

# Building a Strong Economy Scrutiny Committee

1 December 2008

## Update in relation to work undertaken in collaboration with JobCentre Plus



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### Report of Feisal Jassat, Head of Overview and Scrutiny

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#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 Provide an update to Members in relation to the work undertaken in collaboration with JobCentre Plus and to outline how Economy Scrutiny will work in partnership with JobCentre Plus in the future.
- 2 To ensure that Members fully understand the changes in the benefit system which is particularly timely in the current economic climate.

#### Background

- 3 At a previous meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2008 a presentation was given by Jon Clapham, Local Partnership Manager, JobCentre Plus stating the planned changes to the existing benefit system outlined in the consultation document 'No-one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' together with a copy of the executive summary.
- 4 The consultation period concluded on 22 October 2008 and Members of the Economy Scrutiny Committee were given the opportunity to contribute to the response of the Authority, with a copy of the draft response sent to Members and Co-optees for consideration and comment.
- 5 The response from the Authority was considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 9 October 2008.

#### Update

- 6 Discussions have taken place with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy Scrutiny Committee and colleagues from JobCentre Plus, as to how to progress this collaborative work. Following these discussions it has been agreed that a series of visits should be arranged to JobCentre Plus giving Members the opportunity to see a modern JobCentre in action and to speak to staff about the changes in the benefit system outlined in the consultation paper (as some of the changes will be in place from October 2008).
- 7 The visits to JobCentre Plus have been arranged for the 9 and 19 December 2008 commencing at 10.00 a.m. and concluding at approximately 12 Noon with all Members and Co-optees of the Economy Scrutiny Committee invited to select which session they will be able to attend.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- 8 Following the visits scheduled for the 9 and 19 December 2008, the Economy Scrutiny Committee will need to determine how it wishes to progress collaborative working with JobCentre Plus.

## **Recommendations**

- That the report be noted.
- That following the visits scheduled for the 9 and 19 December, the Economy Scrutiny Committee determines how it will progress collaborative working with JobCentre Plus.

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