



Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Hysbysiad o Gyfarfod

Fe'ch gwahoddir i gyfarfod

Pwyllgor Datblygu Polisi Lleihau Tlodi

Lleoliad: O bell drwy Microsoft Teams

Dyddiad: Dydd Llun, 26 Gorffennaf 2021

Amser: 3.30 pm

Cadeirydd: Y Cyngorydd Phillip Downing

Aelodaeth:

Cynghorwyr: C R Doyle, D W Helliwell, P K Jones, L R Jones, E T Kirchner, D Phillips, C Richards, K M Roberts a/ac L V Walton

Gwyllo ar-lein: <https://bit.ly/3haRP2U>

Agenda

Rhif y Dudalen.

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb. | |
| 2 | Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol. www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeluCysylltiadau | |
| 3 | Cofnodion. Cymeradwyo a llofnodi, fel cofnod cywir, gofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol. | 1 - 3 |
| 4 | Diwygiad Strategaeth Trechu Tlodi Cyngor Abertawe. | 4 - 38 |
| 5 | Datblygiad Polisi Adennill Dyledion Personol Corfforaethol. | 39 - 42 |
| 6 | Cynllun Gwaith 2021-2022. | 43 |

Cyfarfod nesaf: Dydd Llun, 27 Medi 2021 ar 3.30 pm

Huw Evans

Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd

Dydd Llun, 19 Gorffennaf 2021

Cyswllt: Gwasanaethau Democrataidd: - 636923

Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 28 June 2021 at 3.30 pm

Present: Councillor P Downing (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C R Doyle
K M Roberts

Councillor(s)

P K Jones
L V Walton

Councillor(s)

E T Kirchner

Also Present:

Councillor M Sherwood

Officer(s)

Aled Gruffydd
Amy Hawkins
Jeremy Parkhouse
Joanne Portwood
Anthony Richards

Lawyer
Interim Head of Adult Services
Democratic Services Officer
Strategy and Policy Officer
Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development
Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): D Phillips and C Richards

4 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

5 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the previous meetings of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee were approved as correct records.

6 Promoting Affordable Credit Draft Policy.

Anthony Richards, Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development Manager presented a report which sought to adopt an overall policy which embedded the promotion of affordable credit.

It was outlined that a draft of the Promoting Affordable Credit Policy, attached at Appendix A, was presented to Corporate Management Team on the 4 November

2020 where it was agreed that the development of the policy could progress to public consultation, prior to it progressing and being adopted as policy.

The Draft Promoting Affordable Credit Policy Public Consultation launched on the 26 April 2021 and ran for a period of four weeks, closing on the 23 May 2021. The consultation was promoted to the members of the Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum, Financial Inclusion Steering Group and Swansea Food Poverty Network and a list of members of these groups was provided at Appendix B.

The report provided a summary of the consultation findings and it was noted that a total of five responses were received, three of which were from third-sector organisations. It was added that all respondents had read the draft policy and a full summary of the consultation findings was included at Appendix C.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- The low number of consultation responses received compared to the number of organisations contacted;
- The IIA Screening / Full IIA / report process to follow if the recommendations were approved by the Committee and the timescales involved;
- Asking those organisations that were consulted why they had not responded;
- The draft report making issues more difficult than they are in reality.

Councillor L V Walton thanked Councillor M Sherwood, the previous Chair of the Committee for her work on the draft policy.

Resolved that: -

- 1) further work be undertaken to scope the implications of the draft policy with Credit Unions;
- 2) further work be undertaken to explore the barriers to accessing affordable credit and identify a range of affordable credit options;
- 3) IIA Screening / Full IIA be carried out;
- 4) the draft policy report be presented to the Committee prior to being forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

7 Work Plan 2021-2022.

The Chair provided the Committee Work Plan report for 2021-2022.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- Green Fairness Policy;
- Corporate Debt Policy;
- Working to Prosperity: Tackling Poverty Strategy;
- Garden Sharing / Community Food Growing Policy;
- Social Care Financial Guidance;
- Swansea Poverty Truth Commission;
- Campaign to Increase Benefits Take-up.

Resolved that: -

- 1) The Chair, Vice-Chair and Joanne Portwood, Strategy & Policy Officer meet with Martin Nicholls, Director of Place to discuss the Green Fairness Policy and report back to Committee in August / September 2021;
- 2) The Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development Manager presents a report to the Committee meeting scheduled for 26 July 2021 outlining the principles of the Corporate Debt Policy prior to engagement / development of the policy;
- 3) The current Tackling Poverty Strategy be circulated to the Committee and the outline / vision be reported to the Committee for review;
- 4) The Chair, Vice-Chair and Joanne Portwood, Strategy & Policy Officer meet with Martin Nicholls, Director of Place to discuss progressing Garden Sharing and the principles of a Community Food Growing Policy;
- 5) A report regarding Social Care Financial Guidance be reported to the Committee;
- 6) The Committee be updated on progress regarding the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission in autumn 2021;
- 7) Jane Storer, Senior Welfare Rights Advisor be requested to present an update on the Campaign to Increase Benefits Take-up at the Committee meeting scheduled for 26 July 2021, subject to her availability.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 4



Report of the Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities

Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee – 26 July 2021

Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Purpose: | To revise the Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy 2017 - 2020. |
| Policy Framework: | Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy Welsh Government's Financial Inclusion Strategy Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Socio-Economic Duty 2021 |
| Consultation: | Access to Services, Finance, Legal. |
| Recommendