

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE CABINET**

**8<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

**Benefit Take up Strategy**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Taylor
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Financial Services – Jayne Pickering

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate recommended that the Council should have a benefit take up strategy to underpin the operation of the Benefit Service. This shows that the authority is committed to ensure that its residents are receiving advice on all aspects of benefit that they may be entitled to.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The strategy shown at **Annex A**, is approved and adopted.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Department of Work and Pensions has objectives for councils to ensure that residents receive the benefit that they are entitled. Joint working with other agencies to ensure that applying for welfare benefits is as seamless as possible is a key element in their strategy for the improvement of benefit administration.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The council pays out around £12m in benefit each year and although benefit take up will increase this, the majority of the money is reclaimed from the Department of Work and Pensions in subsidy. Some advice given may result in take up of other welfare benefits which will have no cost to this council.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal requirements to produce this strategy but is considered to be good practice. The Benefit Fraud Inspection report recommended that a strategy should be written and approved.

## **6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 Approval of this strategy contributes to the Council's corporate objectives because it supports the delivery of improvement in its service delivery and supports the customer focus priority as the Council aims to pay benefit to all members of the community who are eligible in a timely and accurate way.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no specific risks relating to the strategy. It is good practice and clearly states the Council's intentions in relation to this service.

## **8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Improved welfare benefit take up provides extra assistance to some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

## **9.0. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	None

## **10. APPENDICES**

**Annex A** Benefit Take Up Strategy

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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