

## **Corporate Policy and Performance Committee – 10 September, 2009**

### **MATTER OF URGENCY**

**The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and in accordance with Standing Orders, that a replacement page submitted by officers in connection with the following item be tabled, as the information contained within had been omitted from the report currently before members for consideration.**

### **ACHIEVING OUR POTENTIAL: TACKLING POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY IN ABERDEEN CITY**

**9.** With reference to the motion put forward by Councillor Kiddie at the Council Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2009, namely, “That Aberdeen City Council agrees to produce an Anti Poverty Strategy”, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which set out the strategy, “Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City” for consideration and approval.

The report advised that the Scottish Government had published a national framework, “Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland” in November, 2008, with the objective of narrowing the gap between the rich and poor in Scotland while building stronger communities. The framework targeted an increase in overall income and proportion earned by the lowest 30% of people as a group by the year 2017, and recognised the benefits a good education, good health and enough money could have on making society more equal.

While Aberdeen was generally perceived as an affluent city, the report advised that growing poverty and disadvantage existed in Aberdeen’s communities. The recent development of the Single Outcome Agreement between Aberdeen City Council and the Scottish Government had provided a basis for setting poverty and inequality as a strategic priority, and it was stressed that the development of an anti-poverty strategy which cut across all policy areas was key to driving forward this commitment.

Appended to the report was the draft anti-poverty strategy, and it was noted that following consideration of the strategy by the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee, the report would be remitted to the other service committees for detailed consideration by Committee members with an overview setting out proposals to address poverty by the Director responsible for each committee.

#### **The report recommended:-**

- (a) that the Committee consider and approve the draft “Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Inequality in Aberdeen City” for wider consultation;
- (b) that the Committee consider an appropriate member to provide the foreword to the strategy and agree the foreword should contain a public statement outlining the commitment of the Council to the eradication of poverty in the city;

- (c) that the Committee agree that an executive summary be included in the final document;
- (d) that the Committee agree to receive a further report setting out the proposed governance arrangements to co-ordinate and monitor anti-poverty activity across Council services and outcomes in communities;
- (e) that the Committee agree that an audit of mainstream council funding should be carried out to identify current cross service expenditure on anti-poverty activity to inform where efficiencies could be identified to invest in improved joint service and commissioning decisions;
- (f) that the Committee agree to remit the draft strategy to the other committees of the Council for consideration and comment, accompanied by the service Director's advice on action from the service to address poverty;
- (g) that the Committee agree to receive a report on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009, due to be published in October, for consideration at a future meeting;
- (h) that the Committee note that a future report would be required to the Finance and Resources Committee on the implications of the un-ringfencing of the Fairer Scotland Fund in 2010-11 which currently funded significant anti-poverty initiatives.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to request that officers circulate the report to the Disability Advisory Group and all other relevant groups for information;
- (ii) to request that officers amend the wording in the appendix 5.3.3 (early years and early intervention) in connection with the provision of free school meals in line with national policy and local need;
- (iii) that due to his interest in the matter, to recommend that Councillor Kiddie provide the foreword to the strategy; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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### **COMMITTEE** CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

**DATE** 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR** PETE LEONARD

**TITLE OF REPORT** Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City

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#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report sets out for consideration and approval “Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City”.

The report has been produced in response to the motion by Councillor Kiddie agreed at the Council meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009 that, “Aberdeen City Council agrees to produce an anti-poverty strategy.”

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**It is recommended that the Committee:**

1. Consider and approve the draft Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income inequality in Aberdeen City for wider consultation (Appendix 1)
2. Consider and agree the appropriate member to provide the foreword to Strategy, and agree the foreword should contain a public statement outlining the commitment of the Council to the eradication of poverty in the City.
3. Agree that an Executive summary is to be included in the final document
4. Agree to receive a further report setting out the proposed governance arrangements to coordinate and monitor anti-poverty activity across council services and outcomes in communities.
5. Agree that an audit of mainstream council funding should be carried out to identify current cross service expenditure on anti-poverty activity to inform where efficiencies can be identified to invest in improved joint service and commissioning decisions.
6. Agree to remit the draft strategy to the other committees of the Council for consideration and comment, accompanied by the service directors’ advice on action from the service to address poverty.
7. Agree to receive a report on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009, due to be published in October, for consideration at a future meeting,
8. To note a future report will be required to Finance and resources Committee on the implications of the un-ring fencing of Fairer Scotland Fund in 2010-11 which currently funds significant anti poverty initiatives.

#### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy will require consideration of resources for the delivery of proposals to tackle poverty. The preparation of the draft strategy has identified areas where there is service fragmentation, gaps and separate commissioning

arrangements which would benefit from further cross service work to improve coherence, customer service and deliver more efficient services. It is recognized that the implementation of the anti-poverty strategy needs to ensure value for money from the existing funding invested in anti poverty interventions and action by the Council and our partners.

#### **4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT**

Aberdeen's Community Plan is based on key principles to ensure a better quality of life for all the people who live and work in the city and contains commitments to 'closing the gap' in income levels and quality of life, that exist within Aberdeen as part of tackling poverty.

Our Single Outcome Agreement commits us to the national outcome "to tackle the significant inequalities in Scottish society" and improving the quality of life for those communities within the City that are most disadvantaged.

Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking further reinforces the Council's commitment to make Aberdeen a better place to live for all citizens and to tackle inequalities in education, economic development, culture, arts and sports, health and care, transport, environment, community safety and housing.

The feedback from our customers and communities presents a disjointed and difficult experience for those trying to access appropriate support and benefits to which they are entitled where there is considerable room for service improvement.

#### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

1. Legal – None arising from this report; initiatives such as support for Credit Unions, whilst permitted in terms of support from public funds, needs to be registered for State Aid compliance.
2. Resources – The Fairer Scotland Fund which is currently ringfenced for application by the Community Planning Partnership will be unringfenced from April 2010. Consideration will need to be given by the Council in conjunction with the Aberdeen City Alliance through the budget setting process to how this funding can be aligned to support our commitments within the Single Outcome Agreement in relation to tackling poverty. In 2010/11 the Fairer Scotland Fund allocated will amount to £2.843 million and will be part of the Grant Aided Expenditure.
3. Failure to tackle poverty not only has a major implication on the quality of life of the individuals and families concerned but also in relation to the direct costs to public expenditure associated with responding to and tackling poverty related issues.
4. Personnel – none arising directly from this report however as a major employer and contractor in the city the Council can play a key role in the recruitment of people from the regeneration areas and to consider setting an example of best practice for other employers.

5. Property – the council are currently upgrading the council housing stock as part of the compliance with the Scottish Quality Housing Standard and other parts of the public sector property portfolio are being upgraded or redeveloped.
6. Equipment – none arising from this report
7. Sustainability and Environment – successfully addressing poverty requires a balanced approach to tackling social, economic and environmental aspects that contribute to achieving sustainable communities.
8. Health and Safety – none arising from this report

## **6. REPORT**

### **6.1 National Context**

In November 2008 the Scottish Government published “Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland.” The objective of this national framework is to narrow the gap between rich and poor in Scotland and build stronger communities.

The main focus is to build a Scotland where we can say that “we have tackled the major inequalities in Scottish Society”. A ‘Solidarity’ target has been set: “to increase the overall income and proportion earned by the lowest 30% of people as a group by 2017.”

The Scottish Governments framework for tackling poverty and income inequality links to other key Government policies in relation to early years and tackling health inequalities recognising that: “the best possible start in life, a good education, good health and enough money can all help make society more equal.”

The approach to tackling poverty being taken nationally is one which recognises the role of local authorities and the importance of working collaboratively at local and national levels to tackle poverty.

