



To: Council

On: 25 June 2015

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Action Plan to Tackle Poverty

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Renfrewshire Tackling Poverty Commission, the first of its kind to be established in Scotland, was set up by the Council in February 2014. The Commission was tasked by the Council to examine the nature, causes and impact of poverty in Renfrewshire. The Commission set itself on a journey to find innovative ways to mitigate and minimise the impact of child poverty, with the ultimate destination being that no child in Renfrewshire should face a future overshadowed by poverty.
- 1.2 The Commission published its report on Friday 13 March 2015, submitting the report to the Council and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) for consideration. Its approach was widely recognised as ground breaking, as the Commission looked at tackling poverty through the lens of local families. As a result, the Commission's findings have received widespread recognition - not only in Scotland but across the UK.
- 1.3 At the Council meeting on 23 March 2015, the Council unanimously endorsed all of the Commission's recommendations. It made a 'first step' cash injection of £3.23 million from the £6 million tackling poverty fund set aside in the 2015/16 budget to support an early response to the work of the Commission. Recognising the value of a partnership response, the Commission's report was referred to the Community Planning Partnership Board to agree a coordinated, cross-partnership response to the findings and recommendations of the Commission and to report back to Council on 25 June 2015.

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to outline the extensive detailed work which has been carried out in the intervening period to continue the Council's strategic programme of tackling child poverty. The proposals have been developed by the Community Planning Partnership for consideration by members and fully commit the £6 million in additional resources to enable an early response to the work of the Tackling Poverty Commission.
- 1.5 As outlined in the report, the £6 million ring fenced sum is in addition to the £40 million of strategic investment already made by the Council in support of longer term economic growth and regeneration and reaffirms the Council's commitment to tackle poverty and inequality.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Council:
- Note the content of the paper and the update provided on the development of the Community Planning Partnership's Tackling Poverty action plan proposals.
 - Approve the deployment of the £6 million of resources set aside in the 2015/16 budget to tackle poverty as detailed in the report.
 - Note that proposals for monitoring and evaluation of the action plan will be brought back to council for consideration at the next Board cycle.
 - Note that as part of the implementation process there will be ongoing dialogue with Renfrewshire residents directly affected by poverty to provide them with the opportunity to remain involved and to participate in the development of the criteria by which the success of the measures to tackle poverty will be assessed.
 - Further note that a report on the feedback from the ongoing engagement will be brought to the next meeting of the Council.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The Renfrewshire Community Plan 2014 – 2023 sets out a challenging target to reduce child poverty to no more than 15% in any area by 2023 and in the Council Plan; A Better Future, A Better Council, the Council has set out its ambition to bring about a reduction in the causes and impact of poverty, particularly child poverty in Renfrewshire in the period through to 2017
- 3.2 In February 2014, the Council approved the establishment of a Tackling Poverty Commission which was driven by the Council's strategic vision to make a positive difference to the lives of every child

living in poverty in Renfrewshire. The Commission's role was to act as 'critical friend' to the Council and its partners, providing independent and authoritative views on the current approach to tackling poverty, and ultimately, to make recommendations to the Council and its partners which would form the basis of a new approach to tackling poverty in Renfrewshire

3.3 The Renfrewshire Tackling Poverty Commission published its report on 13 March 2015 and identified 24 recommendations grouped under five priority areas proposed by the Commission. The findings reaffirmed the Council determination to systematically dismantle the inhibiting effects of poverty on a child's future. The Council was unanimous in its commitment to ensure that the income of a child's household should not determine how well they do at school and, ultimately, a child's life chances.

3.4 The recommendations are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report and the priority areas are listed below:

1. Increase the number of households who can access employment that provides an acceptable standard of living.
2. Prevent financial crisis and support low income families to make the most of their money.
3. Improve levels of physical and mental health of children in low income families.
4. Close the educational gap between children from low income families and their better off peers.
5. Create neighbourhoods where people want to live and can afford to live.

3.5 Just as the face of poverty has changed beyond recognition in the last decades, the Commission's recommendations reflect the changing response that is required from the Council and its partners in order to reduce the root causes and destructive impacts of child poverty in Renfrewshire. The Commission also applies equal weight to the way organisations should work together in order to effectively tackle child poverty. Community involvement and engagement are seen as critical to providing services that support people and crucially address the stigma associated with poverty.

4. Strategic Priorities and investment

4.1 In considering a response to the Commission's recommendations it is important to also acknowledge the Council's long term strategic economic and regeneration objectives and how they contribute to the partnership's drive to lift children in Renfrewshire out of poverty.

4.2 The Council Plan explains the ambition the Council has for Renfrewshire to make it a fairer more inclusive place. The Council has, in setting its priorities, already invested significant resources in

priority areas intrinsically linked to reducing the causes and impact of poverty in Renfrewshire. The £22 million committed to the Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy including the proposed UK City of Culture Bid, and the commitment to the £1.13 billion City Deal provide strong evidence of the Council's determined commitment to grow the local economy, create employment and increase access to jobs – all with the aim of creating empowering environments for Renfrewshire's people to find sustainable routes out of poverty.

- 4.3 The response to the Commission's recommendations builds on this ambition. It provides the Council and its partners with an opportunity to commit additional resources to the already considerable commitments deployed in tackling poverty and inequality across the Council as well as on the major regeneration projects and other long term strategic programmes to improve the life chances and opportunities for all of Renfrewshire's children and their families including the Early Years Strategy and the Families First locality based projects; and, the partnerships flagship employability programme, Invest In Renfrewshire. The additional tackling poverty allocation provides additional one-off investment to the determined efforts already underway.

5. Development of the response

- 5.1 As approved at the Council meeting on 23 March 2015, a Tackling Poverty Steering Group led by the Chief Executive, comprising Council directors and senior executives from across the CPP has been set up to develop the response to the Commission's recommendations for consideration, of both the Community Planning Partnership Board and Council as well as oversee the implementation of the response. The Tackling Poverty Steering Group has considered the emerging proposals identified by lead directors and where comments have been offered, these have been considered and proposals revised.
- 5.2 Development work has been progressed by lead directors supported by the Tackling Poverty Programme team and has involved key partners including West College Scotland, Engage Renfrewshire, Police Scotland, University of the West of Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce in considering and developing evidence based interventions across all five of the Commission's priority areas. The proposals have been fully endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board at a special meeting to consider the response on 5 June 2015.

6. Proposed actions and interventions

- 6.1 The proposals are a blend of new interventions; the expansion of successful existing interventions; as well as specified projects to further assess need and scope the potential for alternative delivery

models. Significantly, the proposals recognise the contribution of existing programmes and where these can be aligned to the progress the Commission's recommendations.

- 6.2 The proposals are grouped according to the Commission's priorities and are then further grouped according to whether they can be progressed from existing resources or whether they require an allocation from the tackling poverty resources set aside by the Council to respond to the Commission's work.
- 6.3 The proposals offered to the Council for consideration are those that the Partnership believes are the most compelling and those most closely aligned to the Commission's recommendations. All recognise that it will require effort and commitment from all partners to implement and deliver positive outcomes based on these proposals.

7. Financial Summary

- 7.1 The Council seeks to invest in initiatives that will have a direct and positive impact on the causes and impact on poverty in Renfrewshire. The deployment of resources detailed in this report are consistent with the Tackling Poverty Commission's recommendations and provides an opportunity for the Council and its partners to provide an injection of resources into a variety of evidence based approaches and new initiatives across a range of priority areas.
- 7.2 The following sections of the report outline for members the proposed actions and interventions to be taken by the Council and its partners. These proposals, if approved, will ensure that the Council and its partners provide a cohesive response, directly aligned to the Tackling Poverty Commissions recommendations.
- 7.3 The proposed resource commitment in relation to the Commission's five priority areas and the 'how organisations should work' principles are shown in table 1 below:

Table 1

Priority	Proposed Resource commitment
Increase the number of households with access to employment that provides an acceptable standard of living	£0.15 million
Prevent financial crisis and support low income families to make the most of their money	£0.75 million
Improve levels of physical and mental health of children in low income families	£0.915 million

Close the educational attainment gap between children from low income households and their better off peers	£3.3 million
Create neighbourhoods where people want to live, and can afford to live	£0.715 million
How organisations should work	£0.17 million
Total	£6.0 million

8. **Increase the number of households with access to employment that provides an acceptable standard of living**

8.1 The Commission's recommendations under this priority were focussed on making work pay and on ensuring that employment opportunities are supported. The proposals recommended for approval are:

- Deliver a living wage campaign, supported by Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, focussed on low pay sectors. Promote the living wage and positive work practices across the partnership and leverage procurement opportunities to drive payment of the living wage among Council and CPP suppliers. The costs associated with these proposals will be met from existing resources.
- Invite the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to introduce a pilot in Renfrewshire to test a redesign of incentives and conditions for receiving out of work benefits. A letter has been sent to the Secretary of State offering to meet to discuss this proposal; a reply is awaited. Discussions are being progressed with DWP locally in relation to advice and advocacy for customers linked to the introduction of Universal Credit. No additional resources are required to support this proposal.
- Provide increased resources through Invest in Renfrewshire (liR) to provide support for people requiring childcare to attend job interviews and attend training; Map childcare provision to identify gaps in the provision of affordable flexible locally based childcare and develop alternative delivery models for consideration. The resource commitment required to support these actions is **£0.1 million**.
- Double the funding for transport assistance provided through Invest in Renfrewshire (liR) to provide additional support for people starting work and accessing training opportunities; and work with transport providers to explore opportunities to provide lower cost time limited transport. Similar to the childcare proposal, further work is required to understand the existing provision and work with partners to identify alternative means of

support. The resource commitment required to support these proposals is **£0.1 million**.

- Works with Skills Development Scotland to develop high quality on the job training aimed at supporting lone parents' progress in work. No additional resources are required to support this proposal.

8.2 The total proposed additional resource allocation under this priority is **£0.15 million**.

9. **Prevent financial crisis and support for low income families to make the most of their money**

9.1 The Commission's recommendations under this priority were aimed at supporting lower income households to be able to access lower cost alternatives as well as ensure that they have straightforward access to a range of information and advice services. The proposals offered for considerations are:

- Develop and implement peer led approaches to financial and digital capabilities, designed to equip low income consumers to become active consumers. The resource required to progress this proposal is **£0.2 million**.
- With the Renfrewshire Advice Partnership, deliver changes to advice provision to ensure it offers easy access to advice services, providing a mechanism for the referral and tracking of clients between providers and the co-location of services. This proposal includes the resources of £0.170M committed to the provision of fuel advice across Renfrewshire at the Council meeting on 23 March 2015. The costs associated with this proposal are **£0.490 million**.
- Support Renfrewshire Food bank to safeguard its vital front line role, by funding a coordinator for 2 years and assistance to help secure a new distribution centre. **£0.06 million** of resources committed at Council meeting on 23 March 2015.
- Test opportunities to develop fuel switching programmes in Renfrewshire and investigate the feasibility of utility companies providing fuel cards for food bank service users. The costs associated with these proposals will be met from existing resources.
- Review current provision financial inclusion support in primary care settings; build connections between primary healthcare and financial inclusion, and co-locate primary care with relevant support where possible. The costs associated with this proposal

will be met from existing resources.

- Use Renfrewshire as a test area for innovative ways of working identified by the Primary Care Inequalities Group, Deep End GPs and the Centre for Population Health. The costs associated with this proposal will be met from existing resources.

9.2 The total proposed additional resource allocation under this priority is **£0.75 million**.

10. Improve levels of physical and mental health of children in low income families

10.1 Focusing on health inequalities and the impact of poverty on health, the recommendations under this priority were focussed on how existing health provision could be targeted at lower income families and in supporting children and young people facing the stress of living in poverty. The recommended proposals are:

- Extend Healthier, Wealthier Children referral pathways and advice provision across primary care and community services, starting with key vulnerable groups such as substance mis-users. The resource commitment required to support this proposal is **£0.06 million**.
- Recognising, the Scottish Government is commitment to universal health visiting services, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will work with Scottish Government to maintain health visiting provision for the most vulnerable families, and deliver targeted parenting provision, as part of Families First projects. No additional resources are required to support this proposal.
- Invest in resilience development in schools by delivering a range of interventions including expansion of school counselling, rolling out peer mentoring across Renfrewshire's secondary schools, the delivery of targeted youth work programmes and personal and social development programmes in secondary schools. The level of resources required to deliver this proposal is **£0.4 million**.
- Continue to invest in the successful Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) programme providing support to children and families suffering from the impact of domestic violence - **£0.125 million**.
- Improve health and well-being by providing access to arts and cultural activity for more vulnerable people in Renfrewshire at key transitional points, creating a shared sense of community

and ownership by with working schools and the creative learning network to develop cultural educational resources to address achievement and attainment and to work with the voluntary sector and wider partners to provide cultural activities and opportunities. A resource allocation of **£0.24 million** is proposed.

- Develop a new sports leadership employability programme, for young people not in education employment or training providing leadership, training through sport, leading to increased employability opportunities as sports coaches and sports motivators. The cost of this proposal is **£0.09 million**.

10.2 The proposed resource additional allocation under this priority is **£0.915 million**.

11. **Close the educational attainment gap between children from low income families and their better off peers**

11.1 A key area for the Commission, closing the educational attainment gap was regarded is critical to give all children and young people greater opportunity in later life. The proposals for consideration are:

- Build on existing proposals to introduce the successful Families First locality team approach in new area by further extending this provision into another two areas of Renfrewshire. The areas recommended by the Early Years Steering Board are in Johnstone, Gallowhill and Foxbar and pilot a new way of delivering breakfast clubs in these areas. The resource commitment for this proposal is **£1.16 million**.
- Introduce a range of evidence based approaches and good learning and teaching interventions to improve literacy by working with recognised educational experts, teachers, pupils and parents, setting new and stretching targets to improve attainment in literacy. The resource commitment required to support these proposals is **£1.19 million**.
- Invest in improving attainment through the use standardised assessments in primary schools; develop the use of testing in secondary schools to develop a rich source of information on how well children are performing, to target support to children from lower income families. **£0.3 million** of resources is requested to deliver this proposal.
- Address the cost of the school day by involving young people in identifying the problems they face and provide additional support for children from low income households targeted at removing the pressure of the costs linked to the school day, including schools trips, clubs, charity events and classroom

equipment. Work will also be taken forward to maximise the number of people eligible to claim free schools meals and educational maintenance allowance payments by ensuring that the process for applying is accessible and straightforward. A resource allocation of **£0.28 million** is proposed.

- Establish a joint team, aligned to the existing Skills for Success Group, bringing together current employability practice across partners, and develop initiatives to address gaps in provision. Staff will work with young people from S1-6 from low-income families, enabling them to access a targeted and cohesive offer of support which is managed in a multi-agency way. The level of resources required to deliver this proposal is **£0.41 million**.

11.2 The proposed additional resource allocation under this priority is **£3.3 million**.

12. Create neighbourhoods where people want to live, and can afford to live

12.1 The Commission recognised that where communities have control to make decisions, local areas thrive and grow. Good quality, affordable housing, across all tenures. The proposals offered for consideration under this priority are:

- Understand the funding landscape, highlighting new and innovative ways of attracting funding to Renfrewshire and support community groups in developing bids. The costs will be met from existing resources.
- Pilot a programme of social regeneration to support planned physical regeneration in the Johnstone Castle area, establishing an asset based approach to community involvement, using this as a mechanism to devolve specified funding for community led initiatives. A resource allocation of **£0.25 million** is proposed.
- Investment in major regeneration programmes such as City Deal, Paisley Heritage Asset Strategy and the proposed UK City of Culture bid will deliver community benefits, and promote positive workplace practices using procurement exercises and flexibilities. No additional resources required are required to support this proposal.
- Expand the successful 'Street Stuff' programme of activities, providing opportunities for young people in some of the more deprived communities in Renfrewshire to get involved in a variety of evening, weekend and holiday period activities, consulting with young people on the activities to be included. The proposal to expand this programme seeks funding of **£0.25**

million.

- Introduce volunteering and employability opportunities focussed on by offering young people from more deprived communities the chance to work with Police Scotland and the community safety team, enhancing their life experience and developing their work capability. Resources of **£0.135 million** are required to deliver this proposal.
- Working with social landlords, commission a study to better understand total housing costs, including the affordability of rents and develop arrangements which minimise the impact of rents and wider housing costs on tenants. This proposal will require resources of **£0.02 million**.
- Maximise the council's existing and future powers to register, regulate and enforce private landlords to improve private rented sector housing standards. **£0.06 million**.

12.2 The total proposed additional resource allocation under this priority is **£0.715 million**.

13. How organisations should work

13.1 Given equal weight over the course of its work, the Commission identified five principles directed at how organisations should act and what good services should look like. A number of the proposals listed under the five priority areas adopt the principles, with addressing stigma and involving people with direct experience of poverty in designing services, highlighted in this section. The proposals for consideration are:

- Develop the potential of the national Entitlement Card (for young people (Young Scot) as a ways of accessing discounts, providing rewards and as a way of sharing information with young people on low incomes **£0.07 million**.
- Develop and launch a campaign to address the stigma of poverty, expanding across partner organisations and with the wider public **£0.02 million**.
- Design and deliver a new digital assistance action plan and deploy a digital skills trainer in libraries to support people affected by poverty to overcome barriers in accessing and using information technology **£0.06 million**.
- Allocate budget to ensure that citizens involved in engagement and consultation of the tackling Poverty action plan are included and reimbursed **£0.02 million**.

- Integrate poverty into Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments to ensure the council takes account of poverty when making decisions. No additional resources are required to support this proposal.
- Design and introduce a corporate stakeholder engagement framework that provides support and guidance to involving low-income stakeholders in the design and delivery of services. The costs associated with these proposals will be met from existing resources.

13.2 The total proposed additional resource allocation under this priority is **£0.17 million**.

14. Continued engagement

14.1 As referred to in section 13, the Tackling Poverty Commission urged the Council and its partners to consider the involvement of people in designing and shaping services.

14.2 The development of the CPP response to the work of the Commission offers an early opportunity to engage with people affected by poverty on the approach, it is therefore proposed that the people and organisations that took the time to respond to the Commission are offered an opportunity to consider the Partnership response. It is proposed that this engagement is carried out over the summer, giving people with a direct experience of poverty an opportunity to input into how the proposals will be implemented and ask what success should look like, with a report on the feedback brought back for consideration by the CPP and Council after the summer recess.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

15.1 The proposals outlined in this report represent a significant additional investment by the council and its partners to tackle poverty in Renfrewshire therefore it will be important to monitor and track the implementation of the proposals. In setting targets, it will be important to consider the long term nature of some of the actions and set measurable and realistic targets to track progress. The consultation will seek to establish measures that demonstrate what success looks like to people with a direct experience of poverty and incorporate this into the monitoring plan.

16. Next steps

16.1 Subject to approval, work will begin immediately to implement the action plan, with oversight provided through the Tackling Poverty Steering Group. The results of the consultation will be reported to the Community Planning Partnership Board and Council after the summer

recess. Going forward, regular reports on progress towards implementation and in achievement against targets will be reported to the Community Planning Partnership Board and Council.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - As outlined at 1.4, and as detailed in the main body of the report, the £6 million of investment set aside by the Council provides an opportunity to support the initiation of targeted activities in priority areas.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The requirement to enhance existing resources has been considered as part of the development of the proposals.
3. **Community Planning** – The Community Planning Partnership has set challenging targets for reducing child poverty in Renfrewshire. The Partnership's proposals are expected to have a positive impact on reducing the causes and impact of child poverty in Renfrewshire.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - Implementations plans will consider the implications for ICT
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The report details a set of proposals to deploy of £6 million of resources to respond to the Tackling Poverty Commission recommendations. As the proposals focus on investment, it is expected that the proposals will have positive equalities and human rights impacts.

The proposed Tackling Poverty Action Plan is of high relevance to equalities and human rights, considering the overrepresentation of a wide range of equalities groups who are also in low-income households, and the impact of poverty on enjoyment of human rights.

The report includes proposals to integrate poverty into Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment processes, and each project being taken forward will have an impact assessment that considers equalities and human rights issues in addition to consider the impact on socio-economic groups.

In addition, there will be a consultation on the action plan over the summer period which will explicitly seek views of key communities

potentially affected by the proposals, and full equalities monitoring will be carried out to ensure that consultation is a representative exercise and can sufficiently inform the programme impact assessment.

These impact assessments will be developed as the projects are scoped over the summer period, will full impact assessments available in September along with an overarching programme impact assessment.

- 8. **Health & Safety** - None
- 9. **Procurement** – None
- 10. **Risk** - The Council and its partners are committed to breaking the poverty cycle in Renfrewshire. If the Council and partners do not effectively tackle the causes and impacts of poverty in Renfrewshire there will be further polarity of poverty in Renfrewshire, increasing inequality and health inequalities, and greater demand for services. The proposed response to the Tackling Poverty Commission's recommendations will mitigate and minimise the causes and impact of child poverty in Renfrewshire.
- 11. **Privacy Impact** - None

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1 - Report of Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Commission

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Chief Executives Service for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Rhona McGrath, Tackling Poverty & Welfare Reform Programme Manager; 0141 618 6879; Rhona.mcgrath@renfrewshire.gcsx.gov.uk

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