



### Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

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**Time and Date**

10.00 am on Wednesday, 11th December, 2013

**Place**

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House, Earl Street, Coventry

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**Public Business****1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes**

(a) To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th November, 2013 (Pages 3 - 6)

(b) Matters Arising

**4. Welfare Reform (Pages 7 - 40)**

(a) Introduction and Context (10.05 a.m. - 10.15 a.m.)

(b) Impact on Individuals, Communities and the City (10.15 a.m. - 10.55 a.m.)

(c) Co-ordination of Services and Support (10.55 a.m. - 11.35 a.m.)

(d) City Council Position (11.35 a.m. to 12.05 p.m.)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and a Joint Presentation on Items (a) to (d)

The following people have been invited to attend for consideration of this item:

Sue Bent, Director, Law Centre

Simon Brooke, Chair of Working together on Welfare Reform Group

Martin Buxcey, District Operations Manager, Department of Works and Pensions

Charley Gibbons, Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Bureau

**5. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/2014 (Pages 41 - 46)**

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

6. **Outstanding Issues**

All outstanding items have been included in the Work Programme

7. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

**Private Business**

**Nil**

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Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Tuesday, 3 December 2013

Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett, Democratic Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3072 alternatively E-mail: [suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk)

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Suzanne Bennett no later than 9.00 a.m. on the day of the meeting, giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report referred to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Committee, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors F Abbott, J Blundell, J Clifford (Deputy Chair), C Fletcher (Chair), T Khan, R Sandy, T Skipper, S Thomas and K Taylor

By invitation Councillors

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7683 3072  
E-mail: [suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk)**

# Agenda Item 3a

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on**  
**Wednesday, 6 November 2013**

Present:

Members: Councillor C Fletcher (Chair)  
Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor T Khan  
Councillor R Sandy  
Councillor T Sawdon  
Councillor D Skinner  
Councillor T Skipper  
Councillor S Thomas

Other Members: Councillors G Duggins and A Lucas

Employees (by Directorate):

D Carter, People Directorate  
S Giles, People Directorate  
C Hickin, People Directorate  
L Hughes, Resources Directorate  
P Kay, People Directorate  
L Knight, Resources Directorate  
K Larsen, Resources Directorate  
S Roach, People Directorate  
M Watson, People Directorate  
A West, Resources Directorate

Other Representatives: J Hancox, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group  
DC K Madill, West Midlands Police

Apologies: Councillors F Abbott, J Blundell and K Taylor  
Councillor Gingell, Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services)  
Margaret Greer, University Hospitals, Coventry and Warwickshire

## **Public Business**

### **39. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **40. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **41. Strategic Built Environment Group**

The Committee considered a briefing note and received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Services concerning the Strategic Built Environment Group which was set up following a decision of the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities). The terms of reference including membership was set out at an appendix.

The Group was established to facilitate closer working of the Council's various regulatory activities and was chaired by Sara Roach, Deputy Director, Strategy and Communities. The Group had been meeting on a monthly basis since March, 2013 and their work focused on 'problem properties' or issues which, in most cases, had previously proved difficult to resolve by one department working alone, and cut across professional disciplines. A second appendix detailed the past and current work of the Group.

The presentation provided details of two case studies and the actions undertaken by the Group. The first involved a block of flats. The company owning the freehold went into liquidation whereupon title to the land passed to the Crown, who has legal immunity so enforcement action could not be taken. The external fabric of the flats, the common parts, and the external yard and garages were in a poor state of repair and suffered from fly-tipping and dog foul. The second case related to an empty semi-detached property which was fire damaged and derelict and suffered from fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour complaints. The previous owner died intestate and potential beneficiaries of the estate were not interested.

Members questioned the officers on a number of issues including:-

- The potential to take action against the Crown and was this an issue affecting other Local Authorities
- The potential for tenants who owned the leases to the flats to establish a management company
- The suggestion to raise concerns regarding crown owned land with the local MPs and the Local Government Association
- Details about the number of enforcement officers at the City Council
- The numbers of and options for dealing with empty properties in the city including compulsory purchase
- How issues were picked up by the Group and their impact on improved working relationships across the Council.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (i) Officers work with other Local Authorities to identify common concerns in relation to crown owned properties and how this can be pursued nationally through the Local Government Association and the local MPs.**
- (ii) Officers review best practice to understand how other Local Authorities deal quickly and successfully with problem properties.**
- (iii) Officers review the number of Council owned properties that are causing nuisance.**

- (iv) Officers review the opportunities and costs of using Compulsory Purchase Orders to deal with problem properties when other options have been exhausted, included the costs of not taking action.**

#### **42. Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse Services**

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Executive Director, People on the new service model for the commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) Services. The report was also to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 19th November, 2013. Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) and Councillor Lucas, Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. Juliet Hancox, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group and DC Kim Madill, West Midlands Police also attended for this matter.

The report provided an update on the outcome of the extensive review of the statutory and commissioned services involved with DVA and detailed the steps needed to progress the new proposed service model. The proposed new service had been created as part of an integrated multi-agency model which would provide DVA services seeking to ensure a clear first point of contact, prevent duplication and strengthen information sharing. This would include a helpline and interactive website, a single point of access to victim services, a range of accommodation for victims, an aftercare service for victims, a new solution focused programme to work with perpetrators and a children's support service.

The Council currently commissioned nine separate services across five providers and existing contracts had been extended to enable time to design the new model/service. A number of research projects, consultation events and focus groups were undertaken between 2011 and 2013 with providers, referring agencies and service users, in order to assess need and identify gaps in current provision. The findings had been used to develop the specifications for the proposed service to be commissioned within the model, however the final consultation phase for the children's element was still to be concluded.

The Committee questioned the officers and representatives on a number of issues including:-

- the processes undertaken and the timescales involved to date in developing the proposed new service model
- how effectively partner agencies were working together to tackle domestic violence and abuse
- the robustness of information sharing arrangements between organisations
- resources and capacity to meet needs
- how risk would be managed in the new service model to help prioritise activity
- assurance that the voice of the child would be heard in all cases where children were involved
- how service users were involved in the development of services.

The Committee recognised that domestic violence and abuse had wide ranging implications including crime, community safety, protection, safeguarding, health and well-being. A range of organisations and partnerships had responsibilities for action and managing performance and the Committee were keen to understand

how these organisations worked together to ensure an overview of all related issues was taken and how responsibility and accountability was managed effectively. In the light of their discussions they suggested that the Health and Well-being Board could adopt Domestic Violence and Abuse as a key priority and hold partners to account for the response of statutory services.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet be asked to consider and decide whether to agree the following recommendation: ‘That the Health and Well-being Board be requested to adopt Domestic Violence and Abuse as a key priority and hold partners to account for the response of statutory services both in terms of early identification/intervention and response’.**

**43. Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the Work Programme for the current year, minute 44 below refers.

**44. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/2014**

The Committee noted the Work Programme for the current municipal year.

**45. Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

**Private Business**

**46. Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Adult Services**

Further to Minute 42 above, the Committee noted a report of the Executive Director, People on the new service model for the commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) Services. The report was also to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 19th November, 2013. Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) and Councillor Lucas, Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. The report included financial information relating to the contract and the Committee questioned the officers on a number of issues.

**47. Any Other Items of Private Business**

There were no additional items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 12.20 pm)



## Briefing note

**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

**Subject: Welfare Reform**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting has dedicated the whole of its on 11<sup>th</sup> December meeting to consider issues relating to the government's Welfare Reform agenda. The purpose of the meeting is to review:
- the latest information on the implications of the Welfare Reform changes on local people, communities and the city;
  - the way services and support to local people are being co-ordinated in the city; and
  - the impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to review the current position and actions being taken in response to the government's Welfare Reform agenda and make any recommendations to Cabinet, Cabinet Members, partners or others as appropriate.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The government has introduced an unprecedented level of change in welfare reform to which the Council and partners are responding. A set of background information to support presentations, questions and discussion at the meeting is set out in Appendix 2. Key issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to consider in reviewing this at the meeting will include:
- What are the combined implications of changes on individuals and communities that decision-makers need to understand?
  - What can be predicted about future impacts that need to be planned for now?
  - How do we make sure that actions being taken now are providing long term sustainable solutions for people, not short term fixes?
  - How is the city's approach to services and support being co-ordinated to avoid either duplication or gaps?
  - Is the Council doing everything required to discharge its responsibilities for elements of the welfare reform agenda?

### **4 Impact on Individuals, communities and the city**

- 4.1 Working with local partners, the Council's Corporate Research Team has produced a detailed analysis of the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on individuals, communities and the city. A summary is included at Appendix 1. The full report on which this is based is available on Coventry Partnership's web pages at:  
[http://www.coventrypartnership.com/upload/public/documents/conference%202013/Welfare%20Reform%20Initial%20Impacts%20on%20Coventry%2001%2010%2013%20\(5\).pdf](http://www.coventrypartnership.com/upload/public/documents/conference%202013/Welfare%20Reform%20Initial%20Impacts%20on%20Coventry%2001%2010%2013%20(5).pdf)

- 4.2 The issues and challenges emerging from this analysis to date are being considered by partners and include:
- the need to target support at those losing the most benefit – including employees and private sector tenants
  - the demand for crisis support is increasing – is enough being done to find sustainable solutions?
  - Labour market inequalities have widened - is enough being done to address long standing barriers to jobs?
  - Benefits advice and legal support services are proven to make a big difference, but demand is outstripping supply
  - Lack of rented housing for 'over-occupiers' means families are trapped in unaffordable tenancies
  - Monitor danger signs, evaluate how people are coping and calculate costs to partners?

## **5 Co-ordination of Services and Support**

- 5.1 Through the Coventry Partnership, the Working Together on Welfare Reform group brings together partners including Advice Services Coventry, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Coventry City Council, Coventry Law Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, Midland Heart and Whitefriars Housing. Monthly meetings discuss common issues, share knowledge and work together to tackle emerging problems.
- 5.2 This has led to a range of initiatives and interventions and the Chair of the group and representatives of some of the partner organisations will attend the meeting to contribute to case studies and give their perspectives. Those invited are:
- Simon Brooke: Head of Income Management WM Housing Group and Chair of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group
- Charley Gibbons: Chief Executive CAB and Chair of Coventry Partnership
- Sue Bent: Director Coventry Law Centre
- Martin Buxcey: District Operations Manager, Coventry & Warwickshire DWP
- 5.3 Some of the advice and information provided through the Group is available on the Coventry Partnership website at: [http://www.coventrypartnership.com/Welfare Reform](http://www.coventrypartnership.com/Welfare_Reform)

## **6 City Council Position**

- 6.1 A number of council services provide support to people which helps meet long, medium and short term needs, as well as help people in emergency situations. The Council is working to ensure that these are as joined up as possible, particularly at the point of access.
- 6.2 The Council's Benefits Service has dealt with a number of additional pressures through the Governments significant programme of Welfare Reforms. These changes include:
- the introduction of Council Tax Support (replacing Council Tax Benefit).
  - the size restriction in socially rented properties (also referred to as the 'bedroom tax' or 'spare room subsidy).
  - a new Community Support Grant Scheme (replacing Crisis Loans and Community Care
  - grants – previously administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)).
  - administering the National Benefit Cap from July 2013.
  - additional funding to support people impacted by the changes through the Discretionary Housing Payment fund.



