

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy & Resources
DATE	3 December 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Anti-Poverty Strategy Update
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/320
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the instruction to officers to bring forward options around the development of an up-to-date Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. The actions outlined should provide clear priorities for Aberdeen City Council in addressing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee is asked to note this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications of this report but future developments may require additional funding or the redistribution of existing resources.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at present.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Developing a Strategy

The last Anti-Poverty Strategy, Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City was for the period 2009 – 2011.

Currently officers are working on a Strategic Assessment around Wealthier & Fairer; Smarter; Healthier: Safer & Stronger, and; Greener linking to the city vision and national priorities. This process will identify key priorities for the

city. Although this work is being taken forward by Community Planning Aberdeen, priorities and actions for Aberdeen City Council will be identified.

Priorities will be identified in January 2016 leading to a revised Single Outcome Agreement/Local Outcomes Improvement Plan which will require approval by Aberdeen City Council. The timetable for this is outlined at Appendix 1.

The context within which priorities will be determined include the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which states that partners must act with a view to reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. A Working Group has been established to take forward the issues in this Act and many of these, including community engagement/participation, use of public assets, food growing strategy, have the potential to have positive impacts for disadvantaged communities.

An Economic Growth & Wellbeing Strategy is currently in preparation by ACSEF/ONE NE and this will include dealing with issues resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

An additional focus on Anti-Poverty will come from the Education (Scotland) Bill which states that when exercising powers relating to school education due regard must be given to reducing inequalities of outcome experienced by pupils which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scotland Bill before the UK Parliament will devolve a range of Welfare etc. powers and some of these may be devolved to local authorities. The Scottish Government is mitigating some aspects of welfare at present.

A future strategy could set out how the challenges brought about by Welfare Reform and the wider austerity measures will be addressed in Aberdeen.

Possible outcomes from our strategies could include:

- reducing through preventative approaches the number of families experiencing multiple and complex negative outcomes
- reducing deprivation, resulting in the closure of outcome gaps within Aberdeen's population
- reducing levels of unemployment
- universal literacy

As can be seen from the timetable at Appendix 1, it is then intended to develop locality/neighbourhood planning to ensure that the priorities of localities are properly taken into account. Communities, Housing & Infrastructure has been re-structured to meet the community development needs of localities. At the same time, the Health & Social Care Partnership is developing locality planning and it is intended that this is done jointly.

At the completion of these processes we should have clear Priorities for Aberdeen City and robust Action Plans for localities and neighbourhoods.

Additionally, intended outcomes from the other strategies/approaches outlined in the Approaches/Interventions section will have clear links to our overall priorities.

Approaches/Interventions

A range of local initiatives have been and are being undertaken with respect to those in the greatest need but there are still major pockets of deprivation particularly in areas that have been identified for regeneration. However, it could be argued that many pieces of work carried out under a general banner of social exclusion are not particularly well coordinated and neither is the use of the available resources. We could now look to do some things differently to achieve different results including encompassing a prevention approach – tackling the underlying causes of poverty – in line with the outputs from the Christie Commission. Our future initiatives should focus on delivering real benefits for citizens.

Examples of such initiatives include:

- Northfield Total Place is a whole systems approach of joint working to achieve positive outcomes for the community. The community for Northfield Total Place includes the following neighbourhoods: Middlefield; Northfield; Mastrick; Heathryfold; Cummings Park.
- Community Projects (Middlefield, Fersands and Fountain Community Project, St Machar Parent Support, Printfield, and Aberdeen Lads Club)
- Fairer Aberdeen (A fund of c£1.6m that supports a wide range of anti-poverty initiatives across the city)
- Priority Families – a revised project is being developed and a report on this will be presented to Finance, Policy & Resources Committee shortly. The proposed Priority Families service is based on the family intervention model. Following a scaling up process, delivery is anticipated to commence in June 2016 and will reach up to 48 families per year. The service will be delivered on an outreach basis by persistent and assertive Key Workers who will work with families for up to 12 months to effect change and reduce their dependency on targeted public services.
- Our successful Community Planning Partnership has effective interventions with some of the most economically disadvantaged and is a useful source of identifying individuals/communities that require further interventions.
- The Feeding Aberdeen seminar (March 2015) recommendations/action plan are being taken forward with Foodbanks and others via the Welfare Reform Programme Board.

