



Minutes

Title of meeting:	Universal Credit Programme Board
Date:	16 th November 2021 14:00 – 16:00
Location:	MS Teams Meeting & Caxton House
Attendees:	John Mcglynn (Chair), Neil Couling (Change and Resilience DG & SRO for UC), Ian Wright (UC Programme Director), Deb Walton (Director People and Capability), Simon McKinnon (Director General, Digital), Chris Drane (Director HM Treasury), Paddy Rooney (Deputy Secretary for Work and Inclusion DFC Northern Ireland), Dave Brookes (Director, HMRC), S40 (SPAD to Secretary of State), Beverley Warmington (Director, Operations), Fran Beasley (Chief Executive LB Hillingdon), David Magee (IPA Representative), Ruth Nolan (Deputy Director, Finance), S40 (Observer)
Presenters:	Ian Wright (UC Programme Director), Will Garner (Universal Credit Product Director), Stuart Ison (External Affairs, Strategic Design and Planning Director)
Apologies:	Nick Joicey (Director General Finance), Lindsey Whyte (Director HM Treasury), JP Marks (Director General Work and Health), Ani Vithlani (Cabinet Office, Operations Lead), Myrtle Lloyd (Director General, HMRC), Deb Boore (Director, UC Programme)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed attendees and acknowledged the deputies attending who he had not previously met. He extended thanks to all for joining.

Noted the minutes from the previous UC Programme Board are cleared with only one update needed which is to include the dates of the voluntary and discovery phases on page four.

The Chair highlighted that there had been a lot of positive coverage the press since Programme Board last met. He then opened discussion around matters arising:

- The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted the following in regards the £20 uplift:
 - That the September Programme Board recommended not having an October meeting due to the anticipated work around the removal of the £20 uplift.
 - That teams worked exceptionally hard on this from across DWP to support communications.
 - Ministers across Government have been resolute and clear with their messages.

- Outside campaigns helped get across message to many claimants resulting in a very low increase in contact. This was far below the worst-case assumptions in which plans were made.
- That the £20 uplift has now been removed.
- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that the Treasury agreed in the spending review/Budget that we would make major changes to the taper rate and work allowance in UC, and highlighted the following:
 - In summary this means for those going into work or already in full-time work, the effects of the removal of the £20 uplift are washed away.
 - Noted this underpins the Government's message around work and that employment statistics are currently at 1.2m vacancies in the economy. The policy move was praised.
 - That the Chancellor announced that this would start on the first of December, however discussions have taken place between The Change DG & UC SRO and the Director HM Treasury to discuss the potential for bringing this forward. Noted that we have done it quicker and the Secretary of State signed the statutory instrument that brings this into effect a week early, on the 24th November.
 - Noted it only took four weeks from idea to implementation and the Change DG & UC SRO thanked the Universal Credit Product Director and team for their hard work. Thanks was also given to HMT to agree for this to happen at pace.
 - The taper rate change has gone down well particularly with the wider stakeholder third parties from the community.
 - Noted that nearly 2m people will gain from this policy move, and that once people move into work on the back of this, they would be additional gainers:
 - a) In regards to Move to UC, 56% of people will now gain and 34% require transitional protection.
 - b) 74% of people who are in receipt of Tax Credit element as part of their entitlement gain from moving to UC which could support the voluntary exercise.

The Chair questioned how confident are we that those percentages are accurate and have robust analysis behind them.

The Change DG & UC SRO noted that analytical teams have drawn them, and they are the basis of the analysis from 2012 and analysis done subsequently. Noted these percentages are as solid as possible and that it correlates with what the Resolution Foundation are saying.

The Chair questioned whether there are any lessons to learn for future situations from what has turned out to be a low volume of calls through major change to UC that was perceived to be negative.

The Change DG & UC SRO responded and noted:

- That the narrative wasn't always one the Government would want but it did get across to people that the uplift was going.
- The worry was that people would not be aware of the changes and contact UC. However, after all the work undertaken by DWP and externally, no one could be in any doubt what was happening to UC.
- Noted that Alex Chisholm and the centre of Government were pleased we highlighted the risk, walked them through what we intended to do about it and pleased it didn't then manifest due to actions undertaken.

- There is confidence around the chances of shifting a serious number of people to UC in the voluntary exercise if we get sustained and repeated communication. Noted that this approach seems to penetrate people more than one off communications.

2. Programme Update (Paper 1)

The UC Programme Director introduced the paper and walked members through it, highlighting the following from page 1:

- Voluntary phase underway. Discussions are ongoing with HMRC with regards Tax credits and as a minimum looking at inserting a leaflet into their renewal packs. Noted this works well on the back of the percentage of people being better off on UC. No plan announcement as of yet.
- The recruitment for Discovery phase that starts in January is going well apart from Java developers. Noted Java developers are a particular sector of the economy in high demand.
- Starting to ramp up stakeholder engagement and noted there is a big stakeholder meeting planned for the 25/11, however this is at risk as we may not have enough to talk to them about if we are unable to talk about the plan.

Amber Milestones:

- Transaction Risking which is a piece of work linking IRIS fraud system to UC to better detect potential advances fraud. Noted this has been delayed as penetration testing is required, however this should not be delayed long and is expected to complete by the end of November.
- Noted the Future Support Offer is moving ahead but timescales are very tight if we want to hit the dates.
- Data integrity exercise underway, working with HMRC to correct National Insurance records. UC provided data to HMRC who now need to do work at their end to be able to import the data properly. Further data to be provided when HMRC are able to consume it.
- Noted the need to update Move to UC regulations. Previously there was a 10k limit and several other things in the regulations that could leave us open to legal challenges if not removed. Noted the Social Security Advisory Committee often want elongated consultation periods which would impact timelines hence the amber risk.

Programme Board Discussion

- a) The SPAD to Secretary of State asked whether there had been any warmup conversations with stakeholders.
- b) The Change DG & UC SRO responded by saying currently the answer is no, however they are prepared to do so, but given discussions with the Secretary of State we have been nervous around warming them up as they may ask questions we are unable to answer.
- c) The Chair highlighted the stakeholder meeting on the 25/11 and wanted clarification that there are 110 organisations confirmed to attend and that is a virtual meeting. The External Affairs, Strategic Design and Planning Director confirmed.
- d) The Chair questioned what the risk was in regards the stakeholder meeting.
- e) The UC Programme Director stated that the risk is that the meeting would need to be cancelled.
- f) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that the risk is also that time would be lost.
- g) The Chair questioned what the reason is as to why the stakeholder meeting would be cancelled.

- h) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that this discussion is covered in later papers, but in summary we need to have material in which to engage with stakeholders and without this material the meeting would not be worthwhile.

The UC Programme Director continued to highlight Programme risks (page 2):

- Highlighted Move to UC, and the need to get off to a flying start for the voluntary phase to get enough voluntarily migrated cases so that we can complete the rest of Move to UC within the time frame. Noted we can't publish a plan yet, however there is good news in the measures mentioned in the budget which might give us a push. Highlighted the sooner we can get a plan published and get stakeholders behind us the better.
- In terms of unit costs, these are tracking stably however did increase from the previous month but nothing significant. Highlighted that unit costs don't tell the whole story due to being in a period with easements and reduced face to face appointments. Noted that there are more people in the Intensive Work Search Group than was anticipated.

Programme Board discussion:

- a) The Director HM Treasury questioned whether there is more detail on the likely volumes and profiles of natural migration coming across, particularly in light of the latest policy decisions.
- b) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that there was an up-tick in claims, 4-5% in the previous week, however we cannot tell whether this is due to the budget announcements or not. HMRC were anecdotally reporting that they were getting people asking whether they should be claiming UC. Noted a discussion had taken place between the Change DG & UC SRO and the Director General HMRC where she confirmed that she had heard the reports, but there was nothing in the data which suggested this.

The UC Programme Director continued to highlight Programme risks around digital capability (page 3):

- Noted that this paper contains diagrams showing the core development team and the new team being built for Move to UC.
- We are doing well apart from the issue in recruiting Java developers which is being tackled more widely in Digital Group as this is a digital wide concern, and not just for UC.

Programme Board discussion around digital capability and resourcing:

- The Digital Director General noted that:
 - Apart from the Java roles, the team have done very well in recruiting the new Move to UC team.
 - In terms of Java programmers, from a permanent perspective it is hoped to increase the rates through the use of the digital allowance which will be agreed on Thursday the 19th November, however it is unknown whether this will be enough.
 - Noted that in this industry many move into the contract market because of the rates available to them. There are pressures on the contingency labour through increased central controls. The Digital Director General has a meeting with the Cabinet Office on the 19th November 2021 to ensure understanding of the risks this causes to programmes.
- The SPAD to Secretary of State asked how far is DWP competing against other Departments and whether this is a broader private sector issue.
- The Digital Director General replied that this is a market issue and we are competing against all of industry as well as government.

- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that he is concerned about the renewing of the contracts of the 100 people coming up at the end of March. Noted this is the reason the Digital DG is working with the Cabinet Office and that should we lose these specialist people, it would not only impact Move to UC but would affect our ability to support the entire system. The Change DG & UC SRO has raised these concerns with the Secretary of State and that she might need to get involved with Ministerial colleagues to support this.
- The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted that Cabinet Office will be hearing this from multiple Departments, for example HMRC or any of the large Departments will be facing the same issues.

Programme Board Discussion:

- a) The Chair thanked the UC Programme Director for bringing this to the Programme Board to highlight some of the material challenges that the Programme is facing. Suggested that a totals row on the first graph would be beneficial, and also a categorization of what everyone is doing, for example working on releases, product development, technical debt to get an understanding of where the main effort is going.
- b) The UC Programme Director acknowledged the request and explained that the reason this would be better shared when we provide an update to the Board on the next development phase prioritisation rather than on the dashboard as once the phase is set the allocation changes very little.
- c) Universal Credit Product Director noted that he would cover the investment categories and how we understand those in the Phase 10 Paper.
- d) The Chair sought clarity on whether the 54 roles in Move to UC are in addition and that there is no double counting.
- e) The UC Programme Director confirmed these were additional placements. Also noted that the paper shows that there are some internal placements which is because the Move to UC team consists of recruiting new people and moving people from the core. Noted that when moving people from the core there is backfilling taking place.
- f) The Chair questioned whether Human Resources have been central to helping the recruitment.
- g) The People Capability & Place Director noted there is a working partnership between Digital and People Capability & Place and there has been some good progress, however emphasized that it is a competitive market for Java developers.
- h) The UC Programme Director noted that the beginning of discovery phase will not require coding, however there will come a point that the lack of Java developers will cause issues.

The UC Programme Director gave an update in regards finances and highlighted:

- In this financial year the forecast from P6-P7 has net effect changed very little.
- This masks an underspend in the Operations area which was compensated with the payment that had been made to HMRC to make up for an extension.
- We are saving a lot of money compared to what was originally intended. We are £49.5m better off in terms of forecasting vs the budget. 26m of this is operational costs.
- £8m has been set aside to potentially fund partners to help us with the voluntary phase but without a plan this is not likely to be spent.
- Noted lower costs from Local Authorities due to not getting the anticipated volumes of requests to cover redundancy payments.

Programme Board Discussion:

- a) The chair questioned whether the voluntary phase as started yet.

- b) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that some of the social media products have been updated which was part of the voluntary phase, but work has not started in regards the core of the voluntary phase which is to start to make some noise about what the plan is and how we are going to entice the circa 1.8m people who are better off on UC to make claims.
- c) The Chair asked how many people have already moved to UC since the voluntary phase started,
- d) The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted that there is a set number of natural migrations that occur because of Change of Circumstances; however, it is voluntary moves that we want for those who can elect to make a claim to UC. Analysts are currently working on how we can tell the two apart in our data. It was noted that even if it was currently possible to tell the two apart it is expected that there would be very little voluntary moves due to not undertaking the required tasks to encourage claimants.

