

Item 6.1

RECOMMENDATIONS

This short inquiry was undertaken to provide a snapshot of the current position with regard to mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform in Cardiff. Members recognise that significant and far-reaching work has been undertaken by Cardiff Council and partner agencies and Members wish to pay tribute to all those who have worked hard to achieve so much in so short a time. In order to build on this work, Members recommend that the Cabinet:

Raising Awareness

R1. Task officers to ensure that primary school head teachers are briefed fully on the impact of Welfare Reform and where to signpost to find support.

Supported by Key Findings 5 & 8

R2. Task officers to enhance the communications and marketing campaign by: making it clearer that people in low-income work are affected by Welfare Reform; including signposting on literature that flyers and leaflets are available in community languages; including flyers in Council Tax reminder letters; exploring whether a better price could be negotiated for advertising on Cardiff Bus; ensuring that posters and flyers are displayed in libraries; and updating the Welfare Reform section on the website to include signposting to disability advice agencies and information on Child Benefit changes and Local Housing Allowance uplift rates.

Supported by Key Findings 16, 17 & 18

R3. Ensure that the review of the Council's website that is currently underway results in the facility for users to translate content into community languages.

Supported by Key Finding 18

Improving Partnership Working

- R4. Ensure that the Children's Services and Education Services service areas and the Economic Development section fully participate in the welfare reform task group and relevant sub-groups.
Supported by Key Findings 5 & 8
- R5. Task officers to work with specific impairment groups and be guided by them to ensure that the requirements of people with impairments are met, with regard to accessible communication, digital inclusion and economic activity.
Supported by Key Findings 8, 14 & 18
- R6. Task officers to ensure that the focus of the Welfare Reform task group includes work to support all partners, including the third sector, to cope with the impact of welfare reform.
Supported by Key Finding 6
- R7. Ensure that the process followed in 2013/14 to develop budgetary proposals involves on-going meaningful conversations with partners, including the third sector, in order to develop co-owned solutions and to ensure partners affected by savings proposals have time to properly plan for these.
Supported by Key Finding 20

Boosting Economic Activity Opportunities

- R8. Ensure that the Council's Commissioning and Procurement processes are creatively utilised to deliver economic activity opportunities as a community benefit whenever possible.
Supported by Key Finding 8
- R9. Task officers to work with partners to ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place for disabled people starting work with the Council and that the work is appropriate and properly remunerated.
Supported by Key Findings 8 & 18

Meeting need in 2013/14

- R10. Reflect on recent announcements from the Government regarding foster carers and whether they are subject to the 'bedroom tax' and ensure that, if required, all foster carers who are eligible for Discretionary Housing Payments receive these, irrespective of whether they are temporary foster carers offering regular respite or permanent foster carers.

Supported by Key Finding 13

Prepare for 2014 onwards

- R11. Task officers to explore every avenue to find alternative funds or solutions to meet the needs of those currently receiving Discretionary Housing Payments, in recognition that this funding may not continue beyond 2013-14.

Supported by Key Finding 13

- R12. Task officers to reflect upon and utilise the lessons coming from DWP pilots covering digital inclusion and direct payments, including looking at the training offered to frontline staff in libraries and hubs.

Supported by Key Finding 14

- R13. Task officers to explore the usefulness of becoming a pilot for Pension Credit and of participating in an extension of the Fast Track pilot currently underway in Caerphilly Borough County Council.

Supported by Key Finding 23

- R14. Task officers to take account of future Government announcements with regard to Welfare Reform, including the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and ensure that appropriate measures to alleviate the impact of these are considered and implemented.

Supported by Key Findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 9 & 10

- R15. Continue to discuss and negotiate with the Welsh Government with regard to the impact that Welfare Reform has in Cardiff and work that

Welsh Government can do to assist in the mitigation of this in Cardiff and across Wales.

Supported by all Key Findings

The Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee invites the Cabinet to accept the above recommendations and in their response, detail the work to be undertaken for those recommendations that are accepted and, if any recommendations are rejected, the reasons for this.

In addition, the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee recognise that, due to the cross-cutting nature of Welfare Reform, several areas that have arisen as part of this Inquiry fall within the remit of other scrutiny committees. Members therefore request that:

- R16. The Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum considers how best to undertake budget scrutiny in 2013-14.

- R17. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee considers the need to scrutinise the interface between the Council and the voluntary sector, particularly with regards to grant arrangements and bearing in mind the evidence submitted to this Inquiry.

- R18. The Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee considers the need to investigate the role the Council plays in working with partners to boost the opportunities for economic activity including: training, sponsorships, apprenticeships, internships and job opportunities, particularly those flowing from major projects and developments in Cardiff.

The Committee recommends that the future Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee includes in its work programme for 2013-14 a six month update on the impact of Welfare Reform and the relevant budget decisions, to include inviting evidence from organisations affected by budget savings.