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**Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development**

**Report to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**Subject: Improving communications aimed at tackling illegal money lending – working group summary note**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Purpose of this report**

1. At its July meeting, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board raised concern about illegal money lending activity within Leeds and expressed an interest in undertaking further Scrutiny of the activities being undertaken by the Council and its partners to address this issue. The Board therefore received a report in September from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) which summarised the work already undertaken by the Council and its partners, including the national Illegal Money Lending Team. It also provided details of a Leeds action plan that had been developed by the Illegal Money Lending Team in conjunction with the Council and other partners.
2. The Scrutiny Board welcomed the level of activity being undertaken in addressing illegal money lending in Leeds. However, it was felt that communications surrounding this area of work needed to be improved. A suggestion was therefore made to develop a separate communications workstream/plan linked to the Leeds Action Plan.
3. The Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake a separate piece of work to explore how the Council can assist the Illegal Money Lending Team in raising the profile of existing advice and support services and encourage more residents to report illegal money lending activity. The Board agreed to hold an initial working group meeting to which all Board Members would be invited to attend. This meeting took place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

4. The attached summary note sets out the key issues arising from this working group meeting and also presents proposed recommendations from the working group for consideration by the Scrutiny Board.

### **Recommendations**

5. Members are asked to consider the working group's key findings and proposed recommendations set out within the attached summary note and formally agree the Board's recommendations in relation to this piece of Scrutiny work.

### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

6. None used.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.