- The European Social Fund Strategic Interventions will provide us with funding for 2016 - 2019. A report on this will be presented to Finance, Policy & Resources Committee shortly. The Strategic Intervention will focus on regeneration areas within the City, improving the coordination and level of support available in these areas to actively engage with those individuals who have multiple barriers to employment and progressing through employment.
- Scottish Legal Aid Board (Money Advisors + Family Support with HomeStart).
- Job Parents providing support for disadvantage people into work.
- Welfare Matters Support Team (DWP Flexible Support Fund).
- The Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI) supports the economic recovery of Scotland. This incentive is funded by the Scottish Government, administered by Skills Development Scotland and managed by Aberdeen City Council providing support for around 50 individuals.
- Aberdeen Guarantees helps provide a secure future for the youth of Aberdeen. It brings together a range of approaches for all 14 to 25 year olds. Aberdeen Guarantees helps with the move into further education, training, and employment.
- Skills Development Scotland Employability initiatives.
- Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership Draft Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019 outlines that the integration of our health and social care services offers the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Aberdeen and reduce know impact poorly on people's lives. Outcomes of this strategy include health and social care services contributing to reducing health inequalities.
- Aberdeen Community Learning & Development Plan 2015 – 2018. Our key Improvement Priorities are to Ensure an effective Strategic Community Learning and Development Partnership which is inclusive of local communities; Further develop collaborative Community Learning and Development working which will contribute to Improved Life Chances in terms of: youth work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people and families; community-based adult learning, including adult literacies and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); □ learning support and guidance in the community. learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community, for example, people with disabilities, care leavers or offenders; Empower communities and communities of interest through effectively building their capacity to engage as partners in shaping and delivering services and to engage fully in decision making processes:

and community development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with and influencing decision makers).

- Integrated Children's Services Plan has priorities to keep the most vulnerable young people away from out of authority residential placements and maintaining them in the city. The Early Years Change Fund (EYCF) supports a number of services to work directly with vulnerable families in their homes. This has been very successful with staff from the services meeting regularly to share good practice and information. Aberdeen City Council's Corporate Parenting Policy provides a framework for identifying specific actions and interventions to close the gap between looked after children and young people and care is to improve their educational attainment and achievement; enable them to take up and sustain positive post-school destinations in education, employment and training; reduce their involvement in the criminal justice system; reduce levels of homelessness for care leavers; and to help them live full and healthy lives.
- Our Alcohol & Drug Strategies recognise that drug use impacts upon children, young people, families and communities, with those living within the regeneration areas often acutely affected. These groups are central to tackling the problem. Family, community and peer support groups can each have a huge role in supporting individuals through their recovery. Communities need to be supported to find local solutions to deal with the negative effects and to believe in their key role in supporting positive change. Individuals, families and communities can recover from the negative impact of drugs misuse.
- The Aberdeen Domestic Abuse Partnership brings together all the appropriate agencies in the City to tackle domestic abuse and support those affected by it. This Partnership has successfully secured funding from the Scottish Government and from other grants.
- Adult Protection – most adults with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities or other needs, manage to live their lives comfortably and securely, either independently or with assistance from caring relatives, friends, neighbours, professionals or volunteers. However, a small number, are at risk of exploitation and harm. Our Policy and Procedures were developed to enable appropriate recognition and response to situations where adults may be at risk of harm.
- Aberdeen City Council supports a wide range of services operated by the voluntary/third sector often through procurement and can specify outcomes related to our priorities through such contracts.
- Our Financial Inclusion Team, Housing Support Team and Criminal/Community Justice Team, amongst others, are providing a range of services to address issues of poverty and enable citizens to be more resilient and our communities safer and stronger.

The need to tackle financial and social inclusion by helping citizens move from benefits into work could be central to our approach but we need to have much wider aspirations of working with communities to increase financial capability skills and confidence to use finance products and services. This is particularly the case in Aberdeen where the “working poor” constitute a reasonable proportion of those who are affected by poverty.

There is also a need to continue to reduce debt levels in local communities especially disadvantaged communities and to promote affordable credit to replace lending which charges higher interest rates.

We are providing financial capability programmes to ensure that people have the skills to make appropriate financial decisions develop existing partnership working to make the financial inclusion sector more effective and flexible to meet the needs of a changing financial environment.

Work has the potential to transform the lives not just of individuals but of whole communities. The benefits of work are far wider than just remuneration. We know that work provides a sense of purpose and personal responsibility and enables parents to act as role models for their children. For people recovering from problems like substance dependency or mental ill health, work can provide a route towards recovery, providing a structure to the day and a sense of progress and achievement.

Work has wider benefits for communities, fostering aspiration in young people and breaking the cycle of worklessness and entrenched poverty that has become a feature of too many communities.

Our approach could improve the situation of many households who might currently be heavy users of public services. Bringing about significant changes in their lives through employment or greater financial security along with taking a preventative approach could be seen as a major spend to save initiative. The re-allocation of current resource or use of new resources needs to be seen in this light.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

Reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage will narrow the gap in terms of outcomes achieved by all of our communities.

A number of positive changes when a community becomes more empowered could follow as a result of community empowerment. Increased confidence and skills amongst local people; higher numbers of people volunteering in their communities; higher levels of satisfaction with quality of life in a local neighbourhood. All of these benefits flow from people feeling more in control of their lives.

Community empowerment can also have a less tangible, but nevertheless very powerful outcome. It can give people a long term stake in the future of their communities, and can confirm and strengthen community pride; bringing people

Improving Staff Experience –

Staff will be provided with a wider range of experiences including more inter-agency working and they should also be empowered to make decisions.

Improving our use of Resources –

The development of new priorities and the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act could be a driver for new ways of working including a focus on prevention and much greater inter-agency work.

Corporate -

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) will be replaced by a Local Outcome Improvement Plan which will be a main focus for the Council and partners meeting local and national improvement in outcomes.

Public –

The Community Empowerment Act will have considerable interest to the community. It will provide for a greater emphasis on improving outcomes for excluded individuals and groups and whilst this might have a positive impact on those groups it may also adversely affect those who are in much less need.

There are considerable additional provisions for the community to interact with public authorities such as the Council.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The lack of overall priorities will reduce the Council's ability to focus on those most in need.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership Draft Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019
Scotland Bill	Education (Scotland) Bill
Aberdeen Community Learning & Development Plan 2015 – 2018	Integrated Childrens' Services Plan
Alcohol & Drug Strategies	

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX 1

16 November 2015	CPAMG meeting	Priority setting methodologies to CPAMG
w/c 30 November 2015	CPAMG	Management Group discussion on potential priorities from the Strategic Assessment
7 December 2015	CPA Board meeting	Consideration of Strategic assessment
w/c 11 January 2016	CPA Board + Nick Bland	Priority setting ½ day
18 January 2016	CPAMG meeting	Initial drafting of SOA/LOIP
w/c 25 January 2016	CPA Board + Nick Bland	Priority setting ½ day (if required)
1 February 2016	CPA Board meeting	Initial consideration of SOA/LOIP
29 February 2016	CPAMG meeting	Consideration of SOA/LOIP
w/c 14 March 2016	CPAMG/CPA Board	Additional meeting – Discussions on structures to deliver - consider which community bodies are likely to be able to contribute to community Planning, Community Justice transition, themed/sub-groups required
18 April 2016	CPAMG meeting	
March/April 2016	Individual Partners	Approval of SOA/LOIP, work with Improvement Service to ensure links to single system plans
March/April 2016	Individual Partners/joint work	Locality/neighbourhood planning from SOA/LOIP
w/c 25 April	CPAMG/CPA Board	Additional meeting – consideration of resources contribution by Partners
9 May 2016	CPA Board meeting	Final approval of SOA/LOIP, links to Partners Plans