

Single Discretionary Award Policy Consultation 2019

Consultation Plan

Purpose of the Consultation

We are consulting about a proposed change to our Single Discretionary Award (SDA) Policy for Derby.

The Single Discretionary Award (SDA) Policy provides support for those who have a low income, or no income, to pay their rent and Council Tax. It also provides a support programme which includes money advice, digital skills support, housing advice, health and well being advice, benefits advice and better off calculation (an assessment of income and outgoings to help applicants better manage their money), education and training, and towards work support.

The SDA Policy sets out how we administer the SDA in Derby, and how we decide whether or not someone who makes a claim will receive support. The SDA is made up of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs), Council Tax Hardship (CTH) and Local Assistance (LAS).

DHPs can provide help with rent payments for some benefit claimants who live in rented housing.

The funding for DHPs from Central Government for 2019/20 has been reduced and the consultation will consider limiting recipients of DHPs to one award (of up to six months) in any one financial year. The proposed change would mean that from 1 April 2020 it would not be possible for SDA claimants to receive a second DHP award during the same financial year. In 2018/19 this would have affected about 180 households.

There are no guarantees that Derby's DHP allocation will increase in 2020/21, so the proposed change is designed to ensure that from next year the awards made are financially viable and can continue to help those in need. Any subsequent policy alterations that are discussed would also be made in order to ensure that the award can be delivered effectively to those who are eligible.

This proposed change would not affect Priority Groups, such as foster carers or households that need adaptations for disabilities, who could still receive up to 12 months' award in the same financial year.

This consultation will enable anybody in Derby, whether they are a recipient of SDA or not, to have their say about our proposed change.

Timeline and Implications

The public consultation will last for six weeks beginning on **23 September 2019**, closing on **3 November 2019**.

This project will require the commitment and support of the Revenues, Benefits and Exchequer and Customer Management, Communications and Consultation, the DMC and Business Support.

Information about the context of the consultation and the draft Scheme is required, which should be presented as simply as possible.

Although a self-completion questionnaire will be utilised and promoted principally online, consideration must also be given to the more vulnerable consultees. Paper copies and an Easy Read version will be made available to those who need them.

There should be communication, to begin as the consultation opens and take place throughout the consultation, including information on the Council's website.

Who we need to consult with

The proposed change to Derby's SDA Policy is potentially relevant to all residents of Derby. Therefore, the consultation will be universal.

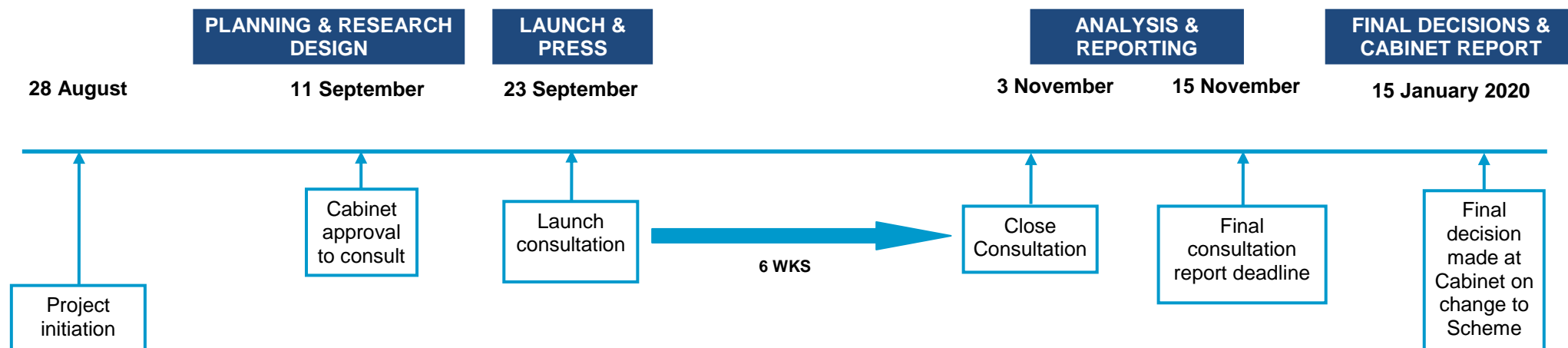
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA will be undertaken. It will be revised and finalised following the consultation and used to inform the final decision making process.

To support the consultation

An FAQ webpage / sheet should be prepared and published when the communication campaign begins and no later than the day the consultation opens.

Figure 1: High Level Timeline



Project Plan

Action	Activity	Who Division/Lead Officer	Deadline
EIA	Draft EIA based on draft Scheme	RBES & CM	DONE
Communications Strategy	Design and production of publicity material	C&C & RBES/CM	DONE
	Press releases, Twitter, web pages inc YCYS	C&C & RBES/CM	DONE
	InTouch, Manager's briefing & front line briefing	C&C & RBES/CM	DONE
Consultation on draft Scheme	Draft consultation material: consultation plan; questionnaire form, including paper version; draft Policy for 2020/21; webpages contents: YCYS page, FAQs & SDA page	RBES/CM	DONE
	Get consultation material signed off	JM/BF	DONE
	Email Equality Diversity Hub	RBES / CM	DONE
	Front line and RBES staff to be briefed	RBES / CM	DONE
	Email to portfolio holder prior to consultation opening to public	JM/BF	DONE
	Public consultation to open & web pages updated	C&C / RBES / CM	23/09/19 - DONE

	Write to as many people as possible who claimed a second DHP award last year	RBES	23/09/19 – 28/10/19 - DONE
	Write to as many people as possible who successfully receive a second award this year, up to the last week of the consultation period. This would be done between 1 September 2019 (the first date that claimants might claim a second award) and 28 October 2019 (the beginning of the final week of consultation).	RBES	01/09/19 – 28/10/19 - DONE
	Email out to any appropriate partners/ stakeholders/ forums to inform them the consultation is taking place and where people can find it. This includes the main Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the city, such as Derby Homes, Metropolitan and Derwent Living; advice agencies such as Citizen's Advice and stakeholders such as the Strategic Housing Group and the RSL Liaison Group.	JM/BF/DEH	23/09/19 - DONE
	Attend the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the 60+ Forum. Information about the potential consultation to be sent to the Disability and Race Equality Hubs for their September meetings on 12 th and 19 th respectively – so they are aware of when it may be launched – pending Cabinet approval.	JM/BF	16 & 17 Oct - DONE
	EIA Meeting	JM/BF/DEH	22/10/19 - DONE
	Ongoing data entry of returned questionnaires.	Business Support / C&C	DONE
Analysis, assessment and reporting	Data analysis and report on the results of the consultation.	C&C	DONE
	Consider results of consultation and propose final SDA Policy	RBES / CM	DONE
	Review and revise EIA	RBES / CM	DONE
	Deadline for Council Cabinet report	RBES / CM	12/12/19 - DONE
	Council Cabinet Meeting to consider the proposal and response to the consultation	Members	15/01/20
	Feedback on results and outcome of consultation to Consultation team – after call in period	RBES / CM	27/01 – 31/01
	Review and revise EIA in response to final Scheme decision by Cabinet	RBES / CM	27/01 – 31/03/20
	Publish Final Scheme	RBES / CM	31/03/20