

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 15 October 2015

**Report of:** Executive Director of Organisational Development & Corporate Services

**Title of Report:** Financial Inclusion Strategy – Action Plan Update

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To update members on progress with delivery of the Financial Inclusion Strategy Action Plan and seek agreement to an update of the Action Plan.

**Key decision** Yes

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Susan Brown, Customer and Corporate Services

**Policy Framework:**

**Recommendation(s):** That the City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Approve** the updated Financial Inclusion Strategy Action Plan as set out at Appendix 2; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director, Organisational Development and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services, to further update the Action Plan as necessary.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Review of original Action Plan
- Appendix 2 Revised Action Plan
- Appendix 3 Risk Register

### **Background**

1. The Financial Inclusion Strategy(FIS) was adopted by the City Executive Board(CEB) on 3 July 2014 for a period of three years. The Strategy incorporated an Action Plan, much of which has been achieved. The

Action Plan now requires refreshing to ensure that work continues to deliver the objectives under the four themes of Debt, Income, Housing and Skills.

2. The nature of Financial Inclusion(FI) work is that it is on-going and long term in nature. Although many actions have been completed, these lead on to further work. This means that many of the objectives within the original Action Plan are reflected in the second iteration of the Plan. The revised Action Plan builds on work in the original plan, and incorporates new learning, in particular the recommendations from research conducted by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI) in 2014.
3. Appendix 1 provides an update on all the actions within the original action plan and explains if and how these actions are being carried forward into the revised Plan.
4. Of the 37 actions in the original Plan, 24 have been completed, 11 are in progress and have been carried forward into the revised Action Plan, and one has not been delivered, and has been amended in the revised Action Plan. This last action related to the training of customer contact staff to recognise signs of financial exclusion and to make appropriate referrals for support. Time pressures in the contact centre mean that this is not practical. As such, the action has been revised to train other frontline staff likely to come into contact with people who are financially excluded.
5. The revised Action Plan is set out in Appendix 2. It contains a fifth theme of Customer Insight which sits above the four themes within the FIS. Its inclusion reflects the intent to get a better understanding of how financial exclusion affects people, in order to better target support.

#### **Climate change / environmental impact**

6. There are no negative climate change or environmental impact issues related to this report. A number of the activities proposed in the FI Action Plan will lead to reduced carbon footprints for affected properties. Alleviating fuel poverty locally by improving the energy efficiency of homes reduces energy bills for occupants, improves health and contributes to the Council's carbon reduction target for the whole city (40% by 2020). The Council has a duty under the Home Energy Conservation Act to report on plans to help householders lower their fuel bills.

#### **Risk**

7. A risk assessment can be found at Appendix 3.

#### **Equalities impact**

8. An initial equalities impact assessment was conducted when the FIS was introduced. As the thematic areas have not changed, this assessment is still valid. Although a new theme of Customer Insight has

been added. This relates to the internal management of data, rather than having a direct impact on customers.

**Financial implications**

9. This report does not propose any new expenditure. Instead it seeks to align a number of different initiatives to produce greater outcomes. Following the July budget, all capital investment is now subject to review, which may impact on the delivery of some items in the Action Plan.

**Legal implications**

10. There are no legal implications.

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