <p>Proposal to write to all 11,000 CTB recipients</p> <p>Use of discretions discussed by group – proposals will be included in report to task and finish/cabinet</p> <p>Proposal to continue with War pensioners disregard, continue to allow extended payments in line with current regulations. Ctax and benefits to consider the application of backdates on the basis of costs/benefits. Report to include costings for each proposal</p> <p>Reflected in report to T and F/Cabinet Proposals for discretion and consultation approved by Cabinet on 17th December 2012.</p> <p><u>Consultation ended on 16 January 2013.</u> To be<u>The 2013/14 council tax support scheme was determined approved by an Extraordinary Special</u></p>
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								Meeting of Council on 23 January 2013
Adopt new CTS scheme	H	Local discretionary options or default scheme adopted	H	CT	Oct 2012	Jan 2013	Officer report to T&F of options	<p>WLGA have advised on wording of report</p> <p>See above scheme to be adopted by Council</p> <p>WLGA consultation and EIA wording has been made available.</p> <p><u>Still a problem with CTR regulations there are still discrepancies that need to be ironed out.</u></p>
Procure ICT system capable of delivering net Council Tax 2013/2014 bills	M	Billing in April 2013 of Council Tax net of CTS enabled with adequate ICT resources	H	CT PR MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for extra software resources	<p>Upgrade available from existing software supplier</p> <p>Draft report to Cabinet for procurement</p> <p>Approved by cabinet 5th November 2012. To be delivered 19th to 20th December in release 64. ICT informed an arrangements in place</p> <p><u>To be Release 64 installed in 9/10 January February 2013. Testing underway.</u></p> <p><u>The release does not have the rule for treating Pension Credit age and working age partners correctly. Capita not going to include it in software.</u></p>
Assess the need for Staff	M	Staff updated on the new regulations and	H	PR MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Training 12k	Approx 60 FTE staff to be inducted on WR changes

Training and delivery to deal with the transition and changes to the CTS system		scheme and able to implement annual billing					customers on currently CTB Within existing resources	<p>Awaiting Regulations</p> <p>To be scheduled for January</p> <p><u>Also need to review application form Application form has been reviewed and amended. It is with the printers</u></p> <p>Priority – benefits staff ;awareness for CT staff; advice staff in housing and social services and C1V</p>
Ensure staff are advised of the transition and changes to the CTS scheme	H	Staff Awareness of WR changes Trade Unions require update of effects on members timely and smooth transition from old to new CTS scheme	H	NTS PR MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Time. Within existing resources	<p>Draft Communications Plan approved by the T&F Group on 18/9/12 which includes mechanisms for staff and Trade Union engagement. Staff News letter issues October 2012 Change Forum briefing given on 24/10/2012. Staff newsletter updated and circulated in December. Use 'staffroom' and core brief</p> <p>All benefit staff have received awareness training. Updates given in team meetings</p>
Update Revenue/Benefit Office procedure manual	H	Claimant notifications designed	H	PR MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Time. Within existing resources.	To be included in next planned updates of procedure manuals
Consider Staffing	H	Engage temporary staff to deal with CTS	H	CT	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for extra staff resources	Cost pressure is being considered as part of

Resources and bid to be made for increase in temporary collection staff		changes and enforcement adequate resources are available at the Enquiry Counter					anticipated 5 FTE temporary staff required	budget process. <u>As the scheme is now 100% funded, there is no longer a requirement for additional staffing resources for 2013/14 billing</u>
Ensure sufficient Enforcement resources are maintained	H	Control Council Tax collection & enforcement of Council Tax for all liable to contribute.	H	CT	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for extra staff resources as above	Cost pressure is being considered as part of budget process <u>As the scheme is now 100% funded, there is no longer a requirement for additional staffing resources for 2013/14 billing</u>
Prepare for Council Tax Billing 2013/14	L/M	Prepare and send bills in March 2013 net of CTS for 2013/14 collection Annual billing of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55,000 accounts • 11,000 CTS notifications 	H	CT	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer time for annual billing External printer and collation of bills and notifications Software required Maintain Council Tax collection rates. Within existing resources.	Billing process to commence February 2013 Billing scheduled for W/E 1 st March. Bills to be sent out 13 th /15 th March. Need to consider payment methods – payment cards; direct debit mandates – <u>no longer an issue with 100% scheme.</u> Check compliance with demand notice regulations (to be revised and come into effect 31 January 2013) Consider how bills; benefit notifications and Council tax reduction notifications are sent. <u>Issues with billing / demand notice regulations</u>

									being taken up with WG by WLGA advisors group.
Prepare Customer & Resident Communication	L	Customers are aware of the transition from CTB to CTS	H	CT	Oct 2012	March 2014	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign	Draft Communications Plan approved by the T&F Group on 18/9/12 which includes communication matrix and appropriate media methods to be used. WG drafting standard wording on national scheme. Need to await final regulations. Contact all current recipients of CTB – consultation will include information on the new scheme Consultation on CTS scheme undertaken – ends 16 January 2013 – letters to all existing claimants; also via web and libraries; key stakeholders also consulted Further communication to be considered following results of consultation	
Ensure adequate Customers Care & Support	H	Provide customer care & support for those affected by the transition from CTB to CTS as low income residents will be affected by the requirement to contribute from fixed budgets	H	CT NTS PR MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for extra staff resources	Cost pressure is being considered as part of budget process Working with C1V As the scheme is now 100% funded, there is no longer a requirement for additional staffing resources for 2013/14 billing – there may be some additional service demand as a result of the late changes to the	

								scheme
Implement a CTS Fraud regime	M	The CTS has a fraud deterrent maintained by the Council to recover overpaid sums and penalties	M	CT	Jan 2013	March 2014	Bid for extra staff resources	The Councils internal Audit Section has been consulted. To be covered in audit structure New – information, offences and penalties regulations to be laid in February 2013- will require approval by Assembly
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Internet	L	Maintained updated webpages with sufficient data to reduce calls and counter enquiries	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources.	Pages now live on web site
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Staff Net & Members Net	L	Maintained updated webpages to inform Members and Officers of the latest information available	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update Within existing resources.	– ongoing. Pages live and being updated as required.

Council Tax Calculation		FINANCE						
CT Base: To mitigate the effects of the CTS scheme on the Finances of the Council. There will be a shortfall in the amount of CTS grant received by the Vale and it is likely following the settlement that this may have an overall effect of 20% liability for all residents. This can be accounted for by an decrease in the overall collection rate or a reduction in Council Budgets								
Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Calculate Council Tax Base	H	Base calculated with least risk to the Council	H	CT	Oct 2012	Dec 2012	Officer time. Within existing resources.	Completed Draft council tax base agreed by 9 th November 2012 and sent to WG agreed by Cabinet 3rd December 2012.
Amend Resolution to account for CTS grant not CTB subsidy	M	implications for the Council Tax Resolution considered & Resolution made and published	H	CT	Nov 2012	March 2013	Officer time. Within existing resources.	WLGA to advise on resolution wording and confirmation by Legal Services. <u>Requisite Amount regs have been received.</u>
Advise on the effect on precepts by the introduction of CTS on non-collection	M	Make Preceptors aware that the burden of non- collection should be borne by Council & Major/Minor Preceptors	H	CT NTS	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Officer time. Within existing resources.	Completed Letters sent to precepting bodies after base was approved by Cabinet on 3 rd December 2012.
Assess the implications on Council Departmental Budgets	M	Budget holders advised of effect of the CTS introduction on the finances of the Council. Overall effect on Council finances, general fund expenditure, council tax revenue streams, HRA revenue streams, cost of implementation	M	CT	Nov 2012	Feb 2013	Officer time. Within existing resources.	Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Analysis and planning; • Medium Term Financial Plan; • Budget process; • Financial Monitoring • Housing business plan Included in budget process. <u>Revised in the light of 100% scheme for 2013/14</u>

Housing Benefit FINANCE
Local Housing Allowance: The maximum amount of Housing Benefit allowed for people in private sector tenancies is called 'Local Housing Allowance'. The LHA rates have been frozen since May 2012 and from April 2013 are linked to CPI not RPI instead of being linked to the local rent levels.

Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Ensure ICT system is updated for new LHA levels	M	ICT system delivers correct rent level from April 2013	M	MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	ICT & Officer time. Within existing resources.	System changes will be undertaken as part of on-going supplier support. Duty to ensure benefits are paid correctly and on time. Up rating of LHA in line with CPI in line with DWP regulations Financial risk to the Council as a result of private landlords refusing to accommodate clients – HRA rent; homelessness DWP circular expected in January 2013. To be updated as part of year end procedures Details of new allowances have been received and will be incorporated as part of annual update of parameters
Prepare Customer & Resident Communication	M	Raise Customer awareness of LHA	M	CT MN	Oct 2012	March 2014	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign	Relevant media method from the Communication Plan and associated Matrix to be utilised. Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process. Landlord forum on 14 th December. Normal comms have been used to inform landlords

								and tenants New rates shown on website in line with usual practice
Ensure adequate Customers Care & Support	M	Provide customer care & support for those affected by the transition from CTB to CTS	M	CT MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for extra staff resources	Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process <u>As the scheme is now 100% funded, there is no longer a requirement for additional staffing resources for 2013/14 billing – there may be some additional service demand as a result of the late changes to the scheme</u>
Advise local people of change from RPI increase in LHA to CPI	M	Publicity to raise general awareness in the general public of the Benefit Cap	M	CT MN	Nov 2012	March 2013	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign.	Prepare agreed publicity wording and relevant media outlets Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process <u>Undertaken as part of normal communications processes on up rating</u>
Assist local people to fund their rental shortfall	H	DHP available locally customers have access to the DHP fund where there is a shortfall due to LHA and rent level	H	CT MN	Jan 2013	March 2014	Within existing resources.	Housing Benefit support has been limited tenants to the LHA rates shortfall for the claimant to find from a limited income.
Prepare agreed publicity wording and relevant media outlets and publicise LHA levels in VOG	M	Publicity to raise general awareness of the Benefit Cap	M	MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign	Relevant media method to be used from the Communication Plan and associated Matrix Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process
Assess the need	H	Staff trained to deal with	M	MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer	Staff have been updated

for Staff Training and delivery		LHA changes					Training. Within existing resources.	on the new LHA levels LHA Figures now available.
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Internet	M	Maintain updated webpages with sufficient data to reduce calls and counter enquiries	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources.	Page available and information shown on website
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Staff Net & Members Net	M	Maintain updated webpages to inform Members and Officers of the latest information available	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources.	Page available and information shown on the website and staff net.

Housing Benefit

FINANCE

Accommodation Cap: Benefit Rent Cap on number of Bedrooms - From April 2013 the Government will introduce a rental cap on the amount of Housing Benefit that can be paid to tenants in social housing (council or housing association) who are of working age and 'under-occupy' their home. This means that they live in a property which has more bedrooms than the Government says they need. For example, a single disabled person living in a two bedroom council or housing association property will only receive Housing Benefit up to the level for a one bedroom property, unless they need a non-resident overnight carer.

The Welfare Act gives empowers the government to impose the size eligibility criteria currently applying in the private rented sector on the social housing sector. Any working-age household deemed to be under-occupying their home will lose part of their Housing Benefit from April 2013. Housing Benefit will be restricted by the size criteria to allow for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions: Children under 16 of the same gender will be expected to share / Children under 10 will be expected to share regardless of gender / Disabled tenant or partner requiring a non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room. The level of the cut will be a fixed percentage of the housing-benefit eligible rent, initially set at 14% for one extra bedroom and 25% for two or more extra bedrooms.

Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Housing and Housing Assoc. to give Council all relevant rent references	H	File containing all Housing and Housing Assoc. rent references identifying a common reference number	H	MN	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Officer Time. Within existing resources.	File received by HB section. Completed. Updated exercise to be completed closer to relevant date in March 2013. Meetings took place with RSLs and housing in December. More detailed work is being undertaken to update information for RSLs. Final data to be returned to council by 15 January 2013. System to be updated and all affected claimants will be written to
Identify relevant properties in HB Database	H	Database has all relevant Housing and Housing Assoc. rent references and accommodation	H	MN NTS	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Software release. Within existing resources.	Software release 63.01 implemented in HB database Exercise to be completed

		makeup identified						closer to relevant date in March 2013.
Identify make up of occupiers as Working Age tenants will be affected Pensioners households will not be capped	H	Tenants affected by cap are identified	H	MN	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Officer Time. Within existing resources.	Completed Database report showing those affected required Need to identify tenants who require extra bedroom for carer. Now available in release 63. Council is reliant on customers and landlords to advice of eligible candidates. - Ongoing
Advise Housing and Housing Assoc. of capped tenants	H	Housing and Housing Assoc. list sent giving Housing and Housing Assoc. time to advise and potentially reallocate tenants	H	MN	Oct 2012	Dec 2012	Officer Time. Within existing resources.	Lists have been sent to Housing and to Social Landlords Updated exercise to be completed closer to relevant date in March 2013. HA's complimentary of VOG benefits service for information being sent promptly
Consider the effect of the Accommodation Cap on Housing Services	H	Ensure that the Housing Service can deal with the effects of the Accommodation Cap	H	CT MI	Dec 2012	March 2014	Officer Time Housing Budget. Within existing resources.	Completed – report to Cabinet Data has been provided to housing accountant to assess potential affects on rental income / bad debts. Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process
Ensure the ICT system can identify over-accommodation	M	ICT system maintains reference numbers and number of bedrooms	M	MN	April 2013	March 2014	ICT Resources Within existing resources.	Completed Release 63.01 includes data on benefits. System has been upgraded to Release 63.01

Prepare agreed publicity wording and relevant media outlets and publicise effects of the Accommodation Cap	M	General public aware of the Accommodation Cap	H	CT MN	Dec 2012	March 2014	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign	Completed Relevant media method to be used from the Communication Plan and associated Matrix. Appropriate article to be placed in Tenants Newsletter. Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process.
Inform relevant tenants of potential shortfall in their benefit	H	Letters sent to affected tenants from HB to allow tenants time to meet the expected shortfall in benefit	H	CT MN	Dec 2012	March 2014	Officer Time & postage. Within existing resources.	Prepare suitable letter Exercise to be completed closer to relevant date Letters to be sent in January
Assess the need for Staff Training and delivery	H	Staff trained to deal with the Accommodation Cap	M	MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Training. Within existing resources.	Staff to be updated on the Accommodation Cap. Staff news letter Oct 2012 Update provided in team briefing in December. Further updates to be provided late January / early February – also briefings for Housing and Social Services staff
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Internet	M	Maintain updated webpages with sufficient data to reduce calls and counter enquiries	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources.	Web page live
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Staff Net & Members Net	M	Maintain updated webpages to inform Members and Officers of the latest information available	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources.	Page now constructed but requires updating as and when more information is received – ongoing.

Housing Benefit

FINANCE

Cap on Household Income to limit the Rental Benefit: This is a cap on the total benefits administered by Local Authorities through Housing Benefit payments where an individual or couple is entitled to and will be set a working household's average net earnings to be £26,000 a year (£500 p/wk) for lone parents and couples with children and around £18,000 (£350 p/wk) or single people without children.

One-off payments, childcare, and Council Tax Support will not be encompassed by the cap, and households will be exempt if a member is claiming DLA, PIP, Attendance Allowance and Working Tax Credit, the support component of Employment Support Allowance or households which include a war widow/widower. The government has also allowed for a nine month grace period, meaning that those who have been in work for the previous 12 months and lose their job through "no fault of their own" will not be affected by the cap. Discretionary Housing Payments, support for childcare through Universal Credit and localised council tax support will not be included in the assessment of the total value of benefits received. The cap will be applied by first reducing any Housing Benefit paid by the local authority and then from out of work benefits. Once households have been transferred to Universal Credit, it will apply to their combined income from Universal Credit and benefits including Child Benefit and Carer's Allowance.

Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Identify claimants whose inclusive income is greater than the threshold in the HB Database	M	Database report identifies all relevant claimants	M	MN NTS	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Software release & Officer Time. Within existing resources	32 clients indentified as being affected by the cap. DWP to provide updated list showing additional clients identified, if any. Further scan of data expected from DWP in January 2013. Implementation of the cap on household income has been delayed. Pilot starting in April - Planned to roll out to all authorities by September 2013. Awaiting further details of rollout
Identify exempt claimants	M	Relevant claimants identified	M	MN NTS	Sept 2012	Nov 2012	Officer Time. Within existing resources	Exception list from Database Report required. (Excluding any claim in a household where the

								claimant or partner are working or receiving DLA (DLA including children) and any claimant who is of pensionable age). Ongoing – Information received via DWP.
Identify those who qualify for the 'Grace Period'	M	Relevant claimants identified	M	MN NTS	Oct 2012	Dec 2012	Officer Time. Within existing resources	Exception list from Database Report to be prepared. Ongoing – Information received via DWP.
Consider the effect of the Income Cap on Housing Services	M	Ensure that the Housing Service can deal with the effects of the Income Cap	M	CT MI	Dec 2012	March 2014	Officer Time Within existing resources Implications for the Housing Budget	Implications for the Housing Budget to be identified.
Prepare agreed publicity wording and relevant media outlets Publicise effects of the Income Cap	M	Publicity to raise general awareness	M	CT MN	Dec 2012	March 2014	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign	Relevant media method to be used from the Communication Plan and associated Matrix. Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process
Inform relevant tenants of potential shortfall in their benefit	M	Letters sent to affected tenants from HB	M	CT MN	Dec 2012	March 2014	Officer Time & postage. Within existing resources	Prepare suitable letter Housing benefit will be reduced by the amount that exceeds the capped level DWP notifying relevant tenants of potential shortfall – ongoing.
Assess the need for Staff Training and delivery	M	Staff trained to deal with the Income Cap	M	MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Training. Within existing resources	To update staff on the Income Cap Update provided in team briefing.

Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Internet	M	Maintain updated webpages	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources	Web page available – includes information about proposed cap and the delay to implementation
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Staff Net & Members Net	M	Maintain updated webpages	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources	as above

Discretionary Housing Payment FINANCE

The **Discretionary Housing Payment** budget is available to local authorities to assist people in receipt of Housing Benefit who are experiencing financial hardship, but this will be targeted to Adapted Accommodation that has been significantly adapted for you or someone in your household due to a disability Entitlement to a DHP to make up any shortfall in rent. Further assistance could be with rent in advance and deposits or a local deposit guarantee scheme for people who might move.

Action	Risk (H,M,L)	Success Criteria & Outcomes	Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
Establish the criteria for access to DHP	M	Review DHP policies and procedures to maximise funding in preparation for increase in applications ensuring that claimants have adequate time to consider their options	H	CT	Oct 2012	Dec 2013	Officer Time & T&F Group criteria	CT to meet with MN to consider policy in the light of regulations and guidance on accommodation adapted for disabled needs and foster carers.
Maximise the DHP Fund	M	Fund increased from the grant level to the permitted total level to support more local vulnerable claimants who are affected by Welfare Reform or need support to gain residence	H	CT	Jan 2013	March 2017	Bid for increase to the permitted total .	Maintain the increase whilst HB is controlled by the Council DHP funding for 2013-14 will be £219,639 and permitted total will be £549,098. <u>Bid included in revenue budget.</u>
Manage the DHP fund as DHP cannot be used for shortfalls in Council Tax Support	M	Shortfall in rent paid until Homeless clients can negotiate a lower rent or help find cheaper alternative accommodation.	H	MN NTS	April 2013	March 2014	Officer Time. Within existing resources	Benefit Section to maintain allocation of fund based on vulnerability and need Part of Revenue Monitoring
Engage with Housing , Social Services and external 3 rd	M	Engage with Housing, Social Services & 3rd parties and identify those who are vulnerable and	H	CT	Oct 2012	March 2013	Officer Time	Housing options advice to be provided for those affected by changes to HB

