

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th July 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Welfare Reform Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Welfare Reform Update - Quarter 4 2014/15.

The report presented an update on monitoring of the outcomes / impact of Welfare Reform, a summary of actions undertaken to mitigate against circumstances arising from the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act and details of the plans to further develop a Family Poverty Strategy. The report also advised Members of the outcome of a review of Advice and Information Services (Stockton Advice and Information Services and the Welfare Rights Team).

To support the ILG research work, the basket of monitoring indicators was attached to the report that they had developed had been entirely included within the refreshed monitoring framework with each of those measures clearly labelled.

Measures used to track impact were attached to the report. The revised monitoring framework was set out under the following issues:-

- Advice and Information Services;
- Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Social Fund/Crisis Payments;
- Housing;
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme;
- Employment; and
- General / cross cutting.

As part of the review of customer perceptions the satisfaction levels of customers using SDAIS and WRU had been looked at as well as carrying out a Members' survey, details of which were attached to the report..

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The performance monitoring outcomes and observations provided be noted.
3. It be noted that the Family Poverty Strategy is being further developed and will be presented to Cabinet for approval later in 2015.
4. The recommendations be noted from a review of Advice and Information Services contained within the report; which are to:-
 - a. Award funding of £45,394 from the Welfare Reform Resource budget to allow the Stockton Welfare Advice Network (SWAN) project to continue for a further year;
 - b. Award a direct contract to SDAIS under Section 5 of the Contract Procedure Rules Exception due to the specialist nature of the service;
 - c. Savings have been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan in relation to advice and information services. It is not proposed to realise these savings within the next two years and to call on funding from the one-off Welfare Reform Resource budget. Additionally it is proposed that a further £70,000 is awarded to fund the additional capacity in Welfare Rights and SDAIS until end March 2017; and
 - d. Move the Welfare Rights Team from Children, Education and Social Care into the Housing and Community Protection Division within Development and Neighbourhood Services.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report provided an update on the various welfare reforms, highlighting early indications of impact and areas of concern.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a person, prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Welfare Reform Update – Q4 2014-15 as she was a board member of SDAIS. Councillor Mrs McCoy withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

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

24th July 2015

Proper Officer
20 July 2015