

**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 05/11/2019 concerning Universal Credit  
 Provided by the Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities, Councillor Marie Tidball**

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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>1) To review the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments Policy from a needs-based perspective and is prepared to fund from general reserves any necessary top-ups beyond the Government grant figure, up to the permitted total.</b>	Partially	We are happy to review the DHP policy to ensure that it continues to follow the current approach, which is based on the customer need for support. In order to mitigate any potential overspend, the Council will apply for approval from the MHCLG for funding of DHP expenditure in relation to Council tenants by the HRA. Any other overspend would need to be met initially from general reserves in this financial year, however this position is not sustainable going forward and therefore the DHP policy may require wider review or alternatively provision would need to be made for the increased expenditure within the Council's budget.
<b>2) That should a needs-based analysis demonstrate a need for Discretionary Housing Payments above the grant funding total, for Cabinet to write to central government to lobby for a higher grant.</b>	Yes	Current policy is based on a needs analysis. Due to changes to Welfare Reform, customers are now having to meet their rental liability from reduced benefit payments, hence the need for the DHP spend. Consequently given this position, and reduction in DHP funding over recent years then Officers can lobby Central Government for a higher grant for 2020/21 onwards.

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