### **6.2 Local Context**

As the energy capital of Europe, Aberdeen is perceived as an affluent City, however this perception masks the growing poverty and disadvantage that exists in our communities. This was evidenced by the relatively large increase in the share of data zones in the 15% most deprived between SIMD 2004 (18 datazones) and SIMD 2006 (27 datazones)

The development of the Single Outcome Agreement between the City Council and the Scottish Government has provided a basis for setting poverty and inequality as a strategic priority. Critical to the delivery of this

commitment is the development of an Anti-poverty Strategy that is cross cutting across all policy areas.

### **6.3 Development of the Anti-poverty Strategy**

The Strategic Research and Information Team were asked to prepare a Poverty Profile that would inform the development of, and provide an initial baseline for, the Anti-poverty strategy. The Profile provides an analysis of the key indicators of poverty in the city. The profile draws extensively on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006, and covers key areas including unemployment rates, earnings levels, number of benefit claimants, school leaver destinations, free school meal entitlements, lone parent households and educational attainment levels.

Given the complex and cross cutting nature of poverty across all policy and service delivery areas, a short life Officers Working Group was established to provide a service orientated perspective on poverty and income inequality issues. The group conducted an initial audit of current and planned Aberdeen City Council activities which impact on the poverty agenda. The Officers Working Group reviewed the audit material, identified gaps in provision and explored opportunities for service action and development to improve the outcomes achieved.

A further research study was conducted over a 4 week period between the 24<sup>th</sup> of June and the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2009. The central aim of this element of the strategy preparation was to provide qualitative information from individuals who had direct and indirect experience of poverty and/or social exclusion. The study called 'Talking About Poverty: Discussing Poverty and Social Exclusion With Aberdeen Residents' was carried out on behalf of the Council by James Simpson, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year sociology student at Aberdeen University.

The Poverty profile, the audit of service activity and the 'Talking about poverty' research study identified key themes that have assisted in developing a framework for the Anti-poverty strategy. These themes reflect the complex and multi-faceted nature of poverty in our communities, and the necessity to target investment on the root causes of deprivation and inequality.

This draft requires further detailed consideration by the newly appointed directors in order to develop appropriate and priority actions prior to it being finalized and published. It is therefore proposed to remit this draft to the various service committees for their detailed consideration with the advice and guidance of the director.

A set of local indicators are being developed by the Improvement Service to measure impact and outcomes in regeneration areas. Officers will develop these in the coming year and ensure their inclusion in the council's performance management, measurement and reporting arrangements and those of our partners.

#### **6.4 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009**

The updated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2009 will be published on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009. This will provide a detailed indication of how the extent and distribution of poverty has changed in the City since 2006. A report will be prepared in relation to the conclusions of SIMD 2009 for consideration by committee at a future meeting.

#### **6 AUTHORISED SIGNATURE**

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#### **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland, Scottish Government, 2008

**Achieving Our Potential:  
Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City**

**2009-12**

**Draft Version 1**

Foreword

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## Foreword

To be agreed at point of publication following Committee approval for the strategy suggested piece from the policy convenor/convenor of social care and wellbeing, and the Chief Executive.

## 1. Context

As the energy capital of Europe, Aberdeen is perceived as an affluent City, however this perception masks the growing poverty and disadvantage that exists in our communities. This was evidenced by the relatively large increase in the share of data zones in the 15% most deprived between SIMD 2004 (18 datazones) and SIMD 2006 (27 datazones). The updated SIMD for 2009 will be available from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009, and will provide an indication of how the extent and distribution of poverty has changed in the City. There is also evidence that a significant number of people in poverty live out with the data zones.

In November 2008 the Scottish Government published 'Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland'. This document is a key part of the Government's Economic Strategy and sets an ambitious target to deliver greater solidarity in Scotland by reducing the nation's relatively high level of income inequality. The aim is to reconnect more people to the mainstream economy and provide opportunities, and incentives, for all to contribute to Scotland's economic growth. The framework does not exist in isolation and complements two other key policy drivers, the 'Early Years and Early Intervention Framework' and 'Equally Well' the report of the ministerial taskforce on health inequalities. The three documents taken together form a coherent approach to addressing disadvantage in Scotland.

Within this context our Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government commits us to the National Outcome: 'To tackle the significant inequalities in Scottish society'. The Scottish Government's National Indicator 14 is to 'decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty'.

The development of the Single Outcome Agreement between the City Council and the Scottish Government has provided a basis for setting poverty and inequality as a strategic priority. Critical to the delivery of this commitment is the development of an Anti-poverty Strategy that is cross cutting across all policy areas. The requirement to develop the anti-poverty strategy for Aberdeen was agreed by the City Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009 following a motion by Councillor Kiddie.

**Figure 1: Extract from Single Outcome Agreement 2008 -2011<sup>1</sup>**

National Outcome	Local Outcome	Relevant Indicators	Frequency/ Type/ Source	Baseline (2006/07)	Local Target & Timescale
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish Society	Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas	People living in the 0-15% most deprived areas in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	18,428	Reduction of 10% in 3 years
		Datazones within the 0-15% most deprived in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	27	25 by 2009/10
		People living in the 0-15% most deprived income domain datazones in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	14,914	Reduction of 10% in 3 years
		People living in the 0-15% most deprived employment domain datazones in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	18,584	Reduction of 10% in 3 years
		People living in the 0-15% most deprived education, skills and training domain datazones in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	20,909	Reduction of 10% in 3 years
		People living in the 0-15 % most deprived health domain datazones in Scotland	Biennial/ National Data/ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006	30,940	Reduction of 10% in 3 years

<sup>1</sup> Aberdeen City Single Outcome Agreement 2008-11

## 2. What is Poverty?

### Defining poverty<sup>2</sup>

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong.

(P. Townsend, Poverty in the United Kingdom)

### Measures of Poverty

The Scottish and UK Governments use two main poverty measures both of which reveal slightly different information about changes in poverty over time. These measures are absolute and relative poverty:

#### *Absolute poverty*

Individuals living in households whose income is below 60% of the inflation adjusted UK median income in 1998/99. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their incomes rise in real terms. In 2007/08 the absolute poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of £203 per week.

#### *Relative poverty*

Individuals living in households whose income is below 60% of the UK median income in the same year. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole. In 2007/08 the relative poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of £236 per week.

### Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2007/08<sup>3</sup>

The Scottish Government publication, *Poverty and income inequality in Scotland, 2007/08* was published in May 2009. It provides estimates of the number of children, working age adults and pensioners living in low income households in Scotland. The key findings are:

- 17% of people in Scotland are in relative poverty,
- a fifth of all children in Scotland are in relative poverty,
- a fifth of all pensioners in Scotland are in relative poverty,
- 15% of working age adults in Scotland are in relative poverty.

In the ten-year period to 2007/08, levels of poverty in Scotland have fallen. The most significant change has been in the level of child poverty, which fell from 30% of all children in 1997/98 to 20% in 2007/08. The proportion of pensioners in relative poverty fell from 24% to 21% over the same period, and there was a slight fall from 16% to 15% for working age adults. Across all age groups, the proportion of Scotland's population in relative poverty fell from 20% of the total population in 1997/98 to 17% in 2007/08.

### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official means of identifying the extent of deprivation across Scotland. It is based on the small area geography known as data zones, which enables pockets of multiple deprivation to be identified that could be missed in analyses based on larger areas such as wards or postcode sectors. Aberdeen has 267 data zones. The average population for data zones in the City is 780.