3. UC Programme Status (Paper 2)

The UC Programme Director walked members through the paper and highlighted:

- That the UC Programme has been rated amber for many years which is good given its breadth and complexity. Although the current rating is amber, the core part of the Programme is closer to amber/green and has a good track record. This includes the day to day work, the fortnightly releases, Fraud & Error Support and Plan for Jobs.
- Move to UC which is trying to move many claimants with complex needs over from legacy systems is thought to be rated amber/red.
- Due to the amber/green and amber/red ratings the programme has been rated amber.
- Now we are moving towards, and focusing on Move to UC, it makes sense that the overall programme is Amber/Red.
- Noted that Programme Delivery Executive have, unsuccessfully, tried for some time to get a plan into the public domain for Move to UC and that he was not convinced it would happen any time soon. This has resulted in the voluntary phase not progressing at speed.
- Highlighted that the plan is to move everyone to UC by 2024, however this is based on being able to move 500k in the voluntary phase which will likely slip if we cannot publish the four-phase plan.

Programme Board Discussion:

- a) The Chair questioned why there is the need to get approval from the Secretary of State to approve the plans.
- b) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that:
 - The Secretary of State had agreed the strategy for Move to UC on 5 March after the independent review of the Plan by Atkins. This agreement had been central to the Treasury agreeing to extend the Programme's spending authority into 2021/22 in March and this plan formed the core of the Department's SR bid.
 - The risk of causing embarrassment to The Secretary of State before parliament if we announced the plan before Parliament was told.
 - The Secretary of State has unparalleled access to broadcast, print and social media compared to Civil Servants, so buy-in and her leading this out is important if we want to get interest.
 - In addition to publishing the plan, we also want to release other elements such as the gainer analysis which will start to entice people in.

- People want to know what our plan is and how this fit in with everything else we are doing. Also noted that some people believe that everyone is worse off in UC, and so without releasing this information we cannot make progress.
 - That we are bound by National Statistics Code in that if we spoke in public about an internally known fact, such as the 56% of claimants that are likely to be better off, we would have to published it to allow scrutiny. Noted that he is unable to use that figure until either the Secretary of State authorises its use or consents to the publication of data so it can be used.
 - There are no concerns regarding whether the 56% gainer analysis is accurate and that the issue is not the quality of the statistics, it's the fact these haven't been made publicly available.
 - Noted the Secretary of State can announce the 56% however she would immediately need to publish the analysis behind it.
 - This remains a serious issue.
- c) The SPAD to the Secretary of State noted that:
- The Secretary of State is keen for the voluntary track to progress, including through stakeholder engagement.
 - That it is reasonable to expect the Secretary of State to agree a plan before it is published.
 - That nonetheless there is a number of things the Secretary of State had agreed could be discussed and shared with stakeholders, and therefore he would question whether there is sufficient concern or need to amend the RAG status on this basis.
- d) As recommended by the Chair, The Change DG & UC SRO and the SPAD to the Secretary of State to continue this conversation offline to obtain clarity.

The UC Programme Director continued to walk members through paper and highlighted:

- That we develop UC based on Agile methodology where we work with customers and find out what works for them, develop this, and then continue to test and learn. Noted the Secretary of State seems nervous of this approach, and the Programme has already seen a number of detailed questions being asked regarding the discovery phase which is causing nervousness as it will only work if the teams are empowered to find the best solutions with claimants.
- The combination of the risks identified suggests the Programme is no longer amber and has moved to amber/red and the SRO will need to take this into consideration.
- If this continues much longer, the Programme Director does not feel it will be long before he recommends the Programme changes to red. This is due to the tight timescale from where we are now to migrating legacy customers to UC given a large number of claimants will have complex needs.
- Noted that every month of time lost impacts the ability to meet the time scales.

After much discussion the following was agreed:

- The Chair summarised that the general view of the Board is to recognise the challenge the Programme is facing and that the RAG Rating should move to amber/red.
- The Change DG & UC SRO emphasised that Board Members will continue to work on this outside of the meeting to address the issues as soon as possible.

4. Phase 10 Checkpoint and Service Goals (Paper 3)

The UC Product Director introduced his paper and highlighted:

- The paper helps us balance Programme Board oversight of what Product Development are doing with empowerment of the team to undertake the work to improve the service against the plans.
- Teams work in phases and take a full backlog to UC Programme Delivery Executive of what is being planned in terms of development, changes and improvements to the service, fixed commitments and legislative changes.
- Over time, phase lengths have varied however currently there is a steady pattern of planning in 6 month increments. This had been established since the covid response phase.