- 6.3 The report to the Cabinet Member Strategic Finance and Resources of 2<sup>nd</sup> December on the Performance within the Benefits Service for the period April 2013 – September 2013 includes a summary of some of the impacts of the welfare reform changes on the Council's Benefits Service and is available at:  
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s13999/Benefits%20Service%20Performance%20to%20November%202013.pdf>
- 6.4 There are two discretionary funds managed by the service and the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has asked that progress on these be reported to the meeting.
- 6.5 **Discretionary Housing Payments** (DHP) are used to help people in difficult circumstances with their housing costs. The new DHP policy was approved by Cabinet in March 2013. The Welfare Reforms introduced from April 2013 have resulted in considerable demands on this area of work.
- 6.6 In the first six months of 2013/14, the Service received 1,541 applications. The number of applications in 2012/13 was 727 (a 56% increase from 2011/12). At the end of September 2013, £159,620 had been allocated out of the total budget available of £798,643. The Service has recently reviewed this position and will be undertaking some promotional activity to ensure that awareness of the support available is maximised. The Service also expects a greater demand during the second half of the year due to seasonal factors (pressures with additional spending on fuel and Christmas, for example) and the on-going accumulative impact of welfare reform.
- 6.7 The Service has successfully introduced a new **Community Support Grant** scheme – which has replaced the discretionary elements of the Social Fund (Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans) previously administered by DWP. The grants are designed to help vulnerable people living in Coventry who find themselves in a crisis situation or where, for example, they require support to remain in the community. The Council is now responsible for administering the £1,195,847 annual grant for these awards.
- 6.8 Payment is made by the issue of a spending card – replacing the cash based system previously used by the DWP. The Service has put in place a responsive process and has worked hard with partners to ensure money is targeted on individual needs. The new team has received 4,340 phone calls and 1,962 applications of which 940 were successful. Spending in the first six months of the new scheme totalled £162,550 (926 were collected with a value of £162,087). Whilst this is relatively low compared to the budget allocation, we do expect demand to increase during the second half of the year. The removal of cash from the system has contributed to a significant reduction in demand when compared to the previous scheme.

Adrian West  
Scrutiny Team  
024 7683 2286

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# The Impact of Welfare Reform on Coventry - September 2013

	Average Annual change to the individual or household	Numbers affected	Annual loss to the Coventry economy
Local Housing Allowance changes...			
.....LHA room rate change	+£124 -£120 and -£360	1,407 households 8,668 households	-£2.3m
.....Four bedroom cap	-£947	22 households	-£21,000
.....Abolishing the £15 excess	-£780	219 households	-£171,000
.....Extension of the shared room rate (under 35)	-£1,392	689 households	-£1m
Under occupancy (bedroom tax)	-£792	2,674 households	-£2.1m
Household benefit cap	-£3,114	144 households	-£0.5m
Incapacity Benefit (estimates)	+£62 +£268 -£1,542*	4,169 people 2,993 people 3,528 people	-£4.4m
Employment and Support Allowance (estimates)	-£1,479	9,600 people	-£7.2m
Disability Living Allowance (estimates)	-£3,640	2,948 people	-£10.7m
Localisation of Council Tax benefits	£128 protected	23,314 protected	-£2.6m
Other predicted losses (using the Sheffield Hallam Model. The figures show the impact when the reforms have come into full effect.)			
Child Benefit	-£362	41,300 households	-£15m
Non-dependent deductions	-£1,121	1,900 households	-£2.1m
Tax Credit	-£812	28,500 households	-£23.1m
Uprating of benefits limited to 1%	? Unknown	? Unknown	-£21.4m
Universal credit (due to be rolled out by 2017)	? Unknown	? Unknown	? Unknown
<b>Total Coventry estimated future annual losses</b>			<b>-£112m</b>
<b>Total estimated annual losses as a result of welfare reform for England as a whole per working age adult</b>			<b>-£470</b>
<b>Total estimated annual losses as a result of welfare reform for Coventry per working age adult</b>			<b>-£540</b>

\*Reduced by £2,317 if aged under 25.

# The Impact of Welfare Reform on Coventry - September 2013

## Executive Summary

The Government is introducing a range of welfare reforms, which won't be fully implemented until 2017. These aim to increase self-reliance through making work pay, whilst supporting disabled people who cannot work.

### Impact

The emerging picture from evidence reviewed by the Welfare Evaluation Group:

- Recession has exacerbated long standing labour market inequalities. **Women, young adults, disabled people and some black & minority ethnic groups** are finding it harder to get a job
- Housing benefit changes have reduced the incomes of 11,096 Coventry residents, totalling £5million each year. Households more likely to lose the most benefit include: **couples, those including children under 5 years old, larger households, those in work, those in Foleshill, St Michaels & Henley wards, in the private sector, in receipt of ESA or Income Support**
- 20,000 people have or will be reassessed for Employment Support Allowance and 11,000 for Personal Independent Payments. This is causing anxiety about benefit reductions for many.
- Increasing rent arrears and applications for Discretionary Housing Payments are early warning signs that some people affected are not coping with reduced incomes
- Partner organisations are already experiencing service pressures:
  - Overstretched specialist debt and benefit advice and legal support services
  - Shortage of smaller rented housing to house those affected by under-occupancy cuts
  - Additional work to deal with rent collection, evictions and increased housing repairs

### Action

The Working Together Group and individual organisations are proactively supporting those affected:

- General awareness raising and benefits and money advice support through pop-up shops, road shows and campaigns
- Targeted support to individual tenants known to be affected, improving money management & checking eligibility for benefits
- Encouraging and supporting individuals to access employment opportunities
- Providing support through hardship funds and food banks
- Giving priority to 'under-occupiers' to access smaller rented housing through Homefinder
- Continuing to provide Council Tax Support to those eligible for means tested benefits
- Switching resources towards supporting the impacts & increasing the use of volunteers to help

### Future

Partner organisations have expressed fears for the future about growing indebtedness, poverty and destitution. Potential social impacts could be increased domestic violence, child neglect, ill-health, homelessness etc. Partners have emphasised the importance of continued partnership working:

- Providing support and advice to mitigate against negative impacts of reforms
- Continuing to focus on tenancy sustainment and preventing homelessness, but widening the focus to include Personal Independence Payments and eventually Universal Credit.

Key issues to watch and understand for the future are:

- Are people adapting and becoming more self-reliant or are some groups of people struggling – what further practical support is needed?
- How effectively is support being targeted at those most at risk? Is it aimed at helping people adapt and thrive in the changed welfare system? What is the impact of migration from other areas?
- Around 15,000 working age adults are not in work or education *and* not claiming welfare benefits. Is this through choice or is there a growing pool of households at risk of falling over? Information from government about what happens to people who come off benefits is required.
- What is the impact of sanctions (loss of benefit) applied to those failing to meet the Claimant Commitment?