The SIMD is made up of seven 'domains' of deprivation: current income; employment; health; education skills and training; crime; and geographical access to services. The most recent results are from SIMD 2006, although an update is due to be published in 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Townsend – Poverty in the United Kingdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living (1979)

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government – Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2007/08

### 3. Indicators of Poverty in Aberdeen

The Research and Statistics Service have produced a Poverty Profile for Aberdeen which provides an analysis of the key indicators of poverty in the City. The profile draws extensively on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006 and other key supporting documents. The key indicators are as follows:

- **Income Support Claimants**

In the second quarter of 2008, there were 6,990 Income Support (IS) claimants in Aberdeen. These claimants were not evenly distributed across the city's 267 data zones. Eleven data zones had at least 80 IS claimants, while 81 data zones had fewer than 10 claimants.

- **Incapacity Benefit**

In the second quarter of 2008, there were 9,250 Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants in Aberdeen, accounting for 6.4% of the working age population. These claimants were not evenly distributed across the city. In Middlefield, around one in six working age people were claiming IB. In Cults, Milltimber and Mannofield, less than 2% of working age people were IB claimants.

- **Earnings**

In 2008, the gross average weekly wage of people working in Aberdeen was £525, significantly higher than the Scottish (£440) and UK (£472) averages. However, these relatively high earnings were not evenly distributed. Average female earnings in Aberdeen were significantly less than male earnings, and people in part-time employment were paid below the equivalent Scottish and UK averages. It is also known that many people living in deprived areas of the city have low incomes; in many cases, these are among the lowest income levels in Scotland.

- **Destinations of School Leavers<sup>4</sup>**

In 2007/08, there were just over 2,000 school leavers in Aberdeen. 86% of these leavers went into Higher Education, Further Education, Training or Employment; 11% were unemployed; and the destinations of the remaining 3% were unknown. The proportion of school leavers with 'positive' destinations (i.e. HE, FE, Training or Employment) varied from school to school. Almost all of the Oldmachar Academy leavers had a positive destination, while this was the case for less than three-quarters of St Machar Academy leavers.

- **Free School Meals**

At the time of the 2009 school meal census, 2,038 pupils in education authority primary schools in Aberdeen were entitled to free school meals, i.e. 17% of the total primary roll. In Bramble Brae School, over 60% of the roll was entitled to free school meals and the entitlement rate was over 40% in a further six schools. In contrast, there were fourteen primary schools where less than 5% of the roll was entitled to free school meals. In secondary schools, 11% of the total roll was entitled to free school meals at the time of the 2009 Census. The entitlement rate at Northfield Academy and Torry Academy was 27%, compared with fewer than 3% of pupils at Oldmachar Academy and Cults Academy.

- **Adults without Qualification**

At the time of the 2001 Census, over 42,000 people in Aberdeen aged 16-74 had no recognised educational qualifications. This represented more than a quarter of the city's adult population. There were seven neighbourhoods where the proportion of adults without qualifications exceeded 40%. These were Cummings Park, Middlefield, Northfield, Mastrick, Stockethill, Heathryfold and Sheddocksley.

- **Homelessness**

There were 2,356 homeless applications in Aberdeen in 2007/08. The number of applications has risen significantly in the five-year period since 2002/03, when there were just over 1,500 applications. In 2007/08, almost 1 in 10 homeless applicants were aged 16-17 years, while

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<sup>4</sup> Skills Development Scotland School Leaver Destination Report 2007/08

over one in three were aged 18-25. The age breakdown of homeless applicants has not changed much over the past five years.

- **Fuel Poverty**

Based on combined data from the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2007 SHCS, giving a mid-point of June 2006, 18,000 households in Aberdeen were in fuel poverty, i.e. 18% of all occupied households in the city. This compares with 22% of households across Scotland that are in fuel poverty.

## 4. Experiences of Poverty in Aberdeen

Over a six week period between June and July 2009, a qualitative research study was carried out with the aim of engaging with and exploring the experiences of people in Aberdeen who have either direct or indirect experience of poverty. The study *'Talking About Poverty: Discussing Poverty and Social Exclusion With Aberdeen Residents'* was conducted by James Simpson. James is 3<sup>rd</sup> year Sociology Student at Aberdeen University.

A summary of the key issues expressed by participants of the study are highlighted below:

- *Children Living in Poverty*

One of the biggest issues for participants was to ensure a better quality of life for children living in their communities. It was highlighted that few families could afford to give their children the standard of living that they would like to on a low income.

*"I used to be able to buy new shoes for my kids and now I buy trainers fae Asda, I got the trainers for the eight year old, he had them ten days and the soles were hinging aff and there's holes in the taes. He had to go to school the last two days like that, because I just didnae hae the money to run off to Asda and buy another pair of trainers."*

- *Accessing Information*

The study highlighted that a significant number of people were not aware of where to go for help or of their possible entitlement to additional benefit income. In addition participants indicated that many did not know what questions to ask which often meant people received wrong or irrelevant information. The language used by the City Council in correspondence was also said to be complicated and hard to understand.

*"I have to get my friend to read my letters from the Council for me now cos I can't bear to look. Sometimes she doesn't have a clue what they mean either!"*

- *Public Transport Costs*

Participants felt that the cost of bus travel was very high and given that public transport is, for most people on a low income, the only way of moving around the city, this significantly impacts on their ability to access essential services and recreational and leisure opportunities.

*"There are a lot of buses that run, but the problem is that because First Bus run it all, a lot of places are restricted by access to the bus routes.... and the prices are expensive!"*

- *Debt*

Many participants expressed concern that young people were more at risk of getting into debt as a consequence of a buy now - pay later culture. This could potentially mean spending the rest of their lives in financial difficulty. It was strongly felt that young people needed to be better educated in relation to life skills so that they could more effectively manage their finances.

*"People who end up on benefits can end up on them suddenly. Many have debt already. When you only have £60 income support and £30 for one child, less for a second, per week to live on, if you have existing debt which the minimum payment should be paid monthly – and if you miss this are charged £15-£20 depending on the company – it can become impossible to get by and debt mounts."*

- *Negative experiences engaging with statutory services*  
Many of the participants reflected that their experiences with front line staff from statutory services had been negative, and had experienced poor standards of customer service. Equally it was reported that information they received had been piecemeal, inaccurate or contradictory. There was a feeling that the likelihood of receiving positive assistance and support was entirely dependent on the personality, attitudes and prejudices of individual staff members.

*'They don't have any idea what they are doing. You go to one person then they tell you you've got to see so and so. So you go there and they tell you to go somewhere else, then you haven't got the right form, or you're not eligible, so they tell you to go back to the first person who tells you the person you're supposed to see isn't gonna be there til next week!'*

- *The Benefit Trap – barriers to employment and incentives to work*  
It was evident from the parents that participated that surviving on a low income or benefits was a trap for the majority of lone parents in particular childcare was a major barrier to improving their financial situation. Many had not or could not go to college or university to gain the necessary qualifications to enter well paid sustainable employment, therefore for these parents it was more practical to reluctantly remain on benefits.

*"It's kind of like being in a trap, you know you just canna get out of it because if you manage to find a little bit of income they take it aff yea so you get less benefit. So you're actually no better aff, your worse aff and its soul destroying because it takes away your incentive."*

- *Pensioner poverty*  
A key concern evident from the research was the variation in experiences and attitudes towards poverty, and people in poverty, between the different generations. There were particular issues raised that were specific to certain ages groups. Most older people interviewed felt that the state pension was only just about enough to live on and no more. They also experienced difficulties in accessing information, and knowing what information to ask for.

