

## PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

**Subject:** Strategic Framework for Information and Advice Services Framework

**Committee:** Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date:** 24 October 2011

**Cabinet Member:** The Leader and Cllr Monahan

**CMT Member:** Director for Community Services

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**Ref:**

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Part:** I

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### Executive Summary:

Good quality information and advice services are a central element of support for our customers. This is particularly true at the current time because of the scale of change, in particular reform of welfare benefits and the delivery of adult social care services. Providing the right information and advice in the right way can make a huge difference to customers' experience of these changes and associated services. This ranges from dealing with simple routine enquiries, to intense services for those whose needs are more complex or require very technical support.

The council delivers a range of information and advice services, relating to financial inclusion and adult social care, many of which are commissioned separately and relate to different strategies. This has been reviewed with the view to taking a more holistic and joined up approach to provision.

To guide future provision and update the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2009-12, it is proposed that the council adopts an Information and Advice Services Strategic Framework. This will guide future commissioning and better align financial information and advice with adult social care advice-giving services.

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### Corporate Plan 2011-2014:

The proposals support our priorities as follows:-

- Reducing inequality: by providing meaningful advice and support to help people make the most of their income, reduce poverty (including child poverty), avoid debt problems and prevent an escalation of healthcare crises.
  - Providing value for communities: by better aligning services to maximise efficiency and ensure the right level of resources go to customers according to need.
  - Raising aspiration: by providing advice on an individual, needs-led basis, and encouraging customers to aspire to manage their finances and care themselves where possible.
  - Growth: by integrating services with the volunteering/work agenda and engaging people in the DWP work-programme and pre Work Programme based on their needs, abilities and aspirations.
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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land**

The proposals are consistent with the medium term financial plan which includes provision for commissioning advice and information services.

The joining up of services in the proposed way provides opportunities to avoid overlap and increase efficiencies.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:**

Ensuring people are getting all the income and support they are entitled to is beneficial in terms of community safety eg preventing rises in acquisitive crime.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

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**Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

It is recommended that cabinet

- Adopts the Strategic Framework for Information and Advice Services (2012-15) contained in this report

Reason: a more holistic and joined up approach to provision, better alignment of financial information and advice with adult social care advice-giving services, and ensures there is a clear, efficient, framework to guide future commissioning.

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**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

Continue to commission disparate information and advice services that do not maximise opportunities to join up provision, improve services for customers, based on need, and deliver in the most efficient way.

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**Background papers:**

- 'Strategic Framework for Information and Advice Services 2012-15' proposal
- Financial Inclusion Strategy (2009-12)
- Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2011
- Feedback from meetings/consultation/events
- Equality Impact Assessment

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**Sign off:**

Fin	SRA /CO SF SCI 112 003- 22/9 /201 1	Leg	TH 31	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	JK/S PU/ CP/2 57/0 911
Originating SMT Member: Pete Aley & Pam Marsden											

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report considers how the council provides advice and information services relating to financial inclusion and adult social care, and makes proposals for improvements.

## 2. Background

2.1 Good quality information and advice services are a central element of support for our customers. This is particularly true at the current time because of the scale of change, in particular reform of welfare benefits and the delivery of adult social care services. Providing the right information and advice in the right way can make a huge difference to customers' experience of these changes and associated services. This ranges from dealing with simple routine enquiries, to intense services for those whose needs are more complex or require very technical support.

2.2 The council delivers a range of information and advice services, relating to financial inclusion and adult social care, many of which are commissioned separately and relate to different strategies including the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2009-12, Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2011 and other agendas such as worklessness, homelessness and child poverty.

2.3 The provision of these services has been reviewed against current need and in consultation with stakeholders. This review suggests that there are benefits for our customers if we take a more holistic and joined up approach to future provision.

## 3. Framework

3.1 To guide future provision, build on and update the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2009-12, it is proposed that the council adopts a Strategic Framework for Information and Advice Services. This will guide future commissioning and better align financial information and advice with adult social care advice-giving services. The proposed Framework, which provides more information, is attached.