# Welfare Reform

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013



[www.coventry.gov.uk](http://www.coventry.gov.uk)

## Purpose of the meeting

To review:

- the latest information on Welfare Reform and its implications on local people, communities and the city;
- the way services and support to local people are being co-ordinated; and
- the impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities



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## Issues for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to consider include:

- What are the combined implications of changes on individuals and communities that decision-makers need to understand?
- What can be predicted about future impacts that need to be planned for now?
- How do we make sure that actions being taken now are providing long term sustainable solutions for people, not short term fixes?
- How is the city's approach to services and support being co-ordinated to avoid either duplication or gaps?
- Is the Council doing everything required to discharge its responsibilities for elements of the welfare reform agenda?



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## Agenda

### 1. Introduction and Context (10 minutes)

Simon Brake: Assistant Director Communities and Health

### 2. Impact on individuals, communities and the city (40 minutes)

Helen Shankster: Corporate Research Co-ordinator

### 3. Working Together - Co-ordination of Services and Support (40 minutes)

Simon Brooke: Head of Income Management WM Housing Group and Working Together on Welfare Reform Group Chair

Charley Gibbons: Chief Executive CAB and Chair of Coventry Partnership

Sue Bent: Director Coventry Law Centre

Martin Buxcey: District Operations Manager, Coventry & Warwickshire DWP

### 4. City Council position (30 minutes)

Tim Savill: Head of Benefits



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# 1. Introduction and Context

Simon Brake

Assistant Director Communities and Health  
Coventry City Council



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## Policy Context

- Global financial crisis and public sector deficit
- Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 - £83 billion public spending cuts over 4 years - £18 billion of this relates to benefits and is phased
- Policy to control deficit from spending cuts rather than tax increases
- Further £10 billion from the benefit bill by 2016/17 announced by the Chancellor at the Conservative Party Conference
- Measures designed to cut but also fundamental cultural change - make the system fairer, simpler and make work pay
- Some public perception of benefits seems commensurate with government policy – e.g. ensuring people out of work are never better off than those in work



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## A complex picture



## Summary of National Changes

- **2010 emergency budget announced £1.8 billion of cuts to housing benefit**
  - 10,000 Coventry residents losing £11 per week
- January 2012: **Housing benefit restricted for under 35's**
- January 2012: **Child benefit**
  - Impacting people earning more than £50,000 – nationally 1 million households losing £1,000 annually
- April 2012: People aged 16 – 65 in receipt of Income Support (paid on the basis of sickness), Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance are being reassessed for **Employment and Support Allowance**.



## Summary of National Changes

### April 2013

- Under occupancy in social housing (working age)
  - Housing benefit cut for people with spare bedrooms in social housing
    - 3180 size restriction cases
      - 2556 one bed reduction (£12.92 pw) / 624 two plus reductions (£22.61 pw)
- Council tax benefit localised and £5 billion budget cut by 10 per cent – Coventry opted to fund the shortfall
- Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants localised
- Benefits uprated by 1 per cent for 3 years and linked to Consumer Price Index rather than Retail Price Index



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## Summary of National Changes

- **Personal Independence Payments** from June 2013
  - Replaces Disability Living Allowance
- **Benefit cap**
  - National roll out from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 – to be completed by September.
  - £500 for couples and single parents per week, £350 for single adults
  - 287 cases in Coventry (1,376 children)
- **Universal Credit - ???**
  - Universal Credit (UC) replaces six main benefits.
  - UC is formed around a new 'claimant commitment' which sets out what is expected in return for assistance.
  - Claimants will be able to claim their benefits online.
  - As claimants earn more money, financial support will be withdrawn at a slower rate than is the case under the current system. UC will be paid monthly, in arrears.
  - A single payment will be made to a household rather than an individual.



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## Meeting the Challenge?

- CWLEP
- City Deal
- Key Cities
- Coventry and Warwickshire Story
- Job Shop and Job Strategy
- Kick Start



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## Co-ordination



### Working Together on Welfare Reform

#### **City Council Welfare Co-ordination Group:**

- To determine which services may be affected Welfare Reform changes, assess the impact on them and investigate options for responding to pressures.
- To look at the wider impacts of poverty across the City and co-ordinate discretionary support provided across the Council.
- Assess the financial impact that the changes will have on specific services, investigating any requirement to respond to pressures identified.



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## 2. Impacts of Welfare Reforms on Coventry – the Story So Far

Helen Shankster  
Corporate Research Co-ordinator  
Coventry City Council

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*'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*

### Government Welfare Reform Aims



- It pays to be in work
- Disabled people are supported to lead independent and active lives, whilst protecting those who cannot work

**Self-  
reliance**

Benefit  
reductions /  
fewer  
entitled


Support  
unemployed  
to work +  
sanctions

Residual  
support  
for  
vulnerable

Easier to  
move into  
work &  
better off

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*'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*



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### Finding it hardest to get jobs

- Females
- 16-24 year olds
- 25-34 year olds
- Disabled people
- Some BME groups (data poor)

### Not in paid work nor claiming benefits

- 15,000 (estimated)
  - Females most affected

15 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*



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## Total Coventry annual loss



### £112 million cut to the city






Estimated by Sheffield Hallam – Hitting the poorest places hardest.  
Not Including Universal Credit

16 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*



  
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## Cumulative Housing Benefit Impacts

As a result of the cap reduction, under occupancy reduction, 4 Bed cap, £15 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) loss & LHA room rate change.


- 
1,220 households increased by £2.39 a week
- 
8,081 households reduced by less than £10 a week
- 
2,297 households reduced between £10-£19.99 a week
- 
633 households reduced between £20-£49.99 a week
- 
85 households reduced by more than £50 a week

17 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*


  
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## Housing Benefit Impact by household type