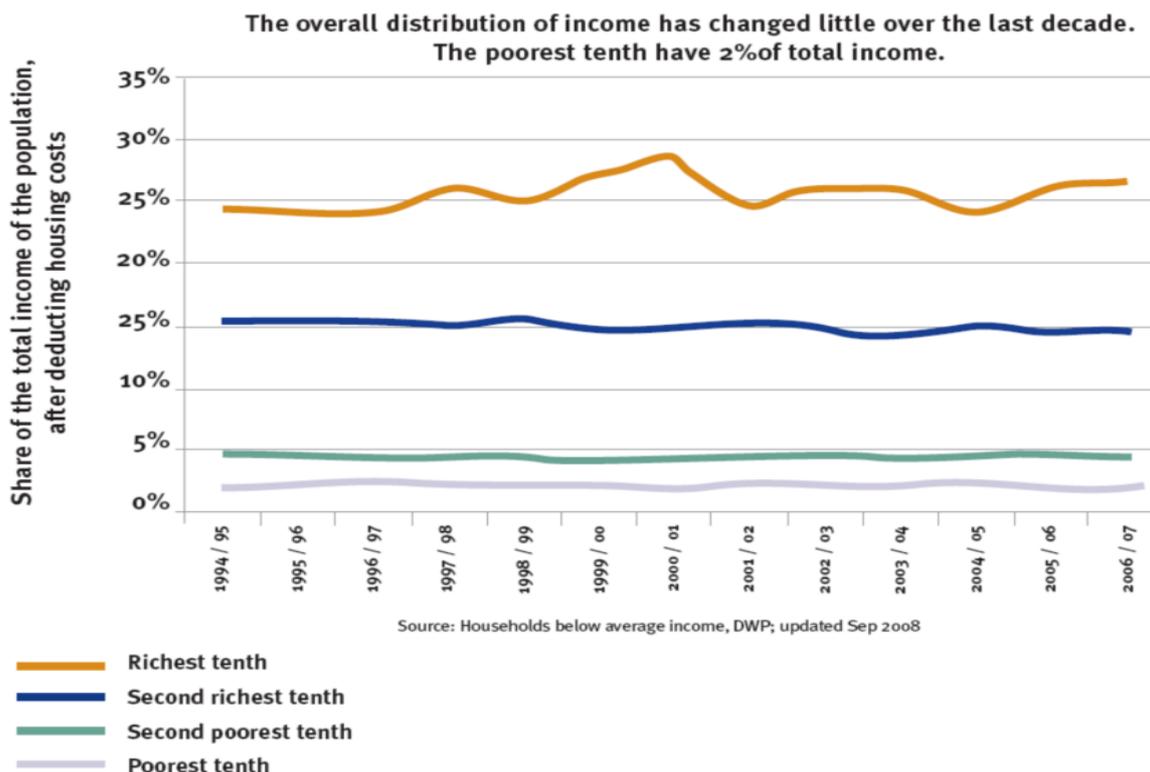
*"It's equally hard being a pensioner. I've worked 40 years and I get £87, cos I'm 37 pence over I get nothing.... yeah even if you're a penny over you get nothing. [no pension credit]"*

## 5. Strategic Objectives

### 5.1 Reducing Income Inequality

The income of the richest 10% of people in Scotland is approximately the same as the total income of the poorest 50%. The overall distribution of income has changed little over the last decade. The poorest tenth have 2% of total income.

Figure 2: Income distribution profile in Scotland 1994 - 2007<sup>5</sup>



#### 5.1.1 Employment

##### Issue

Getting people into work is a major focus of the Government's national poverty reduction policy. In October 2008, there were 1,732 unemployed claimants in Aberdeen City, equivalent to around 1.3% of the working age population (i.e. 16-64 years of age). That rate was not evenly spread across the city. The Tillydrone and Middlefield neighbourhoods had unemployment rates that were four times higher than the Aberdeen average.

The City Regeneration Strategy, in relation to the jobs and prosperity theme, recognised the existence of 'considerable and persistent areas of disadvantage and poor economic performance'. However, although the actual numbers and rates of unemployment in the City have fallen over the last two years since the strategy was updated, the relative position of the priority neighbourhoods remains unchanged i.e. the gap between these areas and the rest of the City has not only remained static but has in some instances increased.

<sup>5</sup> Households below Average Income, DWP, update September 2008

## Current Activity

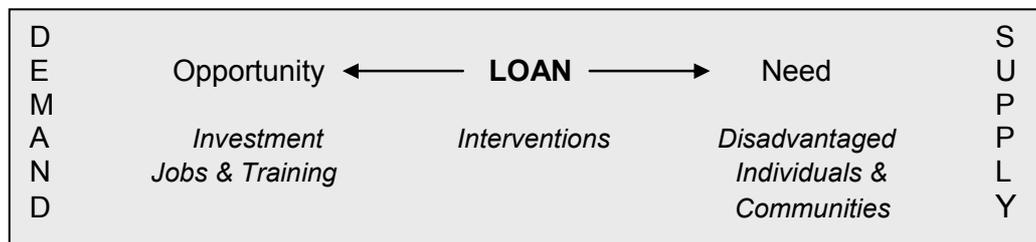
- *Aberdeen Works*

In August 2008, The Aberdeen City Alliance established Aberdeen Works – an employability forum focusing on the employability issues, skills gaps and development opportunities within Aberdeen. Partners include Aberdeen City Council, Job Centre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, NHS Grampian, voluntary sector and Higher/Further Education providers. The impetus to pull partners together formally to address the employability issue stems from a report commissioned by Communities Scotland to examine the economic impact of the City’s economic success on the poorest areas. The report, titled Connecting Communities, detailed the need to ‘Link Opportunity And Need (LOAN)’ in the City by establishing a framework for co-ordinated service development and delivery, to make best use of the resources available. Aberdeen Works is responsible for monitoring the employability elements in the Single Outcome Agreement – specifically Outcome 2 and 7 which includes the national target ‘To reduce the number of those on unemployment related benefit’ (a reduction of one third over 5 years).

- *Linking Opportunity and Need (LOAN) Team:*

The establishment of the LOAN Team, funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund, is a major step forward to focusing on the areas with the highest levels of unemployment and those furthest from the labour market. The main task of the LOAN Team is to ensure that the right services are in place to get people back to work. Working with employers and new businesses coming to the City, the Team will address the needs of employers now and in the future in terms of their workforce planning and development so that the right training/skills development opportunities are available to potential employees. It is also the Team’s intention to support those on low pay to improve their employment opportunities.

**Figure 2: Linking Opportunity and Need Concept<sup>6</sup>**



The LOAN Team will initially focus on the following sectors:

- Retail
- Hospitality
- Care
- Public sector hard to fill vacancies

- *The Employability Pipeline:*

The purpose of the pipeline is to support individuals from their current situation into sustainable employment.

A four stage pipeline has been developed:

- Stage 1 - Initial engagement, assessment and personal development planning
- Stage 2 - Pre-vocational personal development activity
- Stage 3 - Vocational skills training and entering employment
- Stage 4 - Employment aftercare

<sup>6</sup> Linking Opportunity and Need: Maximising the Regeneration Benefits from Physical Investment, Scottish Government 2008

Employability access centres have been established in each of the regeneration areas, and act as a recognisable point of engagement for people. A range of service providers have been identified to support individual need within the pipeline stages, and promote progress to work.

#### **Action Required**

- Improve co-ordination of Aberdeen City Council employability services by establishing a cross service monitoring group
- Negotiation of employability clauses with Aberdeen City Council procurement contracts
- Support the early involvement of the LOAN Team within planning process for major developments to provide effective workforce planning

### **5.1.2 Maximising Income**

#### **Issue**

Income maximisation is about ensuring that an individual's money coming in is maximised, and money going out is controlled, via avenues such as welfare benefits and tax credit claims and budgetary and debt advice. People with inadequate income are likely to experience poorer quality of life. Despite this we know that every year, large numbers of Aberdeen citizens are missing out on their entitlement to means tested and non means tested benefits, or are experiencing problem debt. Without comprehensive advice services and specific activities to encourage people to claim welfare benefits or Tax Credits many people will miss out on their entitlement and a way out of poverty. A number of identified barriers exist which prevent people from accessing benefits including:

- Lack of knowledge and misconception
- Fear of stigma and loss of independence
- Mistrust of government and statutory authorities
- Length and complexity of the application process

#### **Current Activity**

- *Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Uptake Campaigns*  
The Revenues and Benefits Service are promoting benefit uptake and maximisation of household income, with a view to reducing the level of rent and council tax arrears in the City. It is delivered through existing good practice models, as and includes a poster campaign across key venues, promotional materials which accompany rent cards and face to face contact and support for claimants.
- *Cash In Your Pocket Partnership – Community Benefit Uptake Events*  
Over the last two years the Cash In Your Pocket Partnership has run a number of benefit uptake events in neighbourhood areas. These include Torry, Woodside, Tillydrone, Mastrick and Kincorth. The events draw together a range of key statutory and voluntary sector agencies that can provide direct support to individuals, and have demonstrated that they are effective in reaching a number of individuals who were previously unaware of an underlying entitlement to benefit. In some instances this has significantly enhanced their household income.
- *Furnished Tenancy Grant Scheme*  
This scheme was established in 2006 and provides previously homeless households with basic essential household items to assist them in settling in to their new tenancy. The scheme prevents people from taking on additional debt at a time when they can least afford it. The white goods that are offered are all 'A' rated which contributes to a reduction in fuel costs.

### **Action Required**

- Continue to support and promote further Cash In Your Pocket as the mechanism for co-ordinated delivery of income maximisation activities and benefit entitlement uptake campaigns.
- A programme of Poverty Awareness training sessions delivered to front line City Council employees particularly focussing on the needs of the customer.

## **5.1.3 Making Work Pay - A Living Wage for Aberdeen**

### **Issue**

A minimum standard of living in Aberdeen is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society. The significant polarisation of household incomes and high cost of living in Aberdeen, relative to other areas, demonstrates the social and economic need to identify a living wage appropriate to cost of living factors.

The City Council is leading on tackling the levels of worklessness in the City through Aberdeen Works. However, gaining employment is often not sufficient to lift individuals and families out of poverty. Improving the rates of pay for low paid workers can have a significant impact in tackling poverty, and the City Council can take a lead role.

- > Lowest pay grade info
- > Cost implications

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has calculated the living wage for a single working age adult in Britain to be £6.88 per hour. This is higher than the current minimum wage which is currently £5.73 per hour. The experience of cities who have implemented a living wage for their employees has been as following:

- easier recruitment and retention
- reduction in recruitment costs
- improved attendance, productivity, motivation and morale
- improved quality of service

### **Action Required**

- Provide a further report to council giving consideration to a minimum living wage appropriate to cost of living factors, for Aberdeen City Council employees

## 5.2 Supporting Those Experiencing or at Risk of Poverty

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### 5.2.1 Fuel Poverty

#### Issue

The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement defines a household as being in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating level, it would be required to spend more than 10% of income (including Housing Benefit and Income Support for Mortgage Interest on household fuel use).

Levels of fuel poverty are determined by a combination of factors. The most significant of these are low household income and the high cost of fuel. Poor energy efficiency in the home also contributes significantly.

Based on combined data from the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2007 Scottish Homes Condition Survey, giving a mid-point of June 2006, 18,000 households in Aberdeen were in fuel poverty, i.e. 18% of all occupied households in the city. This compares with 22% of households across Scotland that are in fuel poverty.

#### Current Activity

- *Combined Heat and Power Scheme*  
Since 2003, fourteen local authority multi storey blocks have been linked in to Combined Heat and Power (CHP) district heating networks. Previously all of these blocks had electric storage or warm air heating systems which were expensive to run. As a consequence 70% of the occupants were identified as being in fuel poverty in 2002.  
CHP is a very efficient method of producing heat and power simultaneously and so keeping the cost to the end user at a low and affordable level. All the multi storey blocks linked in so far to the CHP district heating networks have been 'fuel poverty proofed' meaning even someone on the lowest level of income is able to comfortably heat their home without being in fuel poverty. Through monitoring the first 4 multi storey blocks linked into a CHP district heating network in 2003/04, additional benefits were identified, including a reduction in outstanding debt on the rent account for these flats, lower turnover and an increased demand for these flats.
- *Warm Zones*  
This initiative targets households in specific geographical areas of the City, taking an income maximisation led approach to tackling fuel poverty. Energy saving measures are also made available to reduce energy costs. This combined approach of increasing household income and reducing fuel costs was successfully piloted in the George Street area in 2008/09, and is due to be rolled out to cover the George Street/Harbour Ward in 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Warm Zone staff are employed by host organisation Grampian Housing Association, as part of the Cash In Your Pocket Partnership's Financial Inclusion Team.
- *Affordable Warmth Scheme*  
This scheme has been delivered via a Service Level Agreement with Castlehill Housing Association as the managing agent for Aberdeen Care and Repair since 1999. It aims to ensure that home owners who are in fuel poverty are assisted to have improved, efficient heating systems and insulation measures installed, as appropriate to their home, in order to reduce their fuel bills. The provider assesses what measures are required to achieve affordable warmth, accesses all available grants for the home owner and provides low-interest loan to cover the balance of the costs. Each loan is repaid out of savings made on the home owner's fuel bills and set at a level that does not put the person back into fuel poverty when account is taken of their reduced fuel

costs, plus their loan repayment. Approximately 200 home owners are assisted through this scheme each year.

- **Save Cash and Reduce Fuel (SCARF)**  
SCARF was established in 1985 as an Urban Aid funded project in Aberdeen. The service is delivered through a Service Level Agreement. The Energy Advisers funded by the Council provide a free, confidential and impartial energy advice and information service aimed at reducing energy costs, increasing income, and making homes warmer and more comfortable, while protecting the environment by reducing carbon emissions.  
The increase in fuel poverty in Aberdeen has been reflected in the significant increase in the number of complex fuel poverty related cases SCARF has been involved in providing face to face advice, information, advocacy and support to households in Aberdeen
  - From 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 SCARF dealt with 9,057 cases
  - From 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008 SCARF dealt with 14,958 cases

#### **Action Required**

- Increase the number of multi storey blocks converted to a Combined Heat and Power Scheme
- Implement phase 2 of Warm Zone over 2009/10 & 2010/11
- Ensure continuation of the Service Level Agreements for Aberdeen Affordable Warmth Scheme and Save Cash And Reduce Fuel (SCARF)

## **5.2.2 Financial Inclusion**

### **Issue**

Financial inclusion means access for individuals to appropriate financial products and services. This includes people having the skills, knowledge and understanding to make informed choices. The necessity for prioritising this area of work is increasingly evident as the economic downturn takes effect. The number of people experiencing financial hardship is estimated to increase rapidly, and therefore measures need to be put in place to mitigate the impact on those already experiencing economic disadvantage in our communities. A significant minority cannot access even the most basic financial services, meaning that they pay more to manage their money, find it harder to cope with financial pressures and are more vulnerable to financial stress and over indebtedness. Within this context there are two interlinking strands of activity:

- Improved access to affordable financial services and products
- Improved financial awareness and capability

#### *Improved access to affordable financial products and services*

This involves increasing the coverage and capacity of third sector lenders, so that people across the City have access to affordable credit, particularly individuals and families living in the priority areas. There are three Credit Unions in Aberdeen City, providing a range of savings options and methods. St Machar Credit Union and North East Scotland Credit Union are community focused organisations with strong local support. These two organisations work effectively in partnership and have established clear operational boundaries within the City with volunteers operating collection points for savers. Grampian Credit Union is the largest Credit Union, and is mostly public sector employee focused, with the majority of their savers opting for payroll deduction.

#### *Improved financial awareness and capability*

Financial learning is about supporting people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be able to manage their money more effectively and make

informed financial choices. This underpins the work undertaken to increase people's access to appropriate financial products and services, and to effective advice and guidance. Improving financial capability should be based on an explicit understanding of how financial needs and circumstances change at different life stages.

### **Current Activity**

- *Cash In Your Pocket Partnership (CIYPP)*  
The Cash In Your Pocket Partnership is the lead forum for tackling financial exclusion in the City and is comprised of key statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The CIYPP Financial Inclusion team funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund are employed by Grampian Housing Association with a remit to establish an effective network of resources, and build the capacity of frontline services. CIYPP have extensive experience of engaging with communities and promoting the uptake of benefit entitlement. CIYPP has also developed a web based single referral system which is used by a number of key organisations who identify individuals who require advice and support. The expertise and experience of the Cash In Your Pocket Partnership is extensive and should be maximised fully.
- *Investment in Credit Union Development*  
Additional investment from the Fairer Scotland Fund aims to increase the coverage and capacity of three third sector lenders so that individuals and families across the city have access to affordable credit and savings options, as an alternative to mainstream banking services. Key areas for development are increasing the number and location of volunteer led collection points, developing stronger links with advice services, extending the range of financial services available and encouraging low paid workers to save and borrow with a Credit Union through payroll deduction.
- *Grand Central Savings*  
Grand Central Savings was established in Glasgow in 2001, as part of the Big Issue Foundation and provides a basic transactional banking service to financially excluded and vulnerable individuals, particularly the homeless. A feasibility study has recently been undertaken to identify the need for a branch to be established in Aberdeen City. The study has highlighted significant gaps in financial services provision for those most marginalised in the City and recommends establishing a branch in the City.

#### **Action Required**

- Support Credit Unions to extend the range of affordable financial products and services provided
- Work with Credit Unions to raise the profile of their services
- Support the development of a Grand Central Savings branch in Aberdeen to provide access to basic banking services to marginalised individuals
- Integrate financial education into Curriculum for Excellence
- Deliver financial education through goal orientation programmes at key transition points

## 5.2.3 Advice and Information Services

### Issue

Citizens of all ages and backgrounds need to be able to access quality advice and information to help them address the often complex issues they may face. To date provision has been inadequate to meet the significant demands that exist, particularly in relation to money advice and welfare rights advice. Additionally evidence from the 'Talking About Poverty'<sup>7</sup> research study indicates that a large number of people remain unaware of the support services that exist in the City.

The need to improve the accessibility and capacity of the Aberdeen City Council advice and information services has been identified as a high priority in ensuring that individuals and families are supported to maximise their income and deal effectively with financial and other difficulties.

The planned amalgamation of the Aberdeen City Council's money advice and welfare rights services will improve efficiency and the capacity to respond to client demand.

Information and Advice Standards Framework  
XXX

### Current Activity

- *Aberdeen City Council Money Advice Service*  
This service is currently based within Trading Standards and provides advice to individuals experiencing financial difficulties. The range of service extends for basic information and signposting to advocacy and court representation. The service is free, confidential and impartial. Demand for the service is high with XXX clients being assisted in 2008/09. The total debt handled by the service in 2008/09 was XXX.
- *Aberdeen City Council Welfare Rights Service*  
This service is currently based within Social Care and Wellbeing and operates independently of the ACC Money Advice Service. The service provides information, advice and representation in relation to welfare benefit entitlement. This includes completing application forms, benefit calculations, reconsiderations and appeals and appeals to Social Security Commissioners. As with money advice the demand for welfare rights assistance is high. The service assisted XXX clients in 2008/09 and achieved Client Financial Gains of XXX.
- *Community Money Advice and Income Maximisation advice*  
This initiative is funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund, and is co-ordinated by the Cash In Your Pocket Partnership. The aim is to improve access and enhance the capacity of advice services, to ensure that individuals and families are supported to maximise their income and deal effectively with financial difficulties. Two Money Advice Officers and two Income Maximisation Officers employed by Citizens Advice Bureau are delivering advice and support, primarily in the regeneration neighbourhoods through a combination of home visit, community appointment and surgery sessions.
- *Housing Information and Advice*  
This project delivered by Citizens Advice Bureau provides high level information, advice and advocacy on wide range of housing issues including rent arrears, benefit entitlement, mortgage problems and private sector issues. The work undertaken is linked to the City Council prevention of homelessness agenda. The Project is funded through the Homelessness Strategy budget.

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<sup>7</sup> Talking About Poverty: Discussing Poverty and Social Exclusion With Aberdeen Residents, James Simpson, 2009

**Action Required**

- Implement the planned amalgamation of Aberdeen City Council's Money Advice and Welfare Rights Services to improve service efficiency and capacity
- Establish internal protocols between key services to deliver earlier intervention for clients, and improve financial efficiency of the Council.
- Provision of outcome focused Service Level Agreements with voluntary sector advice and information delivery partners, e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau linked to the Single Outcome Agreement
- Establish the Cash In Your Pocket referral and tracking database as the primary tool for monitoring performance of external advice and information providers.

## 5.3 Tackling the Drivers of Poverty and Low Income

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### 5.3.1 Inequality and Discrimination

#### **Issue**

Poverty is not just about money. It is also about not having access to the resources necessary to participate fully in society. Many people in our communities still experience disadvantage and limited opportunities because of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, faith, age or social background. These equality target groups are disproportionately represented within low income households. This is social exclusion.

Whilst progress has been made in making society fairer, discrimination still exists and institutions, public bodies, private enterprises and voluntary organisations can sometimes conduct their business in a way that may unwittingly disadvantage particular groups of people. The barriers and limited opportunities that arise as a result can lead to poverty and disadvantage.

A significant barrier to progress in tackling poverty is the lack of understanding and awareness of the issue and the needs of the council's customers who are affected by poverty. This frequently leads to stigmatisation of, and negative stereotyping of individuals and families who live on or below the poverty line. Aberdeen City Council has a key role to play in building support and action locally to challenge the misconceptions and cultural biases that exist in our communities.

#### *Poverty Impact Assessment*

From a local authority perspective, social exclusion can result as much from decisions taken in regard to roads and transportation policy as from those in regard to housing and social care. In some cases, such policies will have little or no effect on people living in poverty, but in other cases the effect will be significant.

Poverty proofing is a mechanism for assessing policies and programmes for their impact on poverty. The primary aim of the process is to identify the effect of policy proposals on the poor so that this can be given proper consideration in designing and implementing the policy.

#### **Action Required**

- Incorporate poverty proofing into Aberdeen City Council planning and performance management, as part of the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- A public statement from the City Council outlining our commitment to the eradication of poverty in Aberdeen should be produced and incorporated into the foreword of the strategy.
- Service standards should be set across key services to monitor and evaluate the customers service experience

### 5.3.2 Regenerating Disadvantaged Communities

#### Issue

The primary purpose is to tackle the social, economic, physical and environmental issues that effect priority regeneration and at risk areas in line with the City Regeneration Strategy.

Neighbourhood Networks have been established in each of the 37 neighbourhoods to plan and deliver interventions which improve the quality of life for residents. Within this context the community working together with statutory services and operational staff have developed Neighbourhood Community Action Plans (NCAP). The NCAP establishes the agreed priorities that will drive service delivery and development for each area. These are regularly monitored and are revised each year. Identified priorities, particularly in the Regeneration areas include, increased employment opportunities and tackling financial exclusion. These community engagement arrangements are currently under review with the resource requirements for provision across all 37 neighbourhoods currently being assessed. However, the importance of maintaining this level of community engagement within priority and at risk areas will be essential.

#### Current Activity

- *Fairer Scotland Fund Programme*

The Fairer Scotland Fund came into effect on the 1st April 2008. It is currently a ring-fenced fund from the Scottish Government, distributed through Community Planning Partnerships. Its purpose is to tackle poverty and deprivation. The Fund enables Community Planning Partnerships to 'tackle area based and individual poverty and to help more people access and sustain employment opportunities'.

The fund replaced seven previous funding streams (Community Regeneration Fund; Community Voices Fund; Working for Families Fund; Changing Children's Services Fund (Social Inclusion element); Financial Inclusion Fund; Workforce Plus; More Choices, More Chances), thereby reducing bureaucracy and administration and allowing Community Planning Partnerships to focus on tackling poverty and deprivation.

In 2010/11 the Fairer Scotland Fund becomes un-ringfenced and will be allocated to the local authority through Grant Aided Expenditure.

The Fairer Scotland Fund Management Board have agreed to allocate funding in 2009/10 to the following themes in line with identified National and local priorities.

- *Employment and Training*

30% of the fund (£790,000) is allocated to this theme, in line with Scottish Government priorities. The programme has been developed by Aberdeen Works, the Aberdeen City Alliance Employability Forum which focuses on the employability issues, skills gaps and development opportunities within Aberdeen.

Funding supports the LOAN (Linking Opportunity and Need) Team to coordinate activities and services supporting those furthest from the job market to take up employment opportunities. A range of organisations are funded to ensure people have access to the support and skills they need to return to work. (see above) This

involves initial engagement, personal development activity, vocational training, and post employment after care.

- *Income and Financial Inclusion*

13% of the fund (£350,000) is allocated to this theme, and the programme has been developed by the Cash in Your Pocket Partnership, supported by the FSF Support Team.

There are three main strands of activity:

- Improving access to affordable financial services and products
- Delivery of financial education initiatives
- Provision of quality advice and information services

- *Health*

13% of the fund (£333,000) is allocated to this theme, and the programme has been developed by the Community Health Partnership.

The Health theme focuses on three key areas:

- Reducing health inequalities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Substance misuse

- *Literacy*

4% of the fund (£100,000) supports a programme of literacy work. This includes developing a Literacy Learners' Forum for Aberdeen City, supporting joint working between the Healthwise project and NHS Grampian, providing literacies and ICT work in the Blair Unit, Royal Cornhill Hospital, supporting a Family Learning PEER Group Project, and adding value to current literacies provision to support FSF initiatives.

- *Neighbourhood programme*

27% of the fund (£696,379) is allocated to neighbourhoods, according to the population living within the 0-15% most deprived data zones. This funding supports local projects and initiatives to address the priority areas of Community Learning, Community Safety, and Strengthening Communities.

Community Flats/Projects are supported in Cummings Park, Printfield, Seaton and Tillydrone, as well as the Youth Flat in Middlefield. These provide accessible venues for activities, advice and information, and allow a range of agencies to deliver services within the local area. They are also instrumental in delivering the thematic aspects of the programme.

Many of these initiatives provide volunteering opportunities and provide accessible services and support to the most vulnerable people in Regeneration areas.

- *Community Support Fund*

This funding (£70,000) is managed by Regeneration Matters on behalf of the Fairer Scotland Fund Board, and supports community involvement in regeneration issues, training, support to attend meetings, events and conferences, communications and capacity building.

#### **Action Required**

- Consider how the Fairer Scotland fund can be aligned to support our commitments within the Single Outcome Agreement in relation to tackling poverty
- Deliver and invest in the City Regeneration Strategy and associated programmes
- Undertake an audit of mainstream council funding which is invested currently in addressing poverty and commission further research into the reinvested value of low income households back into the council through rents as a total proportion of income.

### **5.3.2 Early Years and Early Intervention**

#### **Issue**

Poverty begins to have an effect on a child's future very early on in their lives. Good early years intervention can help to combat some of these disadvantages. Early years provision has been shown in particular to give children from disadvantaged backgrounds a better start in school, including enhancing the child's social and emotional development.

#### **Current Activity**

- *Aberdeen Early Years and Childcare Partnership*  
An Early Years and Early Intervention framework is currently being developed by Aberdeen City Council, in close consultation with partner organisation. The framework which defines early years as pre-birth to 8 years old recognises the right of all young children to high quality relationships, environments and services. These needs have been interpreted broadly and encompass play, learning, social relationships and emotional and physical wellbeing.
- *Free School Meals*  
The purpose of free school entitlement is to improve children's health, their readiness to learn and to contribute to eradicating child poverty. Increasing the number of children receiving a free school meal will have a positive impact on all children and families but particularly on those who are economically disadvantaged. Currently parents or carers are eligible to claim for free school meals if they are in receipt of a range of benefits including Income Support Benefit, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit and have an income below £16,040 (09). From August 2009 families in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit will also become eligible for free school meals
- *Out of School Care*  
Aberdeen supports the provision of out of school care for working parents including those living in living in disadvantaged circumstances and regeneration areas, and for children with additional support needs. All provision is supported to become sustainable but subsidies are available to all out of school care services that support families on low incomes or for families actively seeking work.
- *Family Centres*  
Family centres support and empower the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families to improve their circumstances and move towards sustainable engagement with their communities. A range of statutory and voluntary support services working in partnership, contribute to improve family cohesion through the promotion of confidence building and emotional independence.

- *Family Information Service*  
The Family Information Service (FIS) provides comprehensive up-to date information and guidance on services for children and families in Aberdeen, including childcare, education and family support. The holistic support provided by FIS enables parents, carers and families to provide children with a positive start in life.

### **Action Required**

To be agreed with Sheila Sansbury, Strategist (Early Years, Family Support and Childcare)

## **5.3.3 Education and Life-long Learning**

### **Issue**

#### **Children and Young People**

A family's lack of income has a significant impact on the education of their children. Even a good school and committed teachers can't fully compensate for the stress that living in poverty places on a family or for the social exclusion, poor housing, or a lack of books or a computer at home. This lack of resources means poor children face an uphill struggle just to have the same type of learning environment as their peers. Furthermore, a great deal of informal education takes place outside the school – at home and in the wider community, something disadvantaged children often miss out on. A fundamental element of this approach is to develop a culture of aspiration and positive expectation in our citizens through high quality education and learning experiences, investment in skills development, expansion of modern apprenticeships and a continued commitment to the More Choices, More Chances agenda, making sure that our young people leave school with positive destinations.

#### **Adults**

In Aberdeen City there are approximately 42,000 adults<sup>8</sup> who are disadvantaged in their everyday life by limited levels of literacy and numeracy skills. Many people with literacies learning needs face complex difficulties where poverty is compounded by unemployment, lack of qualifications, health issues, housing difficulties and lack of self confidence.

Many individuals may never have been employed or have not been in employment for a considerable period. Breaking down the structural barriers that prevent individuals from maximising their potential is at the core Aberdeen City Council's drive to eradicate poverty.

### **Current Activity**

- *Curriculum for Excellence*  
Curriculum for Excellence is the new national framework for our schools to ensure that our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Wide-ranging action is needed across the education and wider children's services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and underachievement and of leaving school with few or no qualifications. Learning experiences have to be transformed to ensure they are tailored to individual needs and are designed to enable every child to develop their potential regardless of their personal circumstances.
- *16+ Learning Choices*  
To ensure we support all young people to have more choices and more chances in life it is essential that we encourage all young people approaching statutory school leaving age to stay in learning choices post 16 to support them to achieve long term and

<sup>8</sup> Aberdeen City Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Plan 2006-08

sustainable employability where they can reach their full potential and contribute positively to their communities. The Partnership is working with Secondary and Special Schools to ensure that every young person has an appropriate, relevant and attractive offer of learning made to them, well in advance of their school leaving date.

- *3R's Project*

The 3Rs Project is a key step in the regeneration of Aberdeen City Council's schools estate. The initial phase will see 2 secondary schools replaced, 7 new primary schools built and one refurbished, and the incorporation of two special schools within the new developments. The 3Rs Project is being implemented through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) using a Non-Profit Distributing Organisation, with support from the Scottish Government.

All schools will be seen as community schools, and community facilities and other Council and public services will be delivered from the buildings.

**Action Required**

To be agreed

### 5.3.4 Health Inequalities

#### Issue

Health inequalities are measurable differences in standards of health (e.g. mortality rates) associated with low income and deprivation with the extent of health inequalities across Scotland being well evidenced in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and community profiles produced by the Scottish Public Health Observatory.

The SIMD 2006 indicated that there are 43 data zones in Aberdeen in the 0-15% most health deprived in Scotland. This is further evidenced by the NHS Grampian Traffic Lights Profile 2009<sup>9</sup>. The rates of illness in the most disadvantaged communities in many instances are two to three times greater than the City average. These inequalities are not just due to biological or genetic factors. They are the combined effect of people's lifestyle and life circumstance, such as housing, education, work, income and local environment, all of which can impact on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

In June 2008 the Scottish Government published Equally Well, the report of the Joint Ministerial Taskforce on Health Inequalities. Equally well sets an ambitious framework for change across the key priority areas of children's very early years, the big killers of cardiovascular disease and cancer; drug and alcohol problems; and mental health and wellbeing. Several key principles underpin the drive for progress in reducing health inequalities:

- Reduce peoples exposure to factors in the physical and social environment that cause stress, are damaging to health and wellbeing
- Address the intergenerational factors that perpetuate health inequalities, particularly focusing on supporting the best possible start in life for all children
- Engaging individuals, families and communities most at risk of poor health in services and decisions relevant to their health.

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<sup>9</sup> Traffic Lights Aberdeen City CHP Intermediate Zones, NHS Grampian (2009)

### Current Activity

- *Community Health Partnership (CHP)*

The Community Health Partnership plays a key strategic role in addressing both the causes and consequences of health inequalities. As an integral part of the community planning structure the CHP is well-placed to engage directly with the local community on the design and delivery of health and other services to meet local needs.

- *Fairer Scotland Fund Health Thematic*

The Health theme focuses on 3 key areas:

#### *Closing the Gap*

The objective is to not only improve the health of those in the most deprived communities but also to focus on vulnerable groups of individuals. The Fund supports and adds value to activities which tackle the root causes of inequalities, by emphasising the need to support interventions at an early stage. Key areas:

- Child health
- Reducing food poverty
- Supporting the further development of food skills, healthy eating and physical activity.

#### *Mental Health and Wellbeing*

Although identified as an issue for all communities, particular groups have been identified as requiring specific interventions. They include children, people in poverty and low income families, homeless people these suffering domestic abuse and people with addictions. Key areas:

- Delivery of effective early years support for children and young people, taking a preventative approach and allowing problems to be identified earlier and more effectively
- Support the development of skills that increase resilience and promote self esteem so that people are enabled to avoid risk and maintain positive mental health
- Support access to appropriate treatment and rehabilitation

#### **Substance Misuse**

### **Action Required**

- **TBC**

## 6. Infrastructure and Resources

The eradication of poverty in the City will require significant co-ordination therefore an appropriate support infrastructure should be developed that is fit for purpose. It is proposed that Aberdeen City Council explore where the opportunities for joint working exist within the restructure of services to more closely align related activities and achieve efficiencies.

### **Action Required**

- Establish an Anti-poverty Officer Member group tasked initially with co-ordinating and monitoring anti-poverty activity across council services and to act as a monitoring and overview group on the delivery of this strategy.
- Consideration is given through the restructuring proposals as to opportunities to joint service development and the staffing and other requirements to deliver cross service council and partner action to address poverty in the city

**7. Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Aberdeen City  
Actions and Recommendations**

Objective	Action	Recommendation	Lead Service	Target
Reduce income inequality	Employment	1. Improve internal co-ordination of ACC employability services by establishing a cross service monitoring group		
		2. Support the negotiation of employability benefit clauses within ACC procurement contracts		
	Maximising Income	3. Continue to support and promote further Cash In Your Pocket as the mechanism for co-ordinated delivery of income maximisation activities and benefit entitlement uptake campaigns.		
		4. Programme of Poverty Awareness training sessions delivered to front-line City Council employees.		
	Making Work Pay – A living wage for Aberdeen	5. Provide a further report to council giving consideration to a minimum living wage appropriate to cost of living factors, for Aberdeen City Council employees		
Support those experiencing or at risk of poverty	Fuel Poverty	6. Increase the number of multi-storey blocks converted to a Combined Heat and Power scheme		
		7. Implement Phase 2 of Warm Zone over 2009/10 & 2010/11		
	Financial Inclusion	8. Support Credit Unions to extend the range of affordable financial products and services provided		
		9. Work with Credit Unions to raise the profile of their services		
		10. Support the development of a Grand Central Savings branch in Aberdeen to provide basic banking services to marginalised individuals		
		11. Integrate financial education into Curriculum for excellence		
	Advice and Information Provision	12. Deliver financial education through goal orientation programmes e.g. at key life transition points		
		13. Implement the planned amalgamation of Aberdeen City Council Welfare Rights and money Advice provision, to improve service efficiency and capacity.		
		14. Establish internal protocols between key services to deliver early intervention for individuals, and efficiencies for the local authority		
		15. Provision of outcome focused Service Level Agreement's with voluntary sector advice and information delivery partners e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, linked to the Single Outcome Agreement		

		16. Allocation of resources dependent on compliance with National Information and Advice Standards Framework		
		17. Establish the Cash In Your Pocket referral and tracking database as the primary tool for monitoring performance of external advice and information providers.		
<b>Tackling the drivers of poverty and low income</b>	Inequality and Discrimination	18. Incorporate poverty proofing into Aberdeen City Council planning and performance management, as part of the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment		
		19. A public statement from the City Council outlining commitment to eradicating poverty in the City		
	Regenerating Disadvantaged Communities	20. Consider how the Fairer Scotland fund can be aligned to support our commitments within the Single Outcome Agreement in relation to tackling poverty		
		21. Deliver City Regeneration Strategy and associated programmes		
	Early Years & Early Intervention	22. TBC		
	Education and Learning	23. TBC		
	Health Inequalities	24. TBC		
<b>Infrastructure</b>		25. Establish an Anti-poverty unit located within Housing and Environment tasked with co-ordinating and monitoring anti-poverty activity across council services.		
		26. A report is prepared for Resources Management Committee outlining the resource implications for establishing an Anti Poverty Unit within Aberdeen City Council.		

