



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Response to Notice of Motion re: Welfare Reform
Date:	25th April, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6414)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The Council at its meeting on 1st March, 2012, agreed the following Notice of Motion:</p> <p>“This Council believes that the Coalition Government’s welfare cuts and major aspects of their Welfare Reform agenda are having and will continue to have a significant detrimental impact on the citizens of Belfast; recognises the impact will be more severe for Northern Ireland and our city's citizens given our historically high levels of disadvantage, higher proportion of families with children and of individuals in receipt of Disability Living Allowance; notes that the accumulated cost of welfare cuts to the local economy could reach £450m; calls on the Assembly to establish an ad-hoc committee to undertake detailed scrutiny of the upcoming universal credit bill and related issues; and further calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to make opposition to a wide range of the welfare reforms the highest Executive priority and to immediately pursue robust negotiations with the Coalition Government to pursue all possible legal and operational flexibilities and financial support to mitigate the impact of welfare cuts and changes imposed on Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular.”</p>

2.1	Key Issues
2.1	Correspondence has been received from Mr. J. Reynolds, Head of Poverty, Social Inclusion, Disability Branch, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister advising that tackling disadvantage was a key priority for the Executive and an essential element in the draft Programme for Government. Ministers had therefore included in the Programme a commitment to establish an advisory group, to assist in alleviating hardship including any implications of the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Programme.
3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no implications associated with this report.

4.0	Equality Implications
4.1	There are no Equality Considerations associated with this report.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to note the receipt of the correspondence.

6.0	Decision Tracking
Mr Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer April, 2012.	

7.0	Recommendations
	Appendix 1 – Response from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister