

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting24th April 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the findings of the review of welfare reform and financial inclusion. The review was undertaken by Housing and Community Safety Select Committee. The review considered issues in relation to the impact of welfare reform in the Borough, Universal Credit, benefit sanctions, food poverty, crisis support and wider issues around financial inclusion.

Further scrutiny work would take place on this topic during 2014-15.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Further scrutiny work should take place during 2014-15 to continue to review the impact of welfare reform. This phase of work should include particular reference to Universal Credit including fraud investigation, food poverty, advice and information, and the local housing market.
2. The indicators used in the welfare monitoring framework are kept under review, and that consideration is given to including the workload of the animal welfare service as an additional measure, alongside the existing indicators including child protection activity.
3. The joint working across Council and partner agencies (including third sector and Registered Providers) to mitigate the effects of welfare changes and support residents should be supported and continued in future phases of reform.
4. Where appropriate, the Council and partners raise awareness of the advice available to residents who have had their benefits sanctioned, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups.
5. The Council should raise awareness of sustainable financial

solutions for local residents, including advice, alternatives to high cost credit, and information on enforcement agencies including the Illegal Money Lending Team.

6. All Members should be provided with an information pack outlining the range of services available to residents that support the financial inclusion agenda.

7. Stockton Council and partners sign up to the Stockton Stop Loan Sharks charter and when implementing the Charter, particular emphasis should be given to raising awareness of the Illegal Money Lending Team, within targeted communities where appropriate.

8. A sustainable future for the 'Back on Track' funding and alternative methods of delivering 'crisis/short term' support is identified, and this be considered as part of the future scrutiny work on welfare reform.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report presents the findings of the scrutiny review that took place as part of the agreed work programme for 2013-14.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion as she was as she was the Chair SDAIS.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion as she was as he was a member of SDAIS.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 2nd May 2014

Proper Officer
28 April 2014