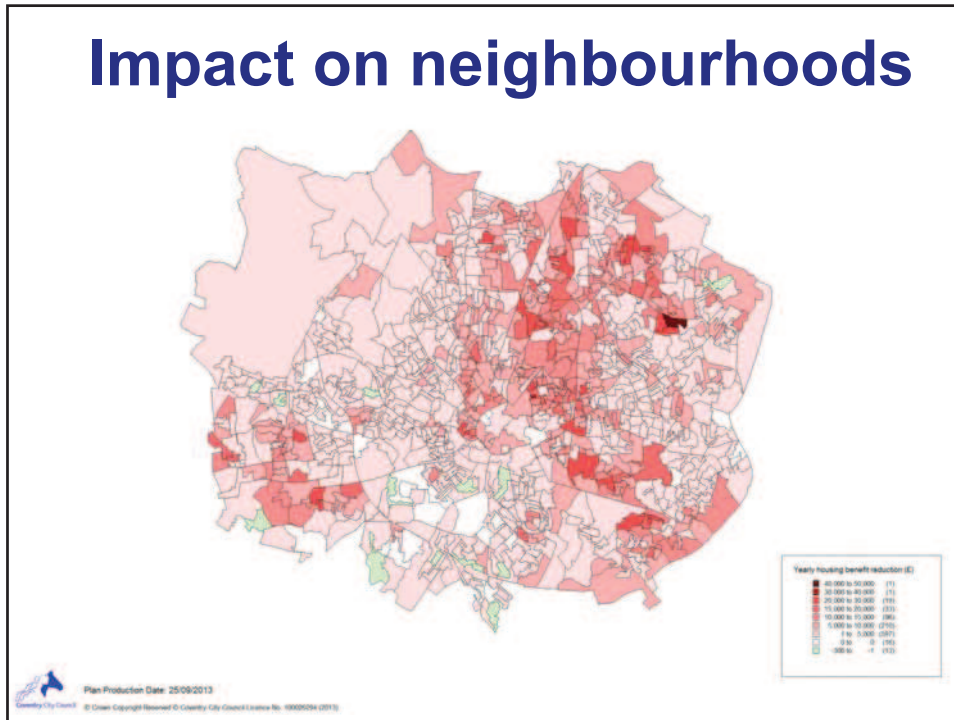
Who's been hit hardest



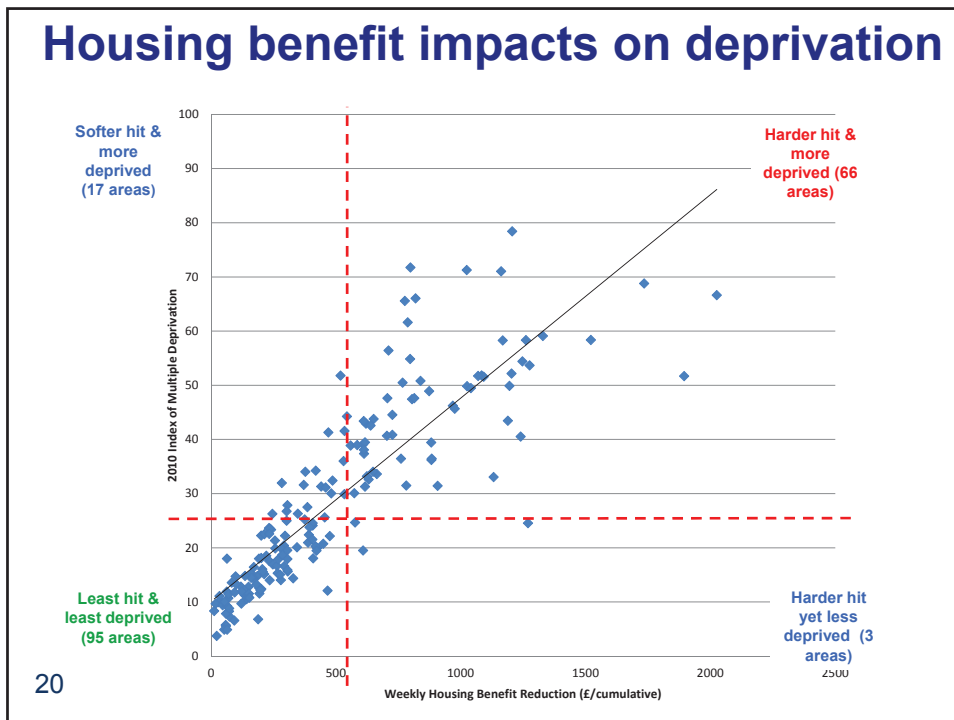
- Receive ESA and IS
- Aged between 45 and 54
- Have dependants under the age of 5
- Are in work
- Couples
- Foleshill, St Michael's and Henley residents
- Privately rented accommodation
- Larger households


18 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*

# Impact on neighbourhoods



# Housing benefit impacts on deprivation





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## Benefit cap case studies

**Aisha (Typical Case)**

- 36 years old, single with 5 children (one under 5 years)
- Income support
- Private tenant, pays £650 rent per month
- Housing benefit reduced by £59.88 per week

**Rachel & Peter (Adapted to change)**


- Early 30's with 5 children
- Faced reduction of £126 per week
- Peter found work and is now claiming working tax credit, so housing benefit not applied

**Sophie (Hardest hit case)**

- 34 years old, single, with 7 children
- Income support
- Private tenant, pays £850 rent per month

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*'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*



www.coventrypartnership.com

## Spare room subsidy (bedroom tax) case studies

**Lucy (Typical Case)**

- 45 years old, single and lives alone in Henley
- Employment Support Allowance
- Assessed as needing one bedroom
- Housing benefit reduced by £15.23 per week


**Cases adapting to change**

- **Gary**, early 60's, HB reduced by £16 per week. He moved to smaller property and now gets all rent paid
- **Debbie**, 51 years, lives alone in 3 bedroom house in Radford so HB was reduced by 25%. Now has 2 additional non-dependants sharing house and not an under-occupier


**Tina (hardest hit case)**


- 33 years old, lives in Upper Stoke with her partner Rob & 4 children – Harry (15), Grant (10), Isabelle (4) and Jessica (2)
- Rob works part time & earns £275 per month
- Housing benefit reduced by £36 per week
- *Tina is also in rent arrears with her RSL*


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### Incapacity Benefit

 5,240 functional assessments  
Oct 2010 - Nov 2012

 39% work related ESA, £1.20  
a week increase

 28% entitled to support group  
ESA, £5.15 a week increase

 33% found fit for work,  
between £44.55 to £29.65 a  
week reduction

### Disability Living Allowance

11,340 individuals being  
reassessed

Award (estimated)	Claimants
Higher award (29%)	3,289
No change (15%)	1,701
No award (26%)	2,948*
Reduced award (30%)	3,402

