

Minute of Meeting Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 31 January 2024	10:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Anne Hannigan, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Andy Steel

Chair

Councillor J Cameron, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

A MacArthur, Director of Finance & Resources; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Partnerships, A Armstrong-Walter, Strategic Partnership & Inequalities Manager, D Dunn, Social Renewal Lead Officer, B Jardine, Senior Planning & Policy Development Officer (Poverty & Equalities) and E Barr, Assistant Planning & Policy Development Officer (all Chief Executive's); and R Devine and E Gray, Senior Committee Services Officers (both Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Sub-committee would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Transparency Statements

Councillor Clark indicated that he had a connection to item 2 by reason of his son being Chief Executive of Active Communities. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

1 **Cost-of-Living Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to an overview of the key context and evidence around current pressures on household finances, both in terms of household income and expenditure.

The report intimated that although there had been reductions in financial pressures, including the recent fall in inflation and improvements in real wage growth, stubbornly high food and energy costs were continuing to significantly affect living standards with those on lower incomes disproportionately affected. The report stated that the Resolution Foundation was projecting zero real growth for the median non-pensioner household income over the next three-year period. For low-income households, it was projected that an extra 300,000 people across the UK, an overall rise of 3%, would face absolute poverty next year. The analysis highlighted that the proportion of children living in absolute poverty was projected to rise highest. It was also anticipated that housing costs would represent one of the most significant pressures on the cost-of-living during 2024 with mortgagors set to see average increases of £1,800 to their mortgage bills and that there would also be significant associated impacts for many renters.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

2 **Fairer Renfrewshire Programme Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to key projects being progressed through the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, highlighting key priorities which would be the focus of future activity.

The report provided updates on current projects, detailed within Section 4 of the report, including the Scottish Government Council Tax Debt Pilot Project; Special Needs Pregnancy Service – Stronger Start; School Support Service; Winter Connections Programme; Lived Experience Panel; and the Child Poverty Deep Dive exercise. The report also noted that following discussion at the meeting of the Leadership Board held on 6 December 2023, proposals for a Breakfast Club/Grab and Go provision were being finalised.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 **School Meal Debt**

The Director of Finance & Resources gave a presentation relative to school meal debt in Renfrewshire and the support provided to families that might be experiencing financial insecurity.

Specific reference was made during the presentation to the background to the issue, issues within the current process which had been identified as requiring revision, COSLA's Best Practice principles, the local approach, feedback received from the Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel, the revised process initiated, Scottish Government Policy initiatives and future proposed actions.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.