



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 8th October 2014

Subject: Welfare Reform – The Impact of Benefit Sanctions on People in Coventry

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To introduce a report and presentation from the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the report and presentation.
 - 2) Support the continued work of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group
 - 3) Receive further updates on progress of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group as part of the work programme
 - 4) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Government has introduced wide scale changes to the welfare system. 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.
- 3.2 At their meeting on 11th December 2013, Scrutiny Co-ordination dedicated the whole of their meeting to the subject of welfare reform. Areas covered at the meeting were:
- 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
 - The impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities
- Scruco requested further updates on progress of the group.
- 3.3 Several of the organisations involved in the Working Together on Welfare Reform have undertaken research on the impact of sanctions and how to address some of the issues. The report can be found at Appendix 1, a presentation on the work of the Working Together on Welfare Reform and their strategy and key priorities can be found at Appendix 2 and 3.

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