

Report of the Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty

1. Opening remarks

1.1 Thank you for inviting me to talk through my Anti-poverty Cabinet Portfolio. This is a new portfolio for the Council, elements of which have been included in the previous leaders, and the old Target area Cabinet member portfolio. I have set myself clear, SMART objectives within my portfolio which take into account my areas of responsibility. The Anti-poverty agenda is cross-cutting and the responsibility of the whole Council and therefore all Cabinet Members. My portfolio of Anti-poverty impacts on a number of portfolios particularly that of Cllr Mark Child – Wellbeing and Healthy Cities, Cllr David Hopkins – Housing and Communities and Cllr Christine Richards – services for children and young people.

1.2 Anti-Poverty Portfolio – introductory remarks

1.2.1 The new Anti-Poverty portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:

- Poverty Strategy
- Communities First
- Welfare Rights
- 3rd Sector (support and funding)
- Social Inclusion
- Welfare Reform (introduction of Universal Credit)
- Financial Inclusion
- Digital Inclusion
- Food access/growing
- Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea

1.2.2 Previously Communities First, 3rd Sector support, financial inclusion, food cooking and growing were included in the Cabinet portfolio for Target Areas and sustainability. Other areas of the Council's work within the Poverty & Prevention Service were included within the Leader's portfolio as the Anti-poverty champion for the Council. Therefore the Anti-poverty portfolio is a new one within the recent Cabinet changes for 2014/15 onwards.

1.2.3 Poverty is a cross-cutting issue illustrated by the recent corporate plan priority and its performance measures which are not just within my portfolio, but actually within Cllr Richards – services for children and young people, and Cllr Child – Wellbeing and Healthy Cities.

2. Portfolio objectives

2.1 Objective 1) The effective running of the Communities First Programme - Welsh Government's tackling poverty programme in Communities.

The indicators for success are:

- 1) The funding allocation is spent appropriately within the financial year – with minimal underspend
- 2) The programme is delivering its targets and achieving the required outcomes
- 3) The programme is actively engaging the residents of each of the cluster areas in activities

There are specific targets and indicators within the Communities First Programme. The mechanism for delivery is via the Cluster Delivery plans and Community Involvement plans, progress is monitored via quarterly reporting on outputs and outcomes, all reported to the Cluster Steering Groups within each of the areas, and then onto the Communities First Programme Board which I Chair. The programme is run within the Tackling Poverty Unit of the Council and the Council is the Lead Delivery Body.

2.2 Objective 2) To deliver the Poverty Strategy's main actions over the next 12 months ensuring the Council is progressing towards delivering the targets for 2017

The indicators for success are:

- 1) The Tackling Poverty Action plan milestones and activities are achieved
- 2) The performance management framework targets are being achieved
- 3) Members of the poverty forum are actively taking responsibility for actions and success – Action Plan
- 4) Involvement and engagement of Ward Members and Cabinet Members in its delivery

The measures are contained within the Action plan and performance management framework for the Tackling Poverty strategy. This will be monitored by the poverty forum and supported by the tackling poverty unit. There is involvement by the Housing, Communities and anti-poverty Cabinet Advisory Committee where appropriate e.g. member involvement in delivering the strategy and action plan.

2.3 Objective 3) Mitigating against the impact of Welfare Reform – particularly the introduction of universal credit.

The indicators for success are:

- 1) Production and implementation of a Local Delivery Framework for the first phase of roll out of Universal Credit
- 2 Development of a an Universal Support Delivered Locally plan as Universal Credit progresses to the transition phase in April 2016
- 3) Effective partnerships with other public and third sector providers supporting the roll out of Universal Credit and other reforms
- 4) Identified role of Cabinet Members and Ward Members in the development and delivery
- 5) Seminars and training sessions developed and delivered to update Council Staff and partners on the requirements and potential impact of Universal Credit roll-out.

This is monitored and reported on by the Tackling Poverty Unit and the financial inclusion steering group.

