

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources Committee
DATE	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
TITLE OF REPORT	Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017-20
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/004
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For members to consider and agree the tackling poverty priorities and proposed actions as detailed in “Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017-20” and consider further proposals on how this will be progressed.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee are asked to:

- a) Consider and agree the corporate tackling poverty priorities and actions contained within “Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017-2020” (Appendix A)
- b) Request officers to report back to a future Finance Policy and Resources Committee with a corporate framework linked to the Community Planning Partnerships Local Outcome Improvement Plan structure for overseeing the governance, performance and management for tackling poverty and inequalities.
- c) Request officers to have further discussion with Community Planning partners to identify further actions intended to address health inequalities and report back to Committee for the next cycle.
- d) To request officers to develop proposals and report back to Committee regarding how ongoing engagement with individuals and groups who are experiencing poverty will be progressed
- e) To note the proposal to pilot school holiday meal provision in 3 primary schools is subject to confirmation that funding is available

in the 2017/18 budgets and to evaluate and report back to Committee within 9 months.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional cost associated with the priorities and actions at this point. Depending on how the specific actions identified are taken forward there may be a requirement for additional resources. However, most of the proposed actions are cost neutral and could be addressed through new ways of working and prioritisation of existing service resources. Where additional actions do require additional funding this would be subject to further reports to Committee that identify costs required within a separate business case.

In relation to recommendation 2(e) the Council has set aside £90K in it's budget for 2017/18 to pilot the provision of food in schools during school holiday periods.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Tackling Poverty and Inequality will contribute positively to social outcomes by helping to addressing a range of issues related to poverty including income maximisation, child poverty, fuel poverty, food poverty, housing and health inequalities. This will also build on the developing approach to locality planning, regeneration priorities and work with the health and social care partnership. The work will also link with the inclusive economic objectives within the Regional Economic Strategy.

### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Finance Policy and Resources Committee of the 20<sup>th</sup> September received an update report on “ Opportunities for Tackling Poverty and agreed that officers should report back to this Committee with an anti-poverty strategy on the key themes of income maximisation, child poverty, fuel poverty, food poverty and housing and to provide an action plan to tackle poverty and inequality

**Shaping Aberdeen the Council's Strategic Plan** contains commitments to develop an Anti- Poverty Strategy and a number of objectives that relate to tackling poverty and inequality including :

“We will seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city and plan with key partners to try and ensure that welfare reform does not increase the gap”

“We will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

“We will create a city of learning which will empower individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities

“We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city/region economy”

The Priorities and Actions identified link to and build on specific high level objectives within the administrations programme “Aberdeen the Smarter City” primarily Smarter Living, Smarter People, Smarter Environment and Smarter Economy.

**Appendix A “Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017-20”** proposes 11 Priorities with associated actions that underpin the Council’s Strategic Plan and Smarter City objectives . It further provides a basis to build on the Councils existing services tackling poverty and disadvantage and identifies additional actions that can be adopted to deliver a Fairer Aberdeen linking to Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan vision of Aberdeen being “A place where all our people prosper”

The proposed Priorities include an overall objective:

**To prevent child poverty and adult poverty in the city of Aberdeen**

The following 10 Priorities under each theme are:

### **INCOME MAXIMISATION THEME**

#### **Priority 1**

**For Aberdeen to become Scotland’s 1<sup>st</sup> “Real” Living Wage City**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Aberdeen City Council secures accreditation as a Living Wage employer

## **Priority 2**

**Ensuring that through Linking Opportunity and Needs our educational, skills and training provision is coordinated to meet the needs of people in the city to secure employment**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Further development of our employment and skills pipeline to incorporate education and training pathways
- Maximisation of Community Benefit clauses in all public procurement by Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen to increase apprenticeship and training opportunities
- Aberdeen City Council sets a target to establish an agreed level of apprenticeship training opportunities for every £1m of new public expenditure – starting with all City Deal investment

## **Priority 3**

**To be a leading Local Authority in Providing Apprenticeship opportunities for developing our young workforce**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Continued development of clear vocational pathways for our young people as part of Aberdeen Guarantees and preparing all our young people for the world of work
- Investigate the opportunities to increase apprenticeships in the Council and across all sectors in the city

## **Priority 4**

**To ensure that those people most affected by welfare reform changes are provided with the advice and support services they need**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Instigate a Benefit's Awareness Take Up Campaign
- Continue to provide advocacy and support for people assessed for Work Capability and challenge decisions where people have not been fairly assessed
- Co-locate Advice and Support services in places and services that people already use eg G.P. surgeries, community centres libraries and the new community hubs in priority regeneration areas.
- Review current investment in benefit advice and information services involving service users
- Increase the knowledge of frontline staff across a range of services so that income maximisation checks can be carried out at an early point

- Promote community asset based and co-produced responses to welfare reform changes
- Continue to support and promote the cities Credit Unions and investigate the development of a Community Development Finance Institute as an alternative to high interest pay day loan companies.

## **CHILD POVERTY THEME**

### **Priority 5**

**To prioritise the development of new flexible childcare services where working families are on the lowest incomes and will benefit the most**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Development of new childcare services in regeneration areas
- Provision of out of school care and holiday provision in all city primaries
- Ensure that families who are entitled to “Access to Leisure” benefit from 25% reduction in costs
- Deliver flexible early learning and childcare services 50 weeks of year subject to additional capital and revenue resources being received from the Scottish Government

### **Priority 6**

**To ensure that no child in the city is prevented from benefitting from their full educational entitlement due to the “Cost of the School Day”**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

All schools and services will use quality improvement processes to plan delivery of the Excellence and Equity agenda. This will include:

- the removal of financial barriers to participation
- The promotion of financial entitlements (including the provision of free school meals) and examination of reasons for non-uptake
- Efficient use of poverty impact assessments when allocating resource
- Raising awareness of the indicators and consequences of poverty
- Raising awareness of the financial inclusion services that exist in the city and referral procedures
- Work with a range of partners to support the delivery of financial education in schools

## **Priority 7**

### **To close the educational attainment gap**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Maximise the use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to target those schools and pupils in most need
- Continue to work towards providing free access to digital technology in as many Localities as possible
- Commission research to assess required levels of support in relation to adult literacy and numeracy to meet welfare reform changes
- Commit to providing a sustainable support model for literacy and numeracy and monitor its effectiveness as welfare reform and Universal Credit is rolled out.

## **FUEL POVERTY THEME**

### **Priority 8**

#### **To increase awareness and understanding of the causes of fuel poverty and develop responses that reduces fuel poverty and the risk of fuel poverty**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are :

- ACC should review the current energy projects, schemes and service we provide and improve linkage with other services involved in tackling poverty
- Continue to increase awareness amongst staff of the effects of fuel poverty and the causes
- Consider running an awareness campaign to encourage householders to consider switching fuel supplier
- A.C.C should consider transferring void properties to a Local Energy Provider that can provide a good deal for the new tenants moving in.
- A.C.C. should complete the investigation into the potential for setting up its own Energy Supply Company to progress and deliver project such as a local tariff , Photo Voltaic (PV) solar schemes , solar farms
- Support and promote local and community led generation projects
- Continue to expand the District Heating Network

## **FOOD POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY THEME**

### **Priority 9**

**To increase awareness and understanding of the causes of food poverty/insecurity and develop responses that reduces food poverty and the risk of food insecurity**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Continue to ensure wide spread use of Scottish Welfare Fund as first port of call for emergency support
- All services in contact with individuals and families increasing their awareness of food poverty and referral processes
- Commission research to ascertain level and nature of food insecurity in the city
- Continue to support the development of the Food Poverty Action Aberdeen Partnership and work together to improve the knowledge, nutrition, growing and cooking of food as part of helping to move beyond food banks
- Aberdeen City Council should develop a corporate debt policy and consider ring fencing the right for individual and family food and fuel when assessing and considering debt repayment levels
- Aberdeen City Council should work with a range of community organisations to develop community based solutions to address the needs of children facing food poverty during the school holidays and ensuring that no child goes hungry

## **HOUSING THEME**

### **Priority 10**

**To increase the supply of social and affordable housing**

The proposed actions to be developed and progressed are:

- Aberdeen City Council should continue to work with other housing providers should via it 'Housing Revenue Account to maximise delivery of new affordable housing within the parameters of our 30 year business plan
- Aberdeen City Council should ensure that the £20M infrastructure fund for the city region is applied to deliver affordable housing and that we work with the Shaping Aberdeen L.L.P RSL's and developers towards this end
- Aberdeen City Council should continue to support The Scottish Cities alliance in seeking greater powers from the Scottish Government to deliver affordable housing including first refusal on all surplus public sector lands for provision of affordable housing

## **Further Considerations**

### **Governance Arrangements**

Whilst members are asked to approve these tackling poverty priorities and proposed actions it has been recognised in developing this report that there is a need to engage more with partner organisations, especially with NHS Grampian and with the Health and Social Care Partnership in relation to actions to address Health Inequalities which is a potential sixth theme.

It is proposed that officers have further discussion with Community Planning partners and review policies and actions for tackling health inequalities. In terms of governance, programme management, performance and monitoring of outcomes it is proposed that officers consider with community planning partners options for integration with the Local Outcome Improvement Group leads and report back to a future Committee with proposals for future governance arrangements

### **Child Food Poverty Holiday Meals Programme**

At the 20th September 2016 F.P.& R Committee officers were asked to bring back a report to the F.P. & R Committee regarding how the Council can help to ensure no child goes hungry during the school holidays.

The report on this to the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 F.P.& R Committee agreed that the Council should pilot a child poverty holiday meals programme in the Easter and Summer school holidays and that proposals on this should be included in this report.

The report on the 1<sup>st</sup> December noted that there is no existing budget allocation for this and that costs be developed for inclusion in the 17/18 budgeting process.

The Council in setting it's budget on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 has included a sum of £90 k to provide food for children and a programme of activities during school holiday periods.

The proposal being developed is to pilot school meal provision linked to an activities programme involving a partnership approach with the voluntary and community sector in 3 primary schools initially based in the regeneration priority areas where Locality Plans are currently being developed

## 6. IMPACT

### **Improving Customer Experience**

The actions being proposed will impact positively for those people experiencing poverty and inequality takes steps to tackle prevent and alleviate where this exists.

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

Through the development of the proposals staff from across Council Services have contributed and advised on the actions being proposed to tackle poverty.

When implemented many of the actions will increase staff knowledge around poverty and inequality and provide opportunities to provide more cross cutting joined up approaches both internally and externally

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

The proposals contained provide opportunities for working across Council departments and with partners to tackle poverty. There are significant costs for services as a whole associated with addressing the impact of poverty in the city.

By adopting a more service user focused approach to designing services there is the potential to make significant savings through the avoidance of duplication and future design of services that better meet people who are experiencing poverty's needs.

### **Corporate –**

Several links to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Smarter Aberdeen objectives are detailed in Appendix A and section 5 above.

The primary link is to Aberdeen: The Smarter City through:  
Smarter Living (Quality of Life)

We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city

### **Public**

This proposal will be of interest to the public given the interest in tackling poverty and inequality and wide ranging understanding and attitudes around poverty.

An EHRIA has been completed for this report

This proposal will impact positively on poverty and social inclusion and is expected to impact positively on groups with protected characteristics.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK **TBC**

This report and the proposed actions to tackle poverty are expected to impact positively on customers and the Council's reputation demonstrating clear commitment to improving the lives of the most disadvantaged people living in Aberdeen  
Failure to tackle poverty not only has a negative impact for the lives of those experiencing disadvantage but increases financial costs for the city as a whole.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

"Deprivation In Aberdeen City, An analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 , ACC Research and Information Team"

"Poverty In Aberdeen City" produced by ACC Research and Information Team

"A Scotland without fuel Poverty is a fairer Scotland" Report of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Strategic Group to the Scottish Government

" A Scotland without Poverty", Dr Jim McCormack , Joseph Rowntree Foundation pub Feb 2016

" Dignity, Ending Hunger Together In Scotland, The Report of the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty" pub June 2016

"Empowering Scotland's Cities "pub June 2016

## 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Dave Kilgour, Inclusion and Welfare Manager

 (52)3035

 [dkilgour@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:dkilgour@aberdeencity.gov.uk)