

**To:** Leadership Board

**On:** 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** Tackling Poverty Programme

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 At the budget meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, Council agreed the allocation of £4.5 million to support a new Tackling Poverty Programme.
- 1.2 A programme of activity has been developed which will sustain key projects which support people on low-incomes, with a focus on low-income families with children.
- 1.3 The proposed programme detailed in section 4 of the report continues key projects from within the programme throughout Year 3. There continue to be several opportunities to review projects throughout the programme, to make sure delivery models are the most effective and to explore opportunities to align more closely to mainstream service provision.
- 1.4 Renfrewshire's first Local Child Poverty Action Report was published earlier in 2019, to meet the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Work is now underway to develop the report for 2020, and the Tackling Poverty Programme investment continues to form a significant part of Renfrewshire's local response to tackling child poverty.

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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the proposed content of Year 3 of the Tackling Poverty Programme (2020/21) as outlined at section 4 of the report.

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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 On 2 March 2018, Council agreed funding of £4.5 million to deliver a tackling poverty programme based on the learning and evaluation of the projects carried out to date and building on the initiatives that have made the most difference in people's lives.
- 3.2 A programme of activity was developed for Year 1 which sustained key projects, supporting people on low incomes, with a focus on low-income families with children.
- 3.3 The proposed programme detailed in section 4 of the report continues key projects from within the programme throughout Year 3. There continue to be several opportunities to review projects throughout the programme, to make sure delivery models are the most effective, to explore opportunities to align more closely to mainstream service provision and to respond to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.
- 3.4 Details on the progress and performance of projects across the Tackling Poverty Programme are reported to Leadership Board on a six-monthly basis, with the latest update being reported on 4 December 2019.

## **4. Progress**

- 4.1 Since the introduction of the Tackling Poverty programme, there have been a significant number of projects and developments undertaken across the Council and its partners to tackle poverty.

In addition to this, the Tackling Poverty Programme continues to provide investment to specific initiatives that support the Council's aspiration to tackle poverty.

The initiatives support three key priorities:

- Targeting support to families to that need it most
- Removing barriers to participation for children and young people
- Supporting health and wellbeing for young people

#### **4.2 Targeting support to families that need it most – £0.7 million**

It is proposed that funding is allocated to support the delivery of the following initiatives:

- The three Families First locality teams funded by the Tackling Poverty Programme in Foxbar, Gallowhill and Johnstone will continue to offer early years and family support services, including targeted financial advice and parenting support over the next four years.
- The Healthier, Wealthier Children service will continue to provide targeted advice and support to new and expectant parents on managing changes to finances and supporting them to claim benefits they are entitled to.
- Energy Advice will also continue to be offered to people who need support to reduce their energy bills, manage fuel debt and improve the energy efficiency in their homes.
- Renfrewshire Foodbank will receive £10,000 allocated to assist with the anticipated increase in demand for support arising from the roll-out of Universal Credit in Renfrewshire, as agreed by Leadership Board in December 2018.

#### **4.3 Removing barriers to participation for children and young people- £0.28 million**

It is proposed that funding is allocated to support the delivery of the following initiatives:

- Breakfast clubs will continue in 10 schools, providing a healthy breakfast to all pupils universally. This project relieves financial pressure on low income families, but most importantly, makes sure that children start the school day ready to learn.
- The Cost of the School Day fund will continue to operate across all primary and secondary schools in Renfrewshire, directly supporting families in a variety of ways including uniforms, food, transport, extra-curricular activities and curricular expenses.
- The programme will continue to provide Street Stuff activities during the holidays and at weekends, along with the provision of free healthy meals.

#### **4.4 Supporting health and wellbeing for young people - £0.16 million**

It is proposed that funding is allocated to support the delivery of the following initiatives:

- The peer health project will continue in partnership with Active Communities, working with young people in secondary schools across Renfrewshire to identify key health priorities in their school and developing young people to lead their own activities to improve health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health.
- Funding will continue to be provided to support the provision of school counselling services in all secondary schools, aligned to the national Scottish Government funding now being received.

## **5. Local Child Poverty Action Plan**

5.1 Renfrewshire's first Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) was published earlier in 2019, to meet the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

5.2 Prior to submitting their report, there was an opportunity for Local Authorities to submit their draft reports to the Improvement Service for feedback of performance against the guidance and framework. Renfrewshire received positive feedback which concluded Renfrewshire's LCPAR was:

“Overall, an excellent report which shows a collaborative and holistic approach to addressing child poverty. Clear commitment to and investment in bringing about a step-change in action to tackle child poverty. Evidence of innovative approaches across a wider range of levers – many of which are targeted specifically at parents with children in priority groups.”

5.3 Following the publication of the LCPARs, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government requested the Poverty and Inequality Commission review the first set of reports. The review randomly selected 10 reports from Local Authorities with a range of sizes and geographies and was designed to provide general feedback for all areas to improve. The recommendations of the review will be considered in the development of future LCPARs in Renfrewshire.

5.4 Work is now underway to develop the Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2020, and the Tackling Poverty Programme investment continues to form a significant part of Renfrewshire's local response to tackling child poverty. The Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020 will be submitted to Leadership Board for approval in June 2020.

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The £4.5 million allocated to the delivery of the Tackling Poverty Programme was agreed in the Council budget agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – Not applicable
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The programme continues to support the key priorities set out in the Council and Community Plan to tackle inequality and widen opportunity.
4. **Legal** – Not applicable
5. **Property/Assets** – Not applicable
6. **Information Technology** – Not applicable
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – The projects within the programme are likely to have a positive impact on equality and human rights, particularly considering the overrepresentation of equality groups in low income households.
8. **Health & Safety** – Not applicable.
9. **Procurement** – The extension of some projects within the Tackling Poverty Programme may have procurement implications, where for example, contracts are coming to an end and may need to go through procurement processes again.
10. **Risk** – Not applicable
11. **Privacy Impact** - Not applicable
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – Not applicable

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## List of Background Papers

- (a) Not applicable

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