The UC Product Director noted that there is lots of progress in phase 10 which runs from, May – 24th November including:

- Reducing risk associated with identity verification
- confirming EU settled status of some 700k claimants.
- Communicating with claimants around the ending of the £20 uplift
- Understanding better causes of fraud and error and testing interventions – e.g. around earnings
- supporting the plan for jobs which included launching the Re-start programme; supporting Kickstart to improve their vacancy filling rates and also tracking customer journeys in the Youth Offer Programme.

The Product Director highlighted key changes during phase 10 as follows:

- increase in scope of work to communicate with claimants around the £20 uplift. This became a significant project testing and iterating how to communicate effectively with the whole claimant base.
- Developing DWP's approach on fraud and error to include a proposed targeted case review. A small team was created to undertake discovery into this concept. The ongoing work with the concept of having a large number of case checkers that will review stock cases, identify fraud and correct cases is subject to HMT funding. On the assumption this work is likely to grow and therefore the team has been kept in place.
- The budget measures announced by the Chancellor which the SRO had already referenced at the outset of the meeting were also brought into scope of phase 10.

Looking ahead to Phase 11, the Product Director highlighted some key areas of investment. These are:

- Move to UC
- Investing in our Labour Market strategy
- Targeted case reviews to reduce fraud and error

The Product Director introduced 8 Service Goals for Universal Credit and explained that these service goals would be used to understand the balance of investment across the UC portfolio and to facilitate prioritisation discussions. He sought Programme Board endorsement of the goals listed in the paper.

1. DWP can manage and iterate the Universal Credit service post-programme.
2. Claimants have equity of outcomes regardless of potential barriers
3. Fraud, error and the associated monetary loss are minimised and we have the capability to continue to design it out.
4. Agents focus more of their time on supporting claimants, and not on unnecessary and wasteful tasks.
5. Claimants progress towards finding work or getting better paid work.
6. Claimants have an excellent end-to-end experience of the Universal Credit service.

7. Claimants are getting the correct payment at the right time.
8. All legacy claimants entitled to Universal Credit are claiming it.

Programme Board Discussion:

- The Chair noted that service goals could be grouped to Internal (including Work Coaches and Agents) and external for claimants. He queried how many staff and contractors are tied up in legacy systems across government departments currently that could be re-deployed once the move to UC has concluded.
- The Director People and Capability highlighted that work is ongoing in regards how move to UC would impact Working Age staff. There was a declining trajectory planned prior to covid.
- The Change DG & UC SRO commented that HMRC will have a lot of staff in this position. Also noted that if the legacy IT system which supports contributory benefit claimants is replaced then when Move to UC is complete we can potentially switch off old systems.
- On measuring the Service Goals, the UC Product Director noted the paper's annex shows where a measure has been identified and how to measure it, i.e. having the level of data needed or further work is required. This will evolve into a set of measures that can be tracked to support the Change DG & UC SRO.
- The Chair questioned how decisions are made in regards items removed from the backlog or deferred until future phases.
- In response, the UC Product Director noted that:
 - It depends on the level and reason, however typically this decision will be obtained via UC Programme Delivery Executive.
 - That some removals had been removed due to the judicial process they related to hasn't happened or proposed policy change have not come in which are both relatively simple decisions.
 - That some have been removed due to spending more time and effort on the £20 uplift removal than originally anticipated.
 - Noted that as far as possible teams are empowered to work with colleagues in the department and those that are impacted by a change to scope. When additional scrutiny is needed it will go to UC Programme Delivery Executive for a decision.
 - The reason the for mid-phase checkpoint at the UC Programme Delivery Executive was to scrutinise the movements that happened during the phase.
- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that:
 - fixed legislative commitments or those with fiscal consequences will be protected, for example, a change such as up-rating. Noted that if DWP lost a court case and it had reached the Supreme Court that would then become a commitment in which case capacity would need to be found. Should this happen, commitments will fall off the other end which is typically service improvements. Noted that for this reason the Board are keen for Ministers to consider this when looking at choices to make in regards UC.
- The Chair noted that part of the challenge is getting the entire Product Development Team for UC on a sustainable footing. Currently there are 400 people in this team supporting what is happening today.
- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that this situation has been a constant feature due to never having enough people.
- In response, the Chair asked what is the Department's plan going forward.
- The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted that:
 - There would be enough people if we were not doing Move to UC.

- That it will get easier as the programme completes, and the work becomes business as usual. Noted that there is no way around this, and it is the reality of this stage in the lifecycle of UC. This is due to the uniqueness of a programme still in development with a significant live service, big things still to deliver and ongoing technical maintenance.
- That this would not always be the case but it will feel like it to the Board for the next few years and prioritisation will be needed, e.g. the Secretary of State is clear that Move to UC is a priority, and so if UC are unable to recruit Java Developers other commitments will be delayed and it would need to be assessed whether UC has sufficient people to keep the programme technically sound.
- The Digital Director General questioned whether the issue is the inability to obtain resources or maxed out the number of people and changes that can be managed.
- In response, the Change DG & UC SRO noted that there is the amount of people around the engine, the amount of fixing that can be done at one time and there is the speed to expand. Noted that the team was started small as an agile development but highlighted that as you grow the teams you need existing members to train new starters and therefore this limits the rate of growth.
- The Digital Director General agreed with the Change DG & UC SRO and added that one of the pressures the Programme has is that whilst in its initial stages it could throw all capacity on functional development, as the product becomes older and larger with more users, a higher proportion of capacity needs to be on maintenance, addressing security risks and upgrading.
- The Chair questioned whether plans were in place for the Department beyond the end of programme.
- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that planning is currently underway over the next 6 phases to move to business as usual. Noted it is important to manage the end of the programme.
- UC Product Director stated that BAU has to involve both operating and continuing to improve the service at. This is part of the first Service Goal. He noted:
 - A lot of investment currently under the banner of 'Service Goal 1' goes into technical debt work.
 - The need to identify how to do prioritisation and governance and the shape, leadership and direction needed to run the service in perpetuity.
 - There are 5 sub-points of that goal which will be worked through in the coming phases.
 - There are technical things that can be done to make it more efficient, however it will be necessary to trade investing in that vs investing in one of the other 7 goals.

The Chair thanks the UC Product Director for bring the paper and summarized that the Board were asked to note the changes to the backlog and to endorse use of the Service Goals.

5. Progress to start Discovery (Paper 4):

The Change DG & UC SRO introduced the paper and noted that:

- The Chair had asked for an update for the progress to start discovery.
- Parts of paper 4 echoes the discussion from paper 2 and therefor the board were advised to ignore those aspects if content that these have been discussed enough.
- There is a need to discuss the legislation risk during this discussion

The External Affairs, Strategic Design and Planning Director highlighted that paragraphs 1-10 relate to publishing the plan and analysis which the Board has already discussed earlier in the meeting.

The UC Product Director walked the Board through the discovery phase and noted that:

- In regards the resourcing position, the team have done a good job to scale at the rate we have. This puts us in the position in which we have the people needed to start discovery in January 2022. The initial team will be a sub-set of the 54, however the crunch point will be the development capacity we need, when we need this and whether it is in place. Noted that if this isn't resolved by then a prioritisation decision will be made to deprioritise other commitments in phase 11
- Work is underway to scope out core problem statements for exploration due in early January.
- Noted that a decision has been brought to this Programme Board to approve the criteria to select locations to run Move to UC tests from. Noted that much discussion and debate went into selecting Harrogate which had both up and downsides in terms of what it offered for learning opportunities.
- The intent during 2022 is to run multiple tests, some of which will be location specific and will be working in collaboration with Jobcentres which will be decided with Operations, with optimising for learning a key focus.
- Noted that the need to also test location-less approaches for legacy claimants that don't require a high level of localised support.

The UC Product Director summarized the proposed criteria:

- Claimant characteristics and circumstances such as housing status and health factors. Noted that this is not just about numbers in different cohorts of benefit claims, but other factors that impact the kind of support they might need.
- Place & Demographics such as rural/urban, levels of unemployment etc. Noted its important to know how to understand different demographics of a local areas against the totality of the claimant base
- Jobcentre and Service Centre capacity, capability, and leadership.

Programme Board Discussion:

- a) The Operations Director noted that it will be hard to work through this due to the rich and diverse claimant database, however, is in agreement with the criteria and is excited to start working on this.
- b) The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted to the Programme Board the plan is for multiple locations to test different aspects and not just looking for a set number of locations. Noted plans to talk the Minister for Welfare Delivery through this paper ensuring the criteria is discussed prior to location discussions.
- c) The Chair queried whether the ability of stakeholders to support the programme would be considering factor.
- d) The UC Product Director acknowledged the Chair's suggestion and that this would be included in the place/demographics criteria.
- e) The chair noted that some objectives and measures for discovery were identified as part of the Harrogate pilot and obtained clarity that lessons learned from that will be used.
- f) The Change DG & UC SRO noted that the Minister for Welfare Delivery asked whether it was possible to start some aspects prior to starting discovery which links to paragraph 13 of the paper. Noted that if Programme Board are content with paragraph 13, he will confirm to the Minister for Welfare Delivery what actions are being undertaken to warm the engine.
- g) The Chair questioned if it is possible to utilise the staff currently in place to do as much work as possible.
- h) The UC Product Director noted that as soon as new starters join, they will be inducted to UC, working against other service goals and learning the service. Noted this will allow an experienced member of staff to be released but the upskilling takes time. Noted this approach will allow a rolling start in January.
- i) The External Affairs, Strategic Design and Planning Director noted that:

- a. Regulation changes are an additional argument as to the importance of coming forward with the plan as soon as possible.
 - b. Regulation changes represent a range of key dependencies for making timely progress on the discovery phase. For example, removing the limit of the number legacy claims that can be manage-moved across.
 - c. Noted that for regulations in this area to move forward they are required to go to the Social Security Advisory Committee, and if we are unable to provide them with a credible plan and confidence it could result in a lengthy consultation which could take a minimum of 12 weeks, which risks further delay to the plan and discovery phase.
- j) The Change DG & UC SRO emphasised that the regulations are the legal basis under which someone is moved to UC. Raised the issue in regard to migration notices which regulations formally require us to issue before starting the process. UC will soon want to start engaging with claimants however without regulations we can't start this, therefore it is vital to have regulations in place. 1
- k) The Chair noted his understanding of the need to gain approval to go beyond the 10k limit.
- l) In response, the Change DG & UC SRO noted that:
- a. The 10k limit is important to mitigate the need to count cases and also to allow teams freedom in terms of numbers.
 - b. Migration notices didn't particularly work in Harrogate, and that this learning has resulted in the current migration notices adapting and changing. Noted that it is possible to use the old migration notices, however this would impact learning from the cases. It would be clearer to use new legislation.
 - c. The Change DG & UC SRO will communicate to Ministers the need for as few bits in the peripheral vision as possible when starting the activity to enable teams to concentrate on Discovery.
- m) The Change DG & UC SRO confirmed that he is to attend the committee on the 08/12. Noted the dream result would be that they approve regulations without consultation if he can discuss the plan, reassure them and explain ways of working. Emphasised that without an agreement from the Secretary of State to talk about the plan it will immediately result in consultation.

No other questions or comment.

AOB

The Change DG & UC SRO highlighted that:

- In discussion with the Chair, a December Programme Board has provisionally been arranged so that, should current issues be resolved, the Board can do final readiness checks on launching the discovery. Noted the following 3 green lights are needed:
 1. The legislation needs to be in place.
 2. Our people need to be in place.
 3. Ministers need to be aware of plans for first locations and in agreement.
- Noted that The Change DG & UC SRO and the Chair will judge the situation nearer the time and check the progress made.

The Chief Executive LB Hillington announced to the Board that she is due to retire and that this could potentially be her last Programme Board.

- The Change DG & UC SRO noted that the Chief Executive LB Hillington has done a superb job supporting the programme and representing Local Authority. Highlighted that the Programme does not work without the engagement from Local Authority. The Change DG & UC SRO extended his thanks on behalf of the Board.
- The Chair noted his thanks.

Deputy Secretary for Work and Inclusion DFC Northern Ireland extended his thanks to the Change DG & UC SRO and UC Product Director for the support received in removing the temporary £20 uplift in Northern Ireland.

Date of Next Meeting: 15th December 2021

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S40

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