



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion: Universal Credit</b>
<b>Date:</b>	19th January, 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager, ext. 6314
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer, ext. 6313

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a response which has been received from Mr. Leo O'Reilly, Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities, in relation to the Council's Motion on Universal Credit.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response and take any such action as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Council, at its meeting on 1st November, passed the following motion on Universal Credit, which had been proposed by Councillor Attwood and seconded by Councillor Kyle:

	<p>“This Council notes the well documented and evidenced hardship caused in England, Scotland and Wales by the roll out of Universal Credit.</p> <p>The Council calls for an immediate halt to the rollout of Universal Credit across Northern Ireland, to protect the most vulnerable and the disadvantaged from poverty, rent arrears and homelessness and calls for all Political Parties to work to deliver a system that is fair, practical and compassionate.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to and seek a meeting with the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities and with the Secretary of State about the implications of Universal Credit.”</p>
3.2	A response has now been received from Mr. O’Reilly, a copy of which is attached. A response has, however, yet to be received from the Secretary of State.
3.3	Mr. O’Reilly states that the Department for Communities, having drawn upon the experience of the Department for Work and Pensions, has adopted a phased approach for the roll-out of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland. The process, which commenced in September, 2017 in the Limavady Jobs and Benefits Office, will cover a twelve-month period and be rolled out to offices in Belfast in May and June, 2018.
3.4	Mr. O’Reilly then outlines the financial and other support which the Department for Communities would provide to claimants during the roll out period and beyond and provides an analysis of the Universal Credit service to date. However, he does not address the request to meet with a delegation from the Council, as alluded to within the motion.
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.5	None
	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p>
3.6	None
4.0	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Response from Mr. Leo O’Reilly, Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities