

To: Leadership Board

On: 28th April 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Tackling Poverty Programme

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the budget meeting on 2nd March 2018, Council agreed the allocation of £5 million over five years to support a new Tackling Poverty Programme.
- 1.2 A programme of activity was developed which will sustain key projects that 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 4 (2021/22). 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 The Tackling Poverty Programme investment continues to form a significant part of Renfrewshire's local response to tackling child poverty. Work is currently underway to develop both the Social Renewal Action Plan for Renfrewshire, and the Local Child Poverty Action Plan for 2021, and these are aligned and complementary to the work of the Tackling Poverty Programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the proposed content of the Tackling Poverty Programme for 2021/22 outlined at section 4 of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 2 March 2018, Council agreed funding of £5 million over 5 years 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 The proposed programme detailed in section 4 of the report continues key projects from within the programme throughout Year 4 (2021/22). 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 alongside the Council's Social Renewal plans.

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. During 2021/22, the Tackling Poverty Programme will continue to provide investment to specific initiatives that support the Council's aspiration to tackle poverty. The initiatives support two key priorities:

- Targeting support to families to that need it most; and
- Removing barriers to participation for children and young people.

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

- 4.2 It is proposed that funding is allocated to support the delivery of the following initiatives:
- Families First will continue to offer early years and family support services, including targeted financial advice and parenting support.
 - 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.

Removing barriers to participation for children and young people- £0.4 million

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

- Breakfast clubs will continue, 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.
- 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.
- Skoobmobile will continue to provide a mobile public library service directly to children and families in communities.

5. Next Steps

5.1 On 4th March, Council agreed an initial Social Renewal Plan, based on an extensive Community Impact Assessment that was carried out in 2020-21 to explore the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local people living across Renfrewshire's communities. Further to this, approximately £1.4million of funding was allocated by Council to support the delivery of the Social Renewal Plan.

5.2 A key priority of the Social Renewal Plan is 'Income, Poverty and Financial Insecurity, with a number of high-level actions identified in this area. Work is now underway to develop a more detailed Action Plan for Leadership Board in June 2021, and work will be undertaken

to ensure this programme of work and the Tackling Poverty Programme are aligned and complementary.

- 5.3 Work is also underway to develop Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Report for 2020/21, 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 2020/21 will be submitted to Leadership Board for approval in June 2021.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The £5 million allocated to the delivery of the Tackling Poverty Programme was agreed in the Council budget agreed on 2nd 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

List of Background Papers

(a) Not applicable

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