



Report of the Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty

Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee – 24 July 2023

Refresh of Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy

Purpose:	The report is to update the Service Transformation Committee on the refresh of the corporate Tackling Poverty Strategy and to feedback on initial themes.
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For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1. Swansea Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2027 sets out six Corporate Priorities, one of which is 'Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities – so that every person in Swansea can reach their potential'. Underpinning this Corporate Priority is our strategic direction for tackling poverty.
- 1.2. In 2017, the Council published 'Working towards prosperity for all in Swansea - a tackling poverty strategy for Swansea'. Refreshing this 2017 – 2020 strategic document was delayed due to prioritising the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Cost of Living crisis. There was also a strong desire to undertake co-production and engagement activities to inform the refresh of the strategy.
- 1.3. The Tackling Poverty Strategy 2017 – 2020 defined poverty as:
 - Income below the Minimum Income Standard (As defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation);
 - Inadequate access to necessary services of good quality;
 - Inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision-making activities.

- 1.4. The Tackling Poverty Strategy 2017 – 2020 set out an ‘everybody’s business’ approach to tackling poverty and the following vision:

The Council aspires to achieve a Swansea in which:

- **Income poverty** is not a barrier to doing well at school, having a healthy and vibrant life, developing skills and qualifications, and having a fulfilling occupation.
- **Service poverty** is tackled through targeting resources where they have the most effect, with decisions about that made in conjunction with service users.
- **Participation** is enjoyed by all our residents, who have the opportunity and resources to join in with social, cultural and leisure activities and decision-making.
- Residents **Maximise their Income** and get the most out of the money that they have.
- Residents avoid paying the '**Poverty Premium**', the extra costs people on low incomes must pay for essentials such as fuel and transport.
- **Barriers to Employment** such as transport and childcare are removed.

2. Strategy Content – Early Findings

- 2.1. The refreshing of Swansea Council’s Tackling Poverty Strategy is building on the previous priorities and incorporating the learning from the COVID-19 pandemic response and the Cost of Living crisis.

- 2.2. The strategy will be based on the following characteristics of poverty, as identified through the Audit Wales review ‘Time for Change’ published in November 2022. We expect that our priorities for action will align with these seven common issues facing people in poverty. Tackling Poverty is also one of the key priorities of the Human Rights City approach.



- 2.3. We recognise the journey that people living in poverty are facing and our strategy will align with the following **headings** / key stages of this journey by:

- Focusing on **early intervention** to prevent poverty from happening;
- Dealing with **poverty crisis** to help people in greatest need or risk to avoid or escape crisis point;
- Enabling **poverty reduction** by supporting people already in poverty to reduce the effects or impacts of poverty;
- Helping people to **improve personal prosperity** by developing the confidence, skills and opportunities to tackle poverty for themselves;

- Ensuring people **recover from poverty** and helping them to **exit poverty sustainably** (mitigating the risk that they may return to poverty).

2.4. Based on evidence collected to date and early findings from our strategy development work, we have already started to identify potential priorities for tackling poverty including:

- Creating co-produced pathways out of poverty;
- Tackling and preventing homelessness;
- Improving access to affordable and energy efficient homes;
- More employment opportunities & support to improve employability;
- Improving access to / coordination between services;
- Improving digital inclusion;
- Tackling stigmas, discrimination & inequality.

3. Strategy Revision Process

3.1. Co-production and engagement using a wide range of approaches are being undertaken to ensure that the voices of all key stakeholders - including those with lived experience of poverty and groups that are at higher risk of poverty - shape the development of the strategy and actions.

3.2. Methods of co-production and engagement have included and will include: discussions with the Swansea Poverty Partnership and the Council's Poverty Forum; intelligence gathered from other relevant and recent events such as the Human Rights Action Plan Development event; an online survey for individuals and stakeholders; bespoke scheduled events across a range of venues; and maximising the network of internal and external services and partners to reach and gather a wide range of voices.

3.3. The final strategy will be subject to the findings of our co-production and engagement plus desktop research, review of national strategic drivers, drawing from good practice, recommendations from governing bodies such as Audit Wales, and aligning with other Corporate Priorities.

3.4. The refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy will reconfirm our strategic intent, and priorities to set out how the Council will deliver on the Corporate Objective of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities with clear reporting structures in place.

3.5. A formal consultation period will follow including various formats of the Draft Tackling Poverty Strategy suitable for all audiences prior to the approval and adoption process.

4. Timescales and Next Steps

4.1. The following dates reflect the key phases of the refresh of the Tackling Poverty Strategy:

July and August – Engagement and Co-production.

August and September – Integrated Impact Assessment process and initial drafting.

September – Internal approvals to progress to formal consultation phase.

September and October – Alternative formats developed.

October and November – Formal consultation phase.

November – Finalising and stakeholder feedback

December – Final approval process

- 4.2. Anybody who wishes to contribute to the co-production and engagement process - to inform the initial draft of the strategy ahead of its formal consultation phase - can get in touch with the Tackling Poverty Development Team via email tacklingpoverty@swansea.gov.uk .

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1. The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 5.2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 5.3. Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 5.4. An Integrated Impact Screening has been completed for this report with no further assessment required (See Appendix B). This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information and Action' Report to the Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee (STC) regarding the refresh of the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the strategy development process in due course.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. There are no legal implications.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached. Any such costs will need to be managed within departmental resources at that time with due regard to the Council's medium term financial plan.

Background papers: Current Tackling Poverty Strategy
<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/9610/Tackling-Poverty-Strategy>

Appendices:

Appendix A: IIA Screening Form