Parties		most in need. Provide housing advice and help with negotiating reductions in rents with landlords						Homelessness prevention to identify where a DHP may be appropriate Social Services clients can be identified
Prepare agreed publicity wording and relevant media outlets and publicise access to DHP in VOG	M	General public awareness of DHP making information on DHPs more available	M	CT/MN	Jan 2013	March 2014	Bid for cost of customer awareness campaign.	Relevant media method to be used from the Communication Plan and associated Matrix. Cost pressure being considered as part of budget process
Assess the need for Staff Training and delivery	M	Staff trained to deal with and advise on changes to the DHP	M	CT/MN	Jan 2013	March 2013	Officer Training. Within existing resources	Staff to be updated on DHP Fund
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Internet	M	Maintain updated webpages with sufficient data to reduce calls and counter enquiries	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources	Information on DHP included on web page
Prepare an adequate Welfare Reform Web Page on the Staff Net & Members Net	M	Maintain updated webpages to inform Members and Officers of the latest information available	M	NTS	Oct 2012	March 2014	Officer time for web update. Within existing resources	as above

Communication Matrix				
Media	Audience Stakeholders	Timeline	Data	Method
Press release Press Advert	Vale Residents	Oct 2012 Jan 2013 – Nov 2013	High level information Detailed information	Press releases to Glamorgan Gem, Penarth Times, Barry & District News, South Wales Echo, Glamorgan Gazette Advice/money management surgeries to be publicised in advance Paid-for advertising in local weeklies (costs approx. £300 for quarter page)
Leaflets/posters	Vale Residents	Feb 2013 – Mar 2013	High level information then Detailed information	To be designed in-house by Vale Council graphic designer
Bro Radio advert	Vale Residents	Feb 2013 – Mar 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Moderated discussion, involving officers, councillors, partner organisations and selected members of the public Free adverts
External Webpages Frequently Asked Questions FAQ	Vale Residents	Oct 2012 – Nov 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Relevant pages on council benefits to include information on the welfare reforms Frequently Asked Questions – how do the changes affect me?
Twitter	Vale Residents	Feb 2013 – Nov 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Press releases to be added and link to relevant pages on Vale website. Hashtag (#) to be added to compile a list of tweets related to welfare reforms, (eg #WelfareReformsVale) or use national Welfare Reforms hashtag
Facebook	Vale Residents	Feb 2013 – Nov 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Press releases to be added and link to relevant pages on Vale website
E-news	Vale Residents	Feb 2013 – Nov 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Press releases and link to relevant pages on Vale website to be added to the news section
Other Departments Adverts	Vale Residents	Oct 2012 Nov 2013	Specific information	Add on to Departments communicate
Local Information Stand	Vale Residents	Nov 2012 Feb 2013 - Nov 2013	High level information then Detailed information	Meet Local Residents externally to the Council Offices and give advice on the Welfare changes as they take effect Using leaflets and personal advice.
Panel discussion	Local politicians Selected Local	Feb 2013 – Mar 2013	High level information then	Use MembersNet or Staffnet where relevant Welfare Reform pages give detailed information

	<i>Residents</i>		<i>Detailed information</i>	
<i>Advice surgeries diary marker</i>	<i>Local politicians</i>	<i>Feb 2013 – Mar 2013</i>	<i>High level information then Detailed information</i>	<i>Use MembersNet or Staffnet where relevant Welfare Reform pages give detailed information</i>
<i>Staffnet Members Net</i>	<i>Local politicians Vale Staff Trade Unions</i>	<i>Sept 2012</i>	<i>Dedicated Web page holding updated information</i>	<i>Staffnet Core brief</i>
<i>Core brief</i>	<i>Vale Staff Trade Unions</i>	<i>Nov 2012 Jan 2013 – Feb 2013 Mar 2013</i>	<i>High level information Detailed information Staff Net/Member Net</i>	<i>Continuous updates of relevant information</i>
<i>Council Tax bills Benefit Notifications</i>	<i>Taxpayers Claimants</i>	<i>Mar 2013</i>	<i>Detailed information</i>	<i>Inform of Welfare Changes</i>