

**Report of the Director - People and Cabinet Members for Anti-Poverty & Target Areas**

**Council – 9 August 2014**

**TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGY**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide Council with a draft Tackling Poverty Strategy addressing the key priority for the Council.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Single Integrated Plan; One Swansea Delivery Framework.
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	To approve a draft strategy for consultation on this key area of policy and delivery.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) Council approve the draft strategy for consultation, returning with a final strategy to November Council. 2) Council note the consultation process outlined.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Chris Sivers
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Janet Hooper
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Sherill Hopkins

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Poverty is the biggest issue facing Swansea. By any range of indicators, Swansea faces a greater number of challenges than many other local authority areas in Wales, and in the UK. Four of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Penderry are in the 100 most deprived in Wales; five of the LSOAs in Townhill are in the top 100 in Wales too. Further, one of the LSOAs in Townhill ranks as the sixth most deprived in Wales.
- 1.2 The impacts of poverty are wide ranging and have a significant bearing on outcomes for the population – poorer educational attainment, greater unemployment and poorer health. Poverty can dampen aspirations and people's confidence and resilience. These issues are

priorities for the Council and other partners to address, as already outlined in the Single Integrated Plan and One Swansea Delivery Framework and the Council's Policy Commitments.

The Council's definition of poverty relates to more than simply income. It relates to aspiration and encompasses both population definitions and geographical definitions. The Council has an established approach to Target Areas – those geographical areas where there is a concentration of poverty. It has established a Poverty Forum for staff in the Council to ensure the work is well coordinated, and this Forum has produced action plans in key areas for the last three years. In addition, the Council runs a number of Welsh Government programmes to tackle poverty such as Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.

## **2.0 Tackling Poverty Strategy**

2.1 The draft strategy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report and outlines the Council's proposed approach to tackling poverty. It recognises that poverty can be particularly entrenched in some communities and that it will take time to affect significant change. It further recognises that there are likely to be distinct phases to the Council's approach, and does not seek to address all issues at the same time.

2.2 The draft strategy outlines the commitment to early intervention and preventative activity, which is already a commitment in the Council's budget strategy, *Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future*, and recognises the importance of investment now in order to reduce costs and produce better outcomes in the future in key areas.

2.3 The draft strategy outlines a vision of aspiration and confidence amongst communities and individuals and suggests an approach of shared leadership to support this development.

2.4 The draft strategy further recognises that in order to deliver the Council's own aspirations, some changes will be needed to existing work practices and processes. These are outlined under the three themes of

- Empowering local people
- Changing cultures
- Targeting resources.

2.5 These themes are replicated and expanded in the Action Plan, which is included as an Annex to the draft strategy. The Action Plan contains a series of actions that are specific to the Council and how it conducts its business. It is recognised that to have maximum impact on these themes, the Council will need to work closely with other agencies and organisations. The Local Service Board (LSB) has committed to poverty as a key priority and we will be seeking to influence other

organisations on the LSB to adopt similar strategies and action plans in their respective organisations.

2.6 The Council has established a partnership Poverty Forum to coordinate partnership action on this agenda. This group is one of the LSB delivery bodies, and will have responsibility to regularly report to the LSB on progress in tackling poverty.

2.7 Also included within the draft strategy is a Poverty Profile, which provides key data in relation to Income & Debt, Employment, Health, Education and Family Support. This compares Swansea's position (where possible) to others in Wales and provides the basis for a wider discussion with partner organisations on appropriate action plans to tackle poverty.

2.8 The final element in the draft strategy is the Performance Framework. This Framework is based on the Single Integrated Plan population outcomes and indicators. This will be used to measure progress in key areas over time. Within this framework, there are a series of key actions, which focus on service changes needed to change outcomes. Other actions will be developed over time, and there will be an annual update of this framework. The targets given for 2021 in this draft strategy are those already agreed for the Single Integrated Plan.

### **3.0 Consultation**

3.1 This paper proposes that the Council consults on this draft strategy and welcomes feedback on it.

3.2 The consultation will be undertaken for a six week period between the 12 August and 26 September. The strategy will be available on-line and provided to community contacts, professional organisations and interested parties for comments and feedback.

3.3 The outcomes of the consultation process will be used to inform the development of the final Tackling Poverty Strategy to be considered by Council for approval in November.

### **4.0 Equality and Engagement Implications**

A full Equality Impact Assessment report will be required for this Strategy. This will be commenced during (and as part of) the consultation process. It will be finalised prior to the Strategy being considered by Council for approval in November.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, acceptance of this strategy policy could result in additional expenditure or opportunity costs at a future time. There could be

indirect costs or opportunity costs arising from the proposed action plans flowing from the strategy. It has been agreed as these are more fully developed the financial implications will be revisited and re-assessed.

- 5.2 Acceptance of the strategy does not mean that additional resources will be made available and it should be assumed that future spending needs will need to be contained within existing budget provision.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** One Swansea Delivery Framework

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Draft Tackling Poverty Strategy