2.4 Objective 4) Monitor spend to ensure it conforms to new funding levels

The indicators for success are:

- 1) Poverty & Prevention Service Managers work within reduced core budgets (Sustainable Swansea)
- 2) Ensuring compliance against Welsh Government terms and conditions
- 3) Tackling Poverty Unit and Partnerships, performance and commissioning teams are monitoring expenditure against internal and external requirements

This is monitored within the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Council through the Poverty & Prevention Service budget, through the Sustainable Swansea programme. There are annual Welsh Government returns around financial spend and monitoring success which are internally and externally audited. These are monitored through team meetings, Performance, finance and monitoring meetings across the P&P service, and reported into the Directorate PFM meetings.

3. Specific activities and achievements

3.1 Tackling Poverty Strategy:

- Production and agreement from Council on the Tackling Poverty Strategy in November 2014
- Refocussing of the Poverty forum for the Council to deliver, track and monitor the tackling poverty action plan and performance framework (attached revised terms of reference for the group)
- Support received from the LSB through presentations on the Poverty Strategy
- A number of the actions are already being worked on e.g. member involvement, volunteering policy for staff etc. (See attached Poverty strategy, action plan, and performance management framework)

3.2 Communities First Programme:

- Development of the 5 Communities First Cluster Delivery plans and their agreement by Welsh Government
- A re-profiled financial plan for the Communities First programme for 2015/16 financial year within a budget reduction of 5%.
- Achievement of Communities First targets and outcomes within 2014/15 (See attached performance report for CF)
- Development of the LIFT programme – an employment support programme within Penderry which focuses on those who have spent more than six months out of work or training and who face the greatest barriers to becoming employable.
- Progressing the culture and poverty agenda through the involvement of Communities First within the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership
- Between April and December 2014 the following successes were achieved via the Communities First Programme
 - 127** - Adults into work
 - 56** - 16 – 24 year olds gaining work related qualifications
 - 230** adults gaining a qualification
 - 255** adults more confident in using IT

3.3 Mitigating the impacts of Welfare reform:

- Providing seminars to staff and elected Members on Universal Credit
- Negotiating with DWP and JCP around the introduction of Universal Credit in July 2015

- Working to support the most vulnerable who will struggle with the changes

3.4 Budget management:

- Good financial management – reduced the potential underspend in the Communities First programme from £450k in 2013/14 to potentially under £200k in 2014/15.
- Budget savings have been achieved in 2014/15 and the recent budget savings are on course to be achieved in 2015/16 onwards. (See attached budget savings spreadsheet)

3.5 Achievement of savings targets for 2014/15

Below is a table giving an up-date on progress towards achieving savings targets for 2014/15 within the Anti-Poverty portfolio. There are no areas of concern or any significant issues in relation to the Anti-Poverty budget savings or the budget going forward.

	SAVINGS IN POVERTY & PREVENTION 2014/15	Target	Firm	Forecast	Position
Budget Description	Action	2014/15	Saving to	Saving for	
		£'000	date	year	
Central overheads and management and administrative savings					
Community Regeneration (No longer exists – this is now the Tackling Poverty Unit)	Delete the recently vacated Community Regeneration Support Officer post. Some of the activity previously undertaken by this post which directly relates to the Communities First programme is being undertaken by the Communities First Collaborative Connections Officer post within the new Tackling Poverty Unit .	37	37	37	Delivered
Community Regeneration	Reduce the hire of facilities, hospitality, IT The majority of the activity that requires room hire etc. is	7	7	7	Delivered

(No longer exists – this is now the Tackling Poverty Unit)	directly related to the Communities First Programme and therefore Communities First funding is being used to cover these costs.				
Social Inclusion Unit (No longer exists – this is now the Tackling Poverty Unit)	Reduction of the anti-poverty activities budget. In house training venues have been used and more support has been gained from delivery partners. E.g. we have used committee rooms and not provided printed training packs for the courses	6	6	6	Delivered
Social Inclusion Unit (no longer exists – this is now the Tackling Poverty Unit)	Not appoint to the newly created Fair Credit Officer post . Review the role of the Campaigns and Development officer post, and look to create one post called the Financial Inclusion officer, which will be offered as a job share. The Financial Inclusion Officer post is in place as a job share and is supporting the Financial Inclusion Steering Group, and providing support to the work around Welfare Reform. This does mean that certain activities have been predominantly stopped e.g. fuel poverty, benefits take up campaigns, capacity to undertake research relating to the poverty agenda	29	29	29	Delivered
Reduce grants to external bodies (3rd Sector)					
341 34004 Swansea Change Fund	Cut in the payment of grants to external bodies. The funding pot has been reduced this year and therefore less grants have been handed out. This has not had any impact on any particular organisation, or community of interest	50	50	50	Delivered

	Total savings achieved:	129	129	129	Delivered (Removed from the P&P base budget)
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- 3.6 These are the budget savings within the previous Target Area portfolio which were agreed in 2013/14 for savings in 2014/15. There are further savings targets across the Poverty & Prevention service, but they are not the responsibility of the Anti-poverty portfolio. These relate to services for children and young people, and community safety.
- 3.7 None of these savings have impacted on the Council's ability to deliver my portfolio's aims and objectives or the delivery of the Poverty Strategy and the Corporate Plan priority going forward in 2015/16 and beyond.
- 3.8 Therefore my portfolio has achieved the budget savings set within 2014/15 of £129k. The savings in 2015/16 in my portfolio which include the Grow local grants, growing officer post and the part time admin post in the partnerships team will achieve a further £53k.

3.9 Savings targets agreed for 2015/16

Budget Description	Action	Target 2015/16 £'000
Additional 20%		
Reduce and continue the Grow Local Grants Grow Local Grants The grants will continue to be available to community	To stop all further applications in the financial year and reduce the funding pot in 2015/16 to £20k per year	30

and voluntary sector groups to support new growing spaces and projects

Reconfigure the Community Food and Growing team and look to progress towards establishing a Community Interest Company

To reduce the numbers in the team from 3 to two posts

The Community Food and Growing team will look to create a Community Interest Company which will generate its own income and employ the two remaining members of staff. Allotments will be transferred back to colleagues in the Place Directorate – under negotiation at this time.

To delete the separate Food Officer post and Growing officer post and reconfigure the work into one Food and Growing Post
Initially this will save £13k, and then £70k by 2017/18 when the CIC is developing.

13

Total 43

4. Progress against policy commitments

Policy Commitment	Anticipated Outcome	Milestones and steps to deliver it	Responsible Officer / Cabinet Member	Progress during Qtr 2 2014/15 & RAG status
Tackle Poverty and unemployment, especially among young people and within the most deprived	The development and implementation of an anti-poverty plan.	A draft poverty strategy and action plan have been produced (including a poverty profile and a performance framework). There are plans to develop an external Poverty	Director of People and the Head of Poverty and Prevention	Green Tackling Poverty Strategy was launched at Council on 4 th November 2014

<p>communities. Draw up and implement and anti-poverty action plan for the city</p> <p>(ref: 7.9)</p>	<p>The reduction of poverty and unemployment, especially within the most deprived areas</p>	<p>Partnership under the auspices of the LSB.</p>	<p>Leader, Rob Stewart</p> <p>Cllr Will Evans</p>	<p>Swansea Partnership Poverty Forum has met twice looking at its role and then working on a big issue of post LAC support in Swansea. Each of the Communities First Clusters has Prosperous Communities Officers that focusses specifically on supporting local residents to access work. This work is supported by the activities of the Learning and Healthier Communities Project Officers that enable local residents to move closer to the job market. Across the Clusters during the first half year: 213 adults have gained a qualification 91 people (aged 25+) have entered employment</p>
<p>Explore with Swansea's Credit Union, new ways it can use the extra powers provided by the last Government to make loans to micro businesses, to support expansion of local economic activity in our</p>	<p>Loans are available to individuals for small business set up.</p>	<p>There is limited capacity here as LASA Credit Union does not have a specific product for Micro Business in terms of loaning money to existing businesses. It does however have capacity to offer small loans to individuals who wish to set up a small</p>	<p>Head of Poverty and Prevention</p> <p>Cllr Will Evans</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Credit Union Review has been completed and a set of 10 recommendations have been made to strengthen the working relationship between the Credit Union and CCS. These recommendations will assist in the future direction, priorities and funding of the credit union</p>

city. (ref: 7.12)		business e.g. self-employment. This could form the basis of a future SLA arrangement with the Credit Union		LASA is exploring potential options for involvement with WCVA 's national programme to develop a micro loan scheme.
With other public sector employers explore the feasibility of implementing a 'Living Wage' for those employed on low incomes. (ref: 7.12)	Encourage other employers in the city to pay the present Living Wage rate of £7.45 per hour to any staff under this at present.	The Council has implemented the Living Wage in April 2014	Head of Poverty and Prevention Cllr Will Evans	Green Swansea Uni is looking at implementing the Living Wage
Work with Moneyline Cymru and the local credit union to help low-income citizens with affordable loans and personal finance. (ref: 7.12)	An appropriate range of banking provision including a saving, loan and payment function is available across Swansea	FISG - readiness for UC action plan to be developed and progress overviewed by the CCS Poverty Forum Housing SLA for rent accounts	Head of Poverty and Prevention Cllr Will Evans	Green Credit Union Review has been completed and a set of 10 recommendations have been made to strengthen the working relationship between the Credit Union and CCS. These recommendations will assist in the future direction, priorities and funding of the credit union The Financial Inclusion Steering group a multi agency working group is developing an action plan detailing the range of provision that will need to be in place to support residents of Swansea when

				<p>Universal Credit is introduced.</p> <p>Credit Union Review has been completed and a set of 10 recommendations have been made to strengthen the working relationship between the Credit Union and CCS. These recommendations will assist in the future direction, priorities and funding of the credit union</p>
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Policy Commitment	Anticipated Outcome	Milestones and steps to deliver it	Responsible Officer / Cabinet Member	Progress during Qtr 2 2014/15 & RAG status
<p>Work with organisations such as Swansea Citizens' Advice Bureau and make targeted use of schemes such as Community First, to enhance the Council's existing Welfare Rights Unit to help low-income families, including working parents with children.</p> <p>(ref: 7.13)</p>	<p>To increase the accessibility and consistency of advice in relation to benefits for families living in deprived areas.</p>	<p>The Tackling Poverty Unit is providing Welfare Rights advice and training to frontline staff across the CCS and partner organisation. This is increasing the capacity to ensure low-income families have access to benefits advice and support.</p> <p>Communities First staff are working closely with CAB to ensure that any outreach is getting to the people who most need support, and helping the CAB to get new clients. The SIU are liaising closely with the Prosperous Officers maximizing their support to</p>	<p>Head of Poverty & Prevention lead</p> <p>Cllr Will Evans</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>79 Staff from across CCS and partner organisations attended training delivered by the Tackling Poverty Unit (219 April – Dec)</p> <p>Communities First funding is being used to enable CAB to deliver advice provision on day a week within each Cluster.</p> <p>Initial discussion have taken place between Tackling Poverty Unit and CAB to look at a possible sharing of training provision. CAB staff to access TPU benefits training in</p>

		those in need.		exchange for CAB delivering Debt Advice training to CCS staff.
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5. How you have engaged with service users / public in your work and what influence this has had

- The majority of my portfolio engages with the public on a daily basis whether through the Communities First programme, or the information and support provided to community and voluntary sector organisations receiving grants and funding advice.
- The Communities First programme has Community Involvement plans which assist the Communities First cluster areas to understand and support their local communities.
- The Tackling Poverty Unit's Welfare rights staff engage with service users via support workers across the Council to assist them in maximising their benefits, and undertaking appeals. These cases have influenced practice for residents by other Council departments, and by Welsh Government and National Government departments e.g Department for Work and Pensions.

6. What you hope to achieve over the next 12 months and what the challenges are (e.g. resources / budget)

- As smooth as possible introduction of Universal Credit to Single claimants newly claiming – the challenge is the introduction of new systems, processes, and changes in payments to individuals, especially those that are more vulnerable.
- Delivering the poverty strategy – this is an ambitious action plan with some stretched targets within the Performance framework – galvanising the resources of the whole Council in the delivery of this is a challenge, and the inclusion of other organisations in developing their own poverty strategies.
- Continuing to develop the Communities First programme, and additional employment support services within communities

7. Any specific issues where you would welcome the involvement of scrutiny

- Support in the delivery of the council's tackling poverty strategy and the role and support of members and officers/departments from across the council
- Assisting with the introduction of Universal Credit as one of the major changes through Welfare Reform