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**To**  
Cabinet

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012

**Subject**

Health, Social Care and Welfare Reform Scrutiny Board (5) consideration of the report relating to the introduction of a Community Support Grants Policy.

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the Health, Social Care and Welfare Reform Scrutiny Board (5)'s recommendation and issues raised following their consideration of the report of the Director of Finance Legal Services detailing the Community Support Grants Policy on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board recommended that Cabinet support the policy and proposals outlined in the report.

Cabinet are asked to note the issues raised by the Scrutiny Board:

- i) That the policy should be kept under review following its implementation
- ii) That the Scrutiny Board's Welfare Reform Sub Group would continue to work with officers and other key stakeholders around the wider implications of Welfare Reform changes to the City and the local response to them.

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Board considered the report outlining the proposed introduction of a Community Support Grants scheme at their December meeting. The Board held a full discussion with officers about both the proposals being made and aspects of the crisis loans and community care grants delivered by the Department of Work and Pensions which the new scheme will replace.
- 3.2 The discussion included the following...
- The discretionary nature of the policy and the importance of fairness and consistency in its application.
  - The relative costs of the administration of the grants compared to the total amount of grant.
  - The impact of the Government reduction in resources available for this support.
  - Potential arrangements for supporting families with emergency support for fuel bills.
  - Issues related to the policy not including cash payments.

- The ability of the policy to be flexible in particular circumstances, for example when women are fleeing domestic violence.
- How officers would manage the Council's responsibilities in circumstances whereby the budget became overspent.
- The ability of officers to tweak the scheme in the event of not all aspects of it being right first time.

3.3 Whilst the Board was supportive of the proposals outlined in the report being implemented, they were mindful that this is only a part of the wider changes to the welfare support available in the City and referred this issue to their Sub Group which will continue to work with officers supporting them in the implementation of the new policy.

Briefing Note Author:

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18<sup>th</sup> December 2012.