



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – Impact of the Welfare Reform Act

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To evaluate the effect of the Welfare Reform Act on the public and Council employees.

2. Outcomes Required

- To make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform in Northampton.

3. Information Required

- Background data
- Background reports and presentation
- Best practice data
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from residents

4. Format of Information

- Background data:
 - Presentation setting the Scene: - The policy context and timetable for change.
 - Presentation - An overview of the national Welfare Reforms: Setting a baseline position and measuring impacts
- Centre for Public Scrutiny's Policy Briefing 19– Welfare Reform (September 2012)

- Centre for Public Scrutiny's briefing Paper - The local impacts of the introduction of Universal Credit and the wider welfare reforms (August 2013)
- Kensington and Chelsea Social Council's report – Change for Children - A study of local families in Kensington and Chelsea (2013)
- Various relevant published papers from organisations such as, Rowntree Trust, Child Poverty Action Group, SHELTER
- Witness Evidence:
 - Cabinet Member for Housing, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
 - Housing Advice Service, NBC
 - Head of Benefits and Revenues, NBC
 - Cabinet Member for Finance, NBC
 - Head of Customer and Cultural Services, NBC
 - Community Law
 - Citizen's Advice Bureau, Northampton
 - Northamptonshire Credit Union Ltd
 - Home-Start, Northampton
 - Thorplands Sure Start Centre, Northampton
 - Blackthorn Good Neighbours, Northampton
 - SIL Officers, Northamptonshire County Council/Charity Link
 - Northampton Food Banks via Community Foundation
 - Oasis House, Northampton, including organisations: Midland Heart, NAASH
 - Northampton Salvation Army
 - St Vincent de Paul Society
 - Case studies from a variety of residents
 - Case studies from a variety of constituents via ward Councillors
- Best practice examples from a range of local services and other Local Authorities, in particular, a Local Authority that is piloting Universal Credit

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Questionnaires (completion by residents)

- Core questions (expert advisers)
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-

➤ Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

6. Co-Options to the Review

None identified for this review.

7 Community Impact Assessment

- A Community Impact Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

January 2014 - July 2014

- 9 January 2014 - Scoping meeting
- 3 February - Evidence gathering
- 20 March - Evidence gathering
- 14 April - Evidence gathering
- 8 May - Evidence gathering
- 30 June - Evidence gathering
- 21 July - Approval of the final report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

9. Responsible Officers

Lead Officers Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities

Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

10. Resources and Budgets

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities, to provide internal advice.

11. Final report presented by:

Completed by 21 July 2014. Presented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

12. Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (March 2015)