

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	31 st May 2010
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Achieving Our Potential – Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City 2009- 2012
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/10/133

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the practical measures being adopted by the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Service in supporting the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy – "Achieving our Potential, Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) to agree that the actions detailed in the report are Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure contribution to Achieving our Potential, Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report relates to the Scottish Government's priority 'Wealthier and Fairer'. It also contributes to Outcomes 2 and 7 in the City's Single Outcome Agreement; to Community Planning challenge 'Jobs and Prosperity' and to the Council's strategic priority for the City 'to improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas.'

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None arising from this report.

Personnel: None arising from this report.

Property: None arising from this report.

Equipment: None arising from this report

6. REPORT

6.1 Background

The Corporate Policy & Performance Committee of 10 September 2009 agreed to remit the draft 'Anti-Poverty Strategy, Achieving Our Potential: Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City 2009-2012', to the other Committees of the Council for consideration and comment, along with each Service Director's advice on action taken or planned by that particular Service to address issues relating to tackling poverty.

Recent research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ("Devolution's impact on low income people and places", January 2010), recognises that trends in social and economic disadvantage are affected by policy developments in four key areas – improvements in these areas can make a significant difference to people affected by poverty:

- Employment;
- Housing and Homelessness;
- Neighbourhood regeneration, and
- Long term care for older people.

Improvements in these areas can make a significant difference to people affected by poverty. The Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Service makes a significant contribution to the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy within the following strategic objective areas:-

6.2 Reducing Income Inequality

Employment

Background

There are currently 16,299 people on unemployment related benefits in the city.

This breaks down as follows:-

Jobseekers Allowance	3,529 (March 2010)
Employment Support Allowance	10,185 (August 2009)
Lone Parents	1,760 (August 2009)
Carers	825 (August 2009)

The distribution of people on benefits throughout the City can be seen at Appendix 1. The areas of the City with the highest concentrations (over 600 people) are:-

Auchmill	794
Cummings Park	751
Mastrick	606
Seaton	713
Springhill	617
St Machar	636
Torry	619
Tullos Hill	941
Woodside	822

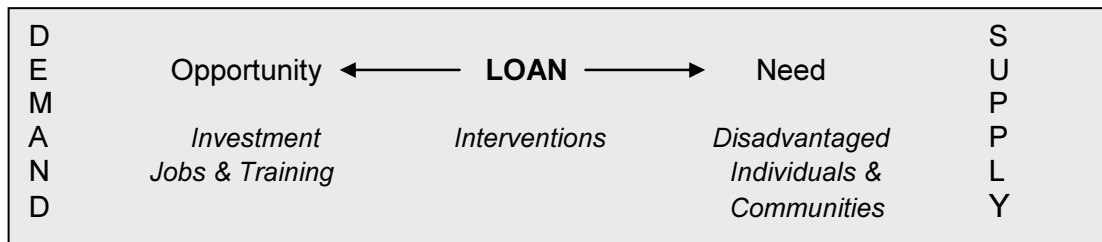
Current activity

- 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, Third 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 is addressing 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 Concept¹



The LOAN Team is initially focusing 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

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.

- The Future Jobs Fund

The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) was created to address the growing number of under 25s on benefits. The Fund (administered by the Dept of Work and Pensions (DWP)) aims to provide all under 25s who have been on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) for 10 months or more, with a job. 'Extra' jobs are created in the public and Third sectors for 6 months (25hours per week at minimum wage). These jobs must have community and/or environmental benefit. Each job attracts £6,500 funding from DWP. The LOAN team operates the Future jobs Fund on behalf of Aberdeen Works with support from Aberdeen City Council's Finance section. To date:-

20 people are in FJF jobs

18 jobs are available to be filled

30 jobs are awaiting approval from DWP

36 jobs to be subject of an application to DWP at the end of April.

- Union Square

A Charter for Employment and Training was developed with key partners including Aberdeen City Council which identified potential employees, provided training and liaised with the developer and retail outlets to secure job interviews. The Union Square development has created (to date) 1248 jobs. There are:-

- 903 confirmed job entries
- 345 jobs awaiting confirmation
- 414 (of 903 jobs) filled by unemployed people
- 162 unemployed people completed the retail training (Retail Passport – an industry recognized entry level qualification).

The development of LOAN has demonstrated the value of the additional investment the Fairer Scotland Fund has targeted to those furthest from the jobs market with over 600 job outcomes in the first year.

6.3 Tackling the drivers of poverty and low income Regenerating Disadvantaged Communities

- Retail Rocks! Aberdeen Property Acquisitions

Retail Rocks! is a highly innovative concept for the regeneration of town centres by focusing on the creation of successful, local retail businesses.

Retail Rocks! concept is support for the new businesses in the form of the running costs which will include water rates, business rates and energy cost, etc.

of the retail units for one year. The business mentoring will be provided by retail organisations for 18 months free of charge.

The project directly supports the rejuvenation of Torry and evidence shows that communities like Torry rely on small, independent business for a healthy and vibrant local economy.

The retention of small businesses in the community and the need to make safe, attractive and sustainable places for people to shop locally are key elements of Aberdeen City's Neighbourhood Community Action Plans 2009/2010.

Retail Rocks! is designed to revitalise town centres and communities by encouraging, enabling and supporting sustainable retail entrepreneurship. It also aims to break down existing socio-economic and demographic barriers, re-educate and create a positive mind-set and provide a catalyst for widespread regeneration, creating the confidence for further investments.

It is proposed to bring vacant retail units in Torry into use. This will involve acquisition (either through purchase or lease) and will support a transformation into vibrant retail businesses providing much needed and evidenced amenity shopping, as well as specialist retailing, to enhance the existing customer base in the community, and develop a new customer base for Torry.

This retail-led regeneration project will provide initial support to aspiring entrepreneurs wishing to start up a retail business in Torry. This initial support will take the form of a rent-free retail unit for a year, plus mentoring support on both entrepreneurship and expert retail skills and techniques. This support will be provided by major high street retailers who have agreed to support the project of Retail Rocks! Aberdeen.

Retail Rocks! engages with the local community by giving aspiring entrepreneurs from within the community the chance to open retail businesses in Torry.

Applicants with a retail business idea will be asked to compete for the opportunity to receive the proposed support package from Retail Rocks! Aberdeen.

- Town Centre Regeneration Fund

Safer Places, Improved Spaces

An application was submitted in August 2009 to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund grant scheme to support extension and improvement of facilities for the purpose of encouraging a wider use of local amenities. The district centres that will benefit from this grant money have been identified, either on the basis of being 'at risk' (Mastrick) and/or being in need of rejuvenation in order to realise their full potential (Rosemount, Cults and Peterculter).

The project has been titled 'Safer Places, Improved Spaces' and seeks to provide better access, environmental surroundings and safety within these town centres.

The Town Centre Regeneration Fund grant has been awarded to improve safety in areas where the threat of crime and violence persist as a barrier to social interaction and movement throughout district centres. While Mastrick is identified as an "at-risk" neighbourhood and the corresponding improvements have been tailored to take account of this, the other eligible town centres of Rosemount, Cults and Peterculter could also benefit from an increased footfall to the areas. By encouraging more people to consider using their local amenities and business

and improving the safety and accessibility of their surroundings, it is anticipated that this increased footfall will improve the long-term future and economic security of local businesses.

Access to local amenities in Mastrick, currently hampered by a number of issues will be improved through the support of this grant. Currently there is insufficient lighting in the pedestrianised centre which acts as a barrier to those wishing to use the shops out of day light hours; new energy efficient lighting will be installed. The condition of some of the access points to the pedestrianised centre need to be addressed; new hand rails and resurfacing of stairs and ramps will allow residents of all abilities to access their local amenities.

These initiatives will make the local shopping facilities much more accessible to people of all ages and ability and also create a safer less threatening environment which should encourage a greater number of local people to engage with these local retail outlets. Greater usage of these local facilities will ensure long term sustainability and assist local people access goods and services on a local basis and remove the need for costly and often inaccessible transport to goods and services further afield. If these shops become more sustainable there is also a potential for local job creation and employment opportunities.

- Investing in Ideas

Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure has recently been awarded a Big Lottery “Investing in Ideas” grant to carry out a feasibility study on the establishment and future sustainability of a Community Digital Channel, which will promote information, services and support to those hardest to reach that will assist them to lead healthier, happier and more enriched and sustainable lifestyles. This channel will promote access to services supporting healthy lifestyles, employability, employment opportunities, cultural activities, access to benefits and other support mechanisms, and provide a guide to local events and activities.

This project aims to bring together a diverse range of public and private sector organisations based in the city to promote their services which support inclusion and positive lifestyles. (Child Care services, Social Work services, Jobcentre plus, Skills Development Scotland, Education, Culture and Sport services, Healthy Living Network, Community Councils, Equality Office, Grampian Racial Equality Council, Grampian Police, Aberdeen College, University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations, community and private arts organisations etc). The project would aim to deliver a wide range of programming generated from community activity, art projects, voluntary activities and the wider support agencies. It is anticipated that the local colleges and universities media study units would become involved in the content generation and management which would bring additionality in the form of work experience and the development of practical and employability skills to their courses. This channel would offer “air” time to all community groups across the city. The addition of “Red Button” interactive services will introduce the opportunity for access to detailed information and support mechanisms

This project aims to target those hardest to reach within the community, whom through lack of money, confidence and awareness may struggle to participate in or access the full range of services and activities freely available within the City. Through the emergence of digital media, opportunities are being created to deliver information and services directly into homes.

People on low incomes would benefit from viewing programmes on employability, skill development, healthy eating and access to benefits. This type of project will assist in the creation of media related employment and volunteering opportunities developing the local skill base and potentially the creation of further media related enterprises.

All community groups across the city will be given the opportunity to participate and increase awareness of their activities and attract wider participation

- Living and Working In Aberdeen

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure has produced a range of leaflets especially aimed at economic migrants. The leaflets which are available in hard copy and distributed widely across the city by a number of partner agencies, are also available to download from Aberdeen City Council's website. The leaflet which is available in Lithuanian, German, Polish, Czech and English ensures that those most likely to be economically disadvantaged have access to information in relation to minimum wage, health & safety and working hours directive etc. Also provided is information to ensure access to all available support services including Healthcare, Police and Health & Safety Executive.

- Supplier Development Programme

Given the current economic situation, the importance of the public sector procurement spend for our business and third sector communities is becoming even more important to aid economic recovery. Undoubtedly the public sector spend will be a major driver to revive much of our small and medium sized businesses. Projects including the 2014 Commonwealth Games; Western Peripheral Route, planned expansion at Robert Gordon University, NHS Grampian developments and other ongoing public sector funded projects will all present a significant opportunity for our businesses but only if they are fit to tender.

The Supplier Development Programme assists Local Authority, Economic Development units across Scotland to help support local business and Social Enterprise access public sector procurement opportunities by delivering a tender ready support programme. This seeks to improve the competitiveness of our Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) base in the area of public sector procurement.

By developing these skills within SMEs, the Voluntary and Social Enterprise sectors, their ability to successfully tender for public sector work will be improved, which will hopefully result in the creation of additional employment, voluntary and trainee opportunities often the first step to engagement for those who find it difficult to access work opportunities.

- North Territory Hub

Assistance is being provided by the LOAN Team to the North Territory Hub to develop Community Benefit clauses within the Hub's procurement processes. The Hub has the potential to deliver major investment in capital programmes across the North of Scotland.

Emphasis is being placed on:-

- targeted recruitment and training
- access to the supply chain for Small and Medium Enterprises and Social Enterprises
- facilities and practices that support partners in meeting their requirements in respect of such business areas as community engagement and environmental and economic sustainability.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy: Achieving Our Potential –Tackling Poverty and Income inequality in Aberdeen City 2009-2012

- Connecting Communities Report

[http://www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/web/FILES/Misc/Sharing the Benefits of Growth Linking Opportunity and Need in the NorthEastFULLREPORT.pdf](http://www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/web/FILES/Misc/Sharing_the_Benefits_of_Growth_Linking_Opportunity_and_Need_in_the_NorthEastFULLREPORT.pdf)

- Town Centre Regeneration Fund – Committee report February 2010

- Retail Rocks! – Committee report January 2010

Appendix 1

Ward	JSA Total March 10		statistical group - ESA and incapacity benefits AUG 09		statistical group - lone parents		statistical group - carers		Total
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	
01C34 : Ashley	65	1.8	135	3.7	10	0.3	5	0.1	215
01C09 : Auchmill	174	5.5	410	13.1	170	5.4	40	1.3	794
01C02 : Bankhead/Stoneywood	59	2.0	170	5.6	25	0.8	35	1.2	289
01C21 : Berryden	102	2.7	345	9.3	40	1.1	15	0.4	502
01C06 : Bridge of Don	43	1.4	120	3.9	10	0.3	20	0.6	193
01C35 : Broomhill	25	0.8	60	1.9	5	0.2	5	0.2	95
01C28 : Castlehill	129	3.1	295	7.1	40	1.0	10	0.2	474
01C32 : Cults	20	0.7	55	1.8	5	0.2	15	0.5	95
01C10 : Cummings Park	146	4.5	420	13.0	120	3.7	65	2.0	751
01C03 : Danestone	38	1.0	95	2.5	15	0.4	15	0.4	163
01C07 : Donmouth	26	1.1	75	3.1	10	0.4	10	0.4	121
01C38 : Duthie	60	1.6	120	3.3	15	0.4	5	0.1	200
01C37 : Gairn	45	1.4	165	5.2	15	0.5	5	0.2	230
01C36 : Garthdee	96	3.2	310	10.3	65	2.2	30	1.0	501
01C26 : Gilcomston	88	2.7	235	7.2	10	0.3	10	0.3	343
01C29 : Hazlehead	44	1.7	150	5.8	15	0.6	10	0.4	219
01C15 : Hilton	103	3.3	365	11.9	50	1.6	20	0.7	538
01C04 : Jesmond	43	1.2	110	3.0	5	0.1	15	0.4	173
01C41 : Kincorth West	78	2.8	310	11.3	30	1.1	20	0.7	438
01C19 : Kittybrewster	73	2.6	280	10.2	35	1.3	10	0.4	398
01C27 : Langstane	164	3.7	310	7.1	30	0.7	10	0.2	514
01C43 : Loirston	46	1.1	105	2.6	10	0.2	15	0.4	176
01C12 : Mastrick	101	3.3	380	12.6	90	3.0	35	1.2	606

01C24 : Midsocket	30	0.9	115	3.4	5	0.1	15	0.4	165
01C31 : Murtle	16	0.5	95	2.8	0	0.0	10	0.3	121
01C08 : Newhills	35	0.9	160	4.1	15	0.4	30	0.8	240
01C42 : Nigg	74	2.5	230	7.7	40	1.3	30	1.0	374
01C05 : Oldmachar	30	0.8	90	2.3	5	0.1	10	0.3	135
01C30 : Peterculter	35	1.1	150	4.7	15	0.5	15	0.5	215
01C01 : Pitmedden	51	1.6	175	5.5	15	0.5	15	0.5	256
01C23 : Pittodrie	87	2.7	310	9.7	20	0.6	10	0.3	427
01C25 : Queens Cross	42	1.3	45	1.3	0	0.0	5	0.1	92
01C33 : Seafield	22	0.9	80	3.1	0	0.0	10	0.4	112
01C18 : Seaton	143	5.1	465	16.5	80	2.8	25	0.9	713
01C13 : Sheddocksley	91	3.1	330	11.4	50	1.7	45	1.6	516
01C11 : Springhill	102	3.4	415	13.9	70	2.3	30	1.0	617
01C17 : St. Machar	161	5.0	355	11.0	95	2.9	25	0.8	636
01C20 : Stockethill	81	3.0	285	10.7	60	2.2	20	0.7	446
01C14 : Summerhill	79	3.1	285	11.0	95	3.7	15	0.6	474
01C22 : Sunnybank	105	2.7	210	5.4	25	0.6	10	0.3	350
01C39 : Torry	159	4.9	390	12.0	50	1.5	20	0.6	619
01C40 : Tullos Hill	211	6.6	520	16.2	175	5.4	35	1.1	941
01C16 : Woodside	207	6.1	460	13.6	125	3.7	30	0.9	822
Column Total	3,529	2.5	10,185	7.3	1,760	1.3	825	0.6	16,299

Nomis April 2010