

To: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board

On: 24 November 2016

**Report by:
Director of Community Resources**

Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership Tackling Poverty Initiatives

1. Summary

1.1 In September 2015, Council approved a Tackling Poverty Strategy for Renfrewshire, which sets the £6 million Council investment within the context of the current opportunities and challenges that Renfrewshire will face in coming years.

1.2 There are four workstreams within the Tackling Poverty Action Plan which Community Resources have a key role in delivering, namely:

- The roll out of an alternative breakfast club model in schools which were highlighted as being in identified poverty areas,
- The expansion of the award winning Street Stuff diversionary programme by providing activities between 4pm- 6pm and the provision of meals to the children attending the activities,
- Development of an employability initiative with the creation of training posts for young people as Special Wardens and Trainee Community Safety Officers, who otherwise may not be afforded these opportunities
- A review of Renfrewshire Council's current arrangements for registration, regulation and enforcement of private landlords

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Safer & Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board;

- Notes the progress with the four workstreams impacting on the Safer and Stronger action plan within the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, and
- Notes that a future report will be submitted to the Safer and Stronger Thematic Board outlining the evaluation of each of the work streams upon completion of the programme.



3. Background

3.1 As part of the £6 million Renfrewshire Council investment within the Tackling Poverty Strategy, over £600,000 has been allocated to four workstreams within Community Resources with a summary of each workstream provided below.

Alternative Breakfast Club Model (£120,000)

3.2 A Tackling Poverty submission was made to expand the Families First Strategy by introducing a new model of breakfast club provision for the start of the school day. The objectives were to:

- Increase engagement with parents and children in areas of identified poverty, and
- Improve knowledge of food to young people and the impact it can have on their health and well-being.

3.3 The initial roll out of the programme focused on delivering the alternative breakfast club model in 4 Primary Schools (St David's, Cochrane Castle, Gallowhill and St Catherine's). Since the initial roll out the success of the project has resulted in the model being rolled out to a further 6 schools – Castlehead High School, St Mary's Primary School, St Margaret's Primary School, West Primary School, Brediland Primary School and Our Lady of the Peace School. Additional funding of £20,000 was allocated from the tackling poverty programme to support the inclusion of Castlehead High School in the programme following a request from the Head Teacher.

3.4 The initial feedback from teachers and parents highlights that this project has been a remarkable success with formal evaluation now taking place in order to establish how this can be sustained.

Expanded Street Stuff Programme (£250,000)

3.5 Street Stuff is a youth engagement programme which seeks to interact with children and young people in their own communities, through the deployment of mobile resources, including football pitches, youth buses and other facilities with various equipment (games consoles, dance mats, exercise equipment) to areas where low level offending and anti-social behaviour is taking place. Street Stuff is staffed by professional coaches who are employed by St Mirren Football Club.

3.6 The objectives of this workstream were to:

- Improve social inclusion and access to facilities to those children in poverty areas, who otherwise would not be able to experience the services provided by the programme,
- Provide education around healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, and
- Deploy activities in areas of need to increase positive destinations for young people.



- 3.7 As part of the expanded programme, sessions have been delivered between 3.30pm and 6.00pm across all five Local Area Committee areas. Since the introduction of the expanded programme in October 2015 there have been almost 40,000 attendances at the overall programme, 27,000 in the first six months of the 2016/17 financial year.
- 3.8 The tackling poverty funding also allowed for the introduction of a further 4 street stuff buses as well as a number of additional sessions, to expand the Street Stuff offer. Three of the buses are now in operation across the area with the fourth bus due by the end of November bringing the total number of buses in the programme to 5. The buses provide greater flexibility to the programme to take the activities into the areas where they are required, whilst also providing additional facilities such as gaming and cultural activities to further enhance the range of activities provided.

Employability Initiative (£135,000)

- 3.9 The creation of a number of Special Wardens and trainee Community Safety Officer posts for young people provides employment and training for a number of people who otherwise would not be afforded the opportunity of work experience within this area.
- 3.10 The objectives of the workstream were to:
- Provide employability opportunities to support community safety in key locations,
 - Equip young people and prepare them for future long term employment opportunities which may arise,
 - Provide the successful candidates with on the job training and experience in a range of activities, including dealing with members of the public and better understanding the close links between poverty and low level anti-social behaviour.
- 3.11 The programme has successfully recruited 7 Special Wardens and 4 trainee Community Safety Officers. All trainees have made a positive contribution to tackling anti-social behaviour and have undertaken wide ranging training and CV building activities which will equip them for future long term employment.
- 3.12 Two of the trainee Community Safety Officers started within the CCTV and centre and had early success in assisting Police Scotland with a theft and firearm offence which both led to arrests. The training given will allow opportunities for the trainees moving forward.
- 3.13 4 of the trainees have been placed within the Street Stuff programme and the expanded programme has allowed them to get a full range of training opportunities to develop their skills in particular working with young people. This



has proved successful with one of the trainees having already moved onto full time employment with Skills Development Scotland as a Career Advisor.

Private Landlords Registration and Enforcement (£30,000)

- 3.14 The Tackling Poverty Action Plan made two key recommendations in relation to the private rented sector aimed at controlling housing costs for tenants and ensuring a linkage between the regulation of the sector and the provision of high quality, well managed accommodation. As part of this workstream, Community Resources have carried out a review of Renfrewshire Council's registration, regulation and enforcement arrangements of private landlords.
- 3.15 This review has considered the current powers available to the Council as well as their current use and options to further utilise these powers in order to improve both physical conditions and management standards within the sector. As part of the review a temporary Private Sector Housing Officer has been recruited to work with the existing team to ensure the enforcement of the sector is as robust as possible and rogue landlords are challenged and necessary action taken. This additional post, as funded by the tackling poverty programme has allowed for an enhanced enforcement regime to be delivered, ensuring residents concerns are addressed quickly and appropriate enforcement action is taken against those landlords who continue to breach private landlord registration requirements.
- 3.16 The policy on third party referrals to the Private Rented Housing Panel (PRHP) was presented to the Renfrewshire Housing and Community Safety Policy Board on 10 November 2016 and the policy is also on the agenda for this Safer and Stronger Thematic Board.
- 3.17 Whilst the onus for referrals remains with the tenant, if there are circumstances when the tenant cannot make the referral, Renfrewshire Council can now make this on their behalf.
- 3.18 This allows opportunities for Renfrewshire Council to support the most vulnerable people in Renfrewshire and give them the support they require with regards to receiving appropriate housing.

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