



Resident Experience Board
21 July 2015

Welfare Reform

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

1. At the meeting of Council Overview Board on 3 June 2015, the Welfare Reform Task Group reported their findings and recommendations.
2. Overall, the Task Group was generally satisfied that Surrey County Council was prepared for the reforms, however they remained very concerned about the impact the changes to the welfare benefits system continues to have on the residents of Surrey.
3. Throughout the discussion it became clear that the next steps for the Welfare Reform Task Group should be clearly linked with the work programme for the new Resident Experience Board. For example, one of the main considerations for the future was the use of libraries as a frontline service for those seeking benefits advice. The importance of training staff to be prepared for the queries and questions residents might have in light of the reforms was highlighted.
4. When making their recommendations there were two that specifically referenced the Resident Experience Board, and these are detailed below:
 - That careful consideration be given to the role of Libraries as a 'gateway to County services' when developing a vision for the future of the Surrey Library Service and that the Resident Experience Board (previously Communities Select Committee) continues to monitor the progress
 - The Welfare Reform Task Group should continue for a further year, meeting quarterly to monitor the impact of the reforms. The Chairman of the Task Group to engage with the Resident Experience Board to carry out future work.

Next Steps and Recommendations

The Resident Experience Board is asked to discuss, with the Chairman of the Welfare Reform Task Group, the next steps, milestones and activities for the Task Group during the next 12 months.

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Sources/background papers: Report of the Welfare Reform Task Group, Council Overview Board, 3 June 2015 Report of the Welfare Reform Task Group, Council Overview Board, 3 June 2015