

Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 11 January 2023. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener (until Article 6); and Councillors Bonsell, Brooks, Clark, Davidson, Delaney (as substitute for Councillor Bouse, from Article 6), Farquhar (as substitute for Councillor McLeod), Graham, Greig, Houghton, Hutchison, Mennie and Watson.

External Advisers: - Evan Adamson (Instant Neighbour); Dr John Bone (University of Aberdeen), Sophy Green (Chief Executive of Instant Neighbour); Maggie Hepburn (Chief Executive of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations); and Phil Mackie (NHS Grampian).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. Members were requested to intimate any Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements in respect of the items on the agenda.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Convener advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 9.1 (Child Poverty Action Plan Annual Statutory Report) and 9.2 (Six monthly update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions) as he was an appointed representative to Aberdeen Foyer, Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) Board and Grampian Regional Equality Council, however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items; and
- (ii) to note that Councillor Brooks advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda item 9.1 as he was founder and Chairman of the TLC Charity which was part of the Trussell Trust family of food banks however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the item.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER 2022

2. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 23 November 2022.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the information requested previously regarding zero hours contracts for Aberdeen City Council, Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) and partners

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

11 January 2023

- was in hand and would be circulated to members in due course once all the information had been received from partners; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business, as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that there would be a Committee visit to CFINE arranged, in advance of the next meeting, with further details to be intimated to Members; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the Planner.

CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL STATUTORY REPORT - CUS/23/011

4. The Committee had before it a report from Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment that provided an update on the progress made in developing the Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022-2026 and the work being undertaken to ensure its alignment with the Children's Services Plan.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note progress in developing the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 and further work to finalise and ensure alignment with the Children's Services Plan by March 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Locality Inclusion Manager to circulate a link to the Scottish Government's analysis of Child Poverty Action Plans;
- (ii) to note that the Convenor and Vice Convenor would meet with their counterparts for the Education and Children's Services Committee; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

SIX MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS - CUS/23/017

5. The Committee had before it a report from the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, that provided an update on the work agreed through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Department of Work and Pensions.

The report recommended:

that the Committee note the report.

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

11 January 2023

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES - CUS/23/012

6. The Committee had before it a report from Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment that presented an approach to developing a Citizens' Assembly in Aberdeen with a particular focus on gender inequality and other inequalities all arising from poverty.

The Locality Inclusion Manager – Central, and Solicitor – Governance, responded to questions from members regarding comparative work, reflecting the demographic of the city and how to ensure participants were reimbursed for any loss of earnings and childcare or carer costs.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

- (a) agree the principles for a Citizens' Assembly described in the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer Early - Intervention and Community Empowerment, to further develop plans for a Citizens' Assembly including potential topics for the Assembly to consider which may include looking at gender inequality, and report back to the Committee on 10 May 2023, noting that any budget requirements would need to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee; and
- (c) approve the draft Terms of Reference for a Citizens' Assembly as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Empowerment, to circulate information regarding work that had been carried out in respect of tackling stigma to assist those seeking to access services and support; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

UPDATE REPORT ON CURRENT INITIATIVES INCLUDING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS - CUS/23/015

7. The Committee had before it a report from Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, that provided an update on (1) ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; (2) health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, (3) credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services; and (4) a report issued by the Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group on Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

11 January 2023

- (a) note the ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, and credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services;
- (b) note the content of the Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group on Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis report issued in November 2022; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, to further promote the Scottish Welfare Fund and financial wellbeing support through social media to increase awareness.

The Convener moved, seconded by Councillor Greig:-
that the Committee approve the recommendations.

Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Bonsell, moved an amendment:-
that the Committee:-

- (1) note the ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, and credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services;
- (2) note the content of the Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group on Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis report issued in November 2022;
- (3) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, to further promote the Scottish Welfare Fund and financial wellbeing support through social media to increase awareness;
- (4) further agree to do more to maximise take up of the Scottish Welfare Fund, including briefing and circulating information to trade unions, credit unions, food banks and other community organisations; and
- (5) agree that urgent concrete action is required in addition to long term plans, including serious considerations to a freezing council house rents for a further year and agrees to refer this proposal to the budget process.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (10) – the Convener, and Councillors Brooks, Clark, Davidson, Delaney, Greig, Houghton, Hutchison, Farquhar and Mennie; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Bonsell, Graham and Watson.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

CLAWBACK OF BENEFITS PAYMENTS - CUS/23/016

8. The Committee had before it a report from Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment that provided further information on the clawback of benefit payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, as instructed at the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 23 November 2022.

ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE

11 January 2023

Angela Kazmierczak – Financial Inclusion Team Leader, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, spoke to the report and responded to questions from members.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the information provided in the report regarding the clawback of benefit payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Director – Customer Services, to arrange for the Financial Inclusion Team to host a Question and Answer Session for Members; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided.

- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener**