



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 11 January 2017

Subject: Welfare Reform

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on changes to the welfare system, the impact on people in Coventry and the work of partners.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:
- 1) Consider and note the content of the briefing
 - 2) Make any comments or recommendations to the appropriate Cabinet Member

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Since the Government introduced wide scale changes to the welfare system, successive Scrutiny Coordination Committees have reviewed progress and impacts and the aim of their consideration of the Welfare Reform agenda has particularly been to explore:
- 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?
- 3.2 In addition to officers from the Council's Benefits Team, representatives of the city's Welfare Reform Working Together Group, made up of agencies from across the City, have been invited to attend. Information contained within the attached documents includes:
- Appendix 1 – Briefing note highlighting recent changes to Universal Credit, the Benefit Cap, the effects on Coventry and use of Discretionary Housing Payments and Community Support Grants;
 - Appendix 2 – Distribution of potential impacts Benefit Cap changes;
 - Appendix 3 – Summary of benefit changes made in 2016 and timetable of future changes 2017/18
 - Appendix 4 – Coventry Working Together on Welfare Reform Action Plan.
 - Appendix 5 – Communications Plan for changes to benefit cap.
 - Appendix 6 – Benefits Cap Case Studies