\* £10.7 million cut to the  
city (estimated)

23 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*

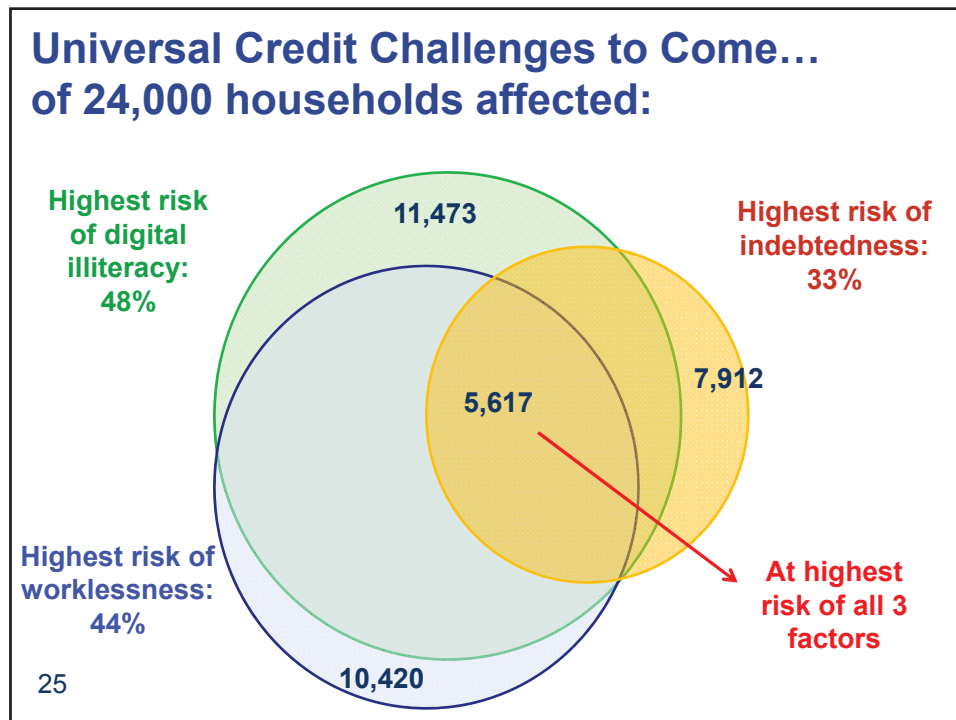

  
[www.coventrypartnership.com](http://www.coventrypartnership.com)

## Claimant Commitment & Sanctions

- Case studies from Coventry organisations

24 *'Raising aspirations, Narrowing the gap'*





## Key Findings & Implications

1. Need to target support at those losing the most benefit – including **employees** and **private sector tenants**
2. Demand for crisis support increasing – is enough being done to find **sustainable solutions**?
3. Labour market inequalities have widened - is enough being done to address long standing **barriers to jobs**?
4. Benefits **advice & legal support** services proven to make a big difference, but demand outstripping supply
5. Lack of rented housing for 'over-occupiers' means families are trapped in **unaffordable tenancies**
6. Monitor **danger signs**, evaluate how people are **coping** and calculate **costs** to partners?

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## 3. Working Together

Our experiences and the value  
of partnership working

**Simon Brooke** WM Housing Group  
Chair of "Working together on Welfare Reform" partnership

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## Our partnership approach

Monthly meetings held to discuss common issues  
with the following partners...



Department for  
Work and Pensions



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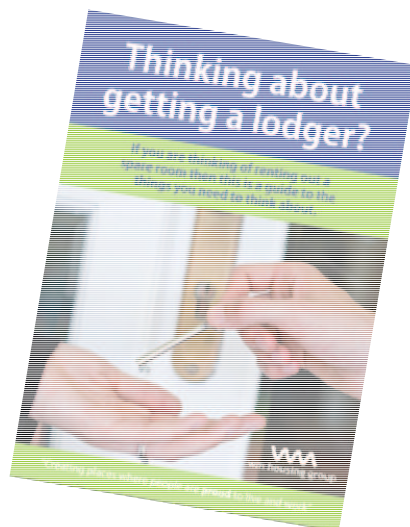
## Visits to under occupiers

- Shared data between CCC and Housing Associations.
- DVD
- Early advice and support
- Follow up support, payment plans
- Advice and help with Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

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## Proactive on Lettings



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## Downsizing scheme



- A partnership project between Coventry City Council and Whitefriars
- This year £50K to pay £300 per room released. To assist 120 customers.

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## Communications Plan



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## Pop Up Shops



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## Are you ready?



### 7 key messages

- Get a benefits check
- Look at your monthly budget
- Get employment if you are out of work
- Get a bank account
- Pay off any priority debts (rent ,council tax etc)
- Set up Direct Debits
- Get online

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## Benefit Cap visits etc



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## Money & Debt Advice



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## Get Digital



3



## Problem solving

- Meetings are a forum for sharing information
- A place to raise issues and concerns
- Action orientated



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## Partnership Conference - Working together – challenges and opportunities

Forward planning.

- i. Input from the evaluation / research on impacts.
- ii. Ideas and debates will influence our plans going forward.

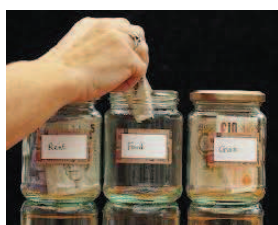
By working together we can achieve much more.



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## Looking Ahead...



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## **4. The impact of welfare reform on the City Council and how we are discharging our responsibilities**

**Tim Savill**  
Head of Benefits  
Coventry City Council



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## **Agenda**

- Welfare Reform
  - General response/impact
  - Council Tax Support
  - Under-occupation
  - National Benefit Cap
  - Community Support Grants
  - Discretionary Housing Payments
  - Universal Credit



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## General: discharging responsibility

- All changes implemented
  - Council Tax Support
  - Under-occupation
  - National Benefit Cap
  - Community Support Grants
  - Discretionary Housing Payments
- All changes introduced on time (and within existing budgets)
- Close working with others (inside and outside the Council)
- Publicity – targeted and general



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## Impacts – more contact (first six months over last 3 years)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	% increase
Phone calls received	37,952	42,015	43,922	+15.7%
Customers visiting CCC Benefits	23,541	24,579	25,051	+6.4%



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## How is our performance?

(Number of days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support)

	Q4 2012-13	Q1 2013-14
• Dudley	15	14
• <b>Coventry</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>
• Sandwell	21	24
• Birmingham	24	26
• Solihull	21	28
• Wolverhampton	24	27
• Walsall	46	35



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## Which reforms and what impact?

- Council Tax Support (April 2013)
  - Council Tax Benefit abolished (no national scheme)
  - CCC 'protected' people by adopting previous Council Tax Benefit scheme
  - Positive impact from partners and customers
  - Helped to cushion impact of some of the other changes
  - Council tax collection rate maintained



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## Which reforms and what impact?

- Social sector size restriction ('Bedroom tax' / 'Spare room subsidy') (April 2013)
  - Original number of households – 3180
  - Current number – 2657
  - Registered Social Landlords reporting lower rent collection (but overall impact of all reforms is also relevant)
  - 408 claims for Discretionary Housing Payments so far
    - Meeting all RSLs early in the New Year



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## Which reforms and what impact?

- Benefit Cap (Mid July 2013)
  - 155 live cases
  - Working closely with CAB to support families with financial management support
  - Still relatively early days
    - 17 Discretionary Housing Payment claims so far



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## Which reforms and what impact?

- Community Support Grants (April 2013)
  - Cashless replacement for social fund elements
  - £1.2 million fund
    - Much lower volumes than with DWP

2011/2012 (Full Year)	<b>Crisis Loan Living Expenses</b>	<b>Community Care Grants</b>
Awards & applications rounded to nearest 10		
<b>Number of Applications received</b>	11,240	3,530
<b>Total expenditure</b>	£446,400	£813,300
<b>Number of Awards</b>	8,390	1,600

- 1964 CSG applications in first six months (£159,000 paid out)



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## Which reforms and what impact?

- Discretionary Housing Payments
  - Applications now over 2,000 (727 in whole of 2012/13)
  - Expecting a seasonal rise in applications
  - Spending for first six months was £159,620
  - Budget £798,643, hence reviewing cases of
    - rent arrears
    - admin fees when paying a bond/rent in advance
    - DWP benefit is sanctioned
    - Under 35's
    - Excess income
    - Non-priority debts



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## Universal Credit

- National roll-out did not take place in October 2013 (original timescale)
- Further 'pilots' taking place (now six)
- Rugby went 'live' 25 November
- Straightforward cases
  - Generally 18-25 year olds living at 'home'
- Government has announced for pension age claims: *'Housing Benefit scheme will therefore need to remain in place until at least the financial year 2017/18'*



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## Joining up across Council Services

### Benefits

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)
- Community Support Grant (CSG)
- Crisis Grant
- Foodbank referrals

### Children's Services

- Section 17
- Free School Meals
- No Recourse to Public Funds (accommodation and living expenses)
- Temporary Accommodation
- Emergency Duty Team

### Housing

- Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- Temporary Accommodation
- Bond Scheme

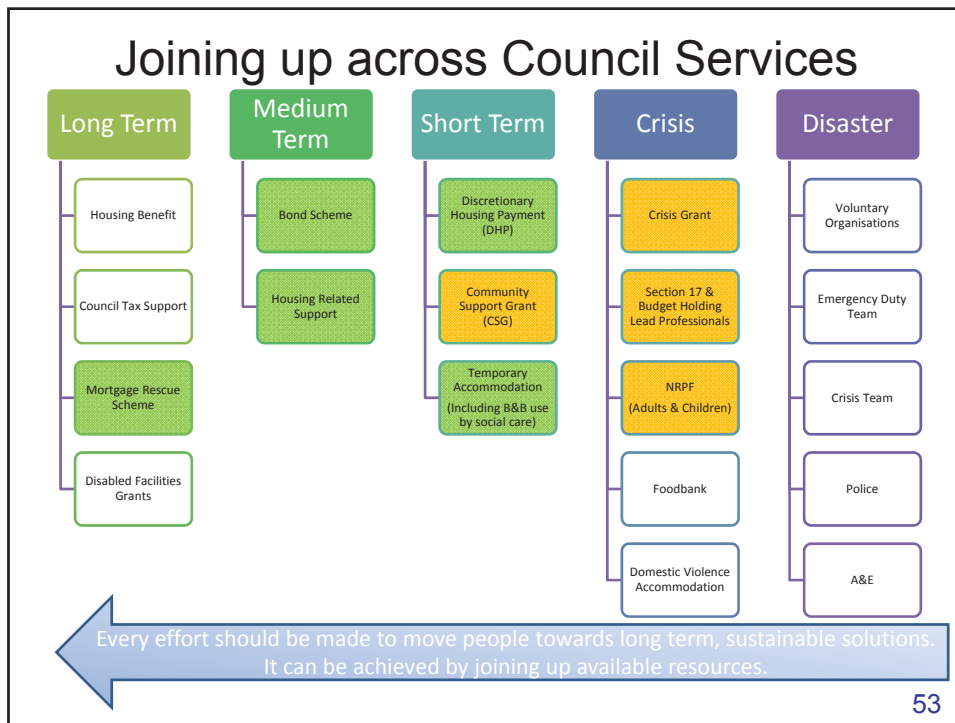
### Adult Social Care

- Blue Badge
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- No Recourse to Public Funds (if eligible for Social Care services)
- Housing related support
- Crisis Team

### Sustainability

- Jobs Team (Job Shop and Support for Families Project)
- LEP
- Friargate

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## Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

### Work Programme 2013/14

*For more details on items, please see pages 2 onwards*

#### 10<sup>th</sup> July 13

- Alcohol Strategy
- Olympic Legacy Scrutiny Panel
- Outside Bodies reports back
- Review of Coventry Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Aug 13

- Equalities
- Equalities in Employment
- Changes to the Constitution

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 13

- Houses in Multiple Occupation Task and Finish group
- Conference Reports –
  - Civic Visit to Volgograd
  - Delegation to City of Volgograd
  - Presentation to the European Union
  - Civic Visit to Kiel

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Oct 13

- Council Wide Marmot Plan
- Statutory Advisor on Health

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 13

- Built Environment Enforcement
- Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse services

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 13

- Welfare Reform

#### 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 14

- Public Safety Services
- Evaluating Asset Based Working in Coventry
- Effectiveness and quality of recent consultation exercises carried out by Coventry City Council

#### 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 14

#### 19<sup>th</sup> March 14

#### 16<sup>th</sup> April 14

#### Date to be identified

- Review of Coventry Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership Annual Report
- Monitoring of new Neighbourhood working model
- Transition between Children's and Adult's Social Care
- Immigrant communities – access to healthcare and support services, promoting values
- Asset Based Working
- Organisational Change

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/14

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
10 <sup>th</sup> July 13	Alcohol Strategy	Jane Moore/ Olivia Taylor	Alcohol has wide ranging impacts on people and communities particularly in relation to health and community safety. A draft Alcohol Strategy has been prepared for consideration by the Community Safety Partnership and Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services) setting out the position in Coventry and proposals for action and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee will contribute to this.	Informal Scrucoco meeting 10/06/13
	Olympic Legacy Scrutiny Panel	Gennie Holmes	To feedback and report on progress on the work of the task and finish group established following the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance) meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2012. A progress report was presented to Scrucoco at their meeting on 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2013.	Scrucoco 17/4/13
	Outside Bodies reports back	Scrutiny Officer	To identify which outside bodies appointed to by the Council at their annual general meeting report to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and other Scrutiny Boards.	Annual review
	Review of Coventry Community Safety Partnership (CSP)	Sara Roach	To present to the Board the proposed changes to the CSP requested by the Police and Crime Commissioner	Informal Scrucoco meeting 10/06/13
7 <sup>th</sup> Aug 13	Equalities	Jenni Venn/ Surindar Nagra	To review the Council's annual equalities report and identify any priorities or concerns for future action or review.	Informal Scrucoco meeting 10/06/13
	Equalities in Employment	Shokat Lal	This item will look at the diversity of the Council's workforce and how the Council is encouraging a more diverse workforce. Referred to Scrucoco for monitoring from CM(Equalities and Community Safety)	CM(Equalities and Community Safety)
	Changes to the Constitution	Christine Forde/ Carol Bradford	For the Board to discuss and comment on proposed changes to the Constitution	
11 <sup>th</sup> Sept 13	Houses in Multiple Occupation Task and Finish group	Gennie Holmes/ Vicky Castree	To feedback and report on progress on the work of the task and finish group established following the Scrucoco meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	Scrucoco 20/3/13

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/14

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
	Conference Reports – - Civic Visit to Volgograd - Delegation to City of Volgograd - Presentation to the European Union - Civic Visit to Kiel	Cllr Sawdon, Cllr Crookes, Cllr J Mutton	Conference reports for several civic visits.	
9 <sup>th</sup> Oct 13	Council Wide Marmot Plan	Jane Moore	To review the Council's work as one of the Marmot Cities to improve life chances and reduce health inequalities	Informal Scrucro meeting 10/06/13
	Statutory Advisor on Health	Jane Moore	To review the role and impact of the Director of Public Health's responsibilities as the Council's Statutory Advisor on Health	Informal Scrucro meeting 10/06/13
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov 13	Built Environment Enforcement	Sara Roach	To review the effectiveness of initiatives to ensure that enforcement activity (across housing, planning, environment and community safety) is effectively joined up to deliver the best outcomes for local people and the environment, including the work of the Strategic Built Environment Group. This could include information on how the issue of empty properties is being addressed.	Informal Scrucro meeting 10/06/13
	Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse services	Sara Roach/ Mandie Watson	An update on progress since the Streets and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2012, to include an update on progress on actions and any further actions from the recent SCR's.	SB4 Meeting 21/11/12
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 13	Welfare Reform	Simon Brake	To consider the approach the Council and partners are taking to co-ordinate services and support for those people affected by Welfare Reform. To include: current position; financial impact on the Council (including Discretionary Housing Payments and the Community Support Grant); impact on individuals, communities and the city. Also links to Credit Unions, Making Every Contact Count and Marmot.	

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 14	Public Safety Services	Sara Roach	To contribute to a review of risk levels and thresholds for intervention as part of review of how the service operates and engages with local people.	Informal Scruco meeting 10/06/13
	Evaluating Asset Based Working in Coventry	Cat Parker	At his meeting of 9 <sup>th</sup> July, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities) considered a proposal for the future of Neighbourhood Working proposals and requested that Scrutiny support the development and monitoring of performance measures for the new Community Development Service. This will include progress on Asset Based Working including evaluation.	Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities) 09/07/13
	Effectiveness and quality of recent consultation exercises carried out by Coventry City Council	Helen Shankster	To consider issues raised in a report prepared for the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) on the effectiveness and quality of recent consultation exercises, and particularly the role of elected members in promoting good consultation practice	Chair of Scruco
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 14				
19 <sup>th</sup> March 14				
16 <sup>th</sup> April 14				
Date to be identified	Review of Coventry Partnership	Jenni Venn	To review the current priorities and working model of the Coventry Partnership in the context of new national and local initiatives including the LEP	Scruco 17/4/13
	Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	Mandie Watson	The Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership as well as the strategic assessment informing priorities for working	
	Monitoring of new Neighbourhood working model	Sara Roach/ Jane Moore	To look at the development and monitoring of performance measures for the new service, following the changes to neighbourhood working towards an asset based approach. Referred for monitoring by Cabinet at their meeting on 9/7/13	Cabinet 9/7/13

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/14

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
	Transition between Children's and Adult's Social Care			SB2 2012/13
	Immigrant communities – access to healthcare and support services, promoting values		Prompted by Referral and Assessment Service visit by Scrutiny Board 2 during 2012/13	Prompted by RAS visit SB2 2012/13
	Asset Based Working	Jane Moore	To contribute to the development of asset based working to create more resilient communities.	Informal Scruco meeting 10/06/13
	Organisational Change		To scrutinise the impact of the significant organisational change being planned with the creation of the People and Resources Directorates.	All Scrutiny Members meeting 26/6/13

In addition the following dates are “if required” 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> April

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