

Council – 15 January 2007

Review of the Welfare Rights Service – Council motion to review the status.

Service Area: Corporate Services

Wards: All

Summary of report

On 6 November 2006 Council moved the following motion concerning the Welfare Rights Service:

This Council therefore supports the longstanding and widely accepted principle that our Welfare Rights Service could be best placed as an independent trust. This would enable the service to attract significant additional external funding and to increase the remit to work on a broader anti-poverty front. This model should be underpinned from the current Council budget and could bring a more proactive approach to best utilise and add value to current resources.

This Council therefore tasks the scrutiny process to review options to establish whether this would be beneficial to this Council and to the citizens of Walsall and if so that all endeavours are undertaken to effect this change of status to be in place by April 2007, and make recommendations in order to maximise the positive impacts for the citizens of Walsall.

The Corporate Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel considered this matter at their meeting on 14 December 2006 and resolved the following:

Officers to engage outside consultants to undertake a comprehensive options appraisal to identify whether it is in the best interests of Walsall Council for the Welfare Rights Service to become an Independent Trust
Officers to identify resources to pay for the work of the consultants

Recommendations

(1) To note that consultants are to be engaged to undertake a comprehensive options appraisal to identify whether it is in the best interests of Walsall Council for the Welfare Rights Service to become an Independent Trust.

Resource and legal considerations

The council must comply with the council's finance and contract procedure rules. It is also good practice to comprehensively and objectively examine options and implications and this is to be done via a business options appraisal. Any decision to change the status of the Welfare Rights Service will have resource and legal considerations. These issues will be explored as an integral part of the options appraisal.

Citizen impact

The Welfare Rights Service seeks to maximise benefits for Walsall residents and alleviate poverty.

Environmental impact

None directly as a result of this report.

Performance and risk management issues

The options appraisal seeks to identify how the aims of the Welfare Rights Service could be further developed.

Equality implications

Alleviation of poverty contributes to reducing inequalities.

Consultation

This report has been prepared following consultation with officers and discussion at the Corporate Service Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

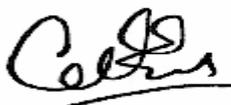
The work towards production of the options appraisal will include consultation with various stakeholders.

Background papers

Minutes of Council 6 November 2006

Draft minutes of the Corporate Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel 14 December 2006

Signed:



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Date: 5 January 2007

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