

**Report To: Full Council**

**Date of Meeting: 10 June 2014**

**Lead Member / Officer: Cllr Huw Irving, Lead Member**

**Report Author: Sarah Lamberton, Project Manager, Financial Inclusion Together**

**Title: Making financial inclusion everyone's business - an introduction to the FIT Project**

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**1. What is the report about?**

Financial Inclusion Together (FIT) is a Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board project funded through the European Social Fund. This report will provide an overview of the project and explore how Councillors can benefit from getting involved in the project.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information regarding the FIT project and encourage Council members to participate in one of its financial inclusion awareness raising sessions, so that they in turn can provide greater support to local constituents.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the report is noted.

**4. Report details.**

Financial Inclusion Together is supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government. The project aims to tackle poverty by developing, coordinating and promoting financial inclusion services within Local Service Board (LSB) organisations across Conwy and Denbighshire.

**What is financial inclusion?**

It's about ensuring everyone has the opportunity to access the financial advice, services and products needed to participate fully in society. Welsh Government have identified 5 key themes:

- Access to mainstream Financial Services
- Financial capability (including digital inclusion)
- Accessible financial and debt advice
- Income maximisation (including energy efficiency)
- Access to affordable credit and loans

## **Aims of the Project**

- To improve the strategic co-ordination and collaboration of services across Conwy and Denbighshire to ensure that financial inclusion is integrated and embedded into the normal service delivery of relevant public, private and third sector organisations.
- To improve access to quality financial inclusion information and advice services which will ensure that people in Conwy and Denbighshire are empowered to manage a challenging economic future.

## **What the project is doing**

One key objective of the project is to provide at least 1000 front line workers in LSB partner organisations with the financial inclusion knowledge and resources necessary to empower people they have contact with to be financially included.

To do this the FIT project is delivering awareness raising sessions to anyone working in the frontline who could assist in providing information on, or make quality referrals for in depth advice around financial inclusion.

The project is also building a legacy of actions within LSB partner organisations that will continue to embed financial inclusion practice once the project has ended (in December 2014).

## **How can Councillors benefit from getting involved with the project and attending one of the awareness raising sessions?**

- Appendix 1 provides an overview of the learning outcomes and objectives participants can expect to achieve from attending an awareness raising session.
- Appendix 2 provides detail on session dates available and how to book a place.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

This is a preventative project which aims to tackle poverty in the community; it helps frontline staff to assist people to better manage in a challenging economic climate.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

As the project is funded through the European Social Fund, there is no cost to the Council.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

The EqIA for the FIT project's awareness raising sessions is attached as Appendix 3. No decisions are being made in this report that require conclusions from the EqIA.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Not required.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

*Not required*

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

N/A

**11. Power to make the Decision**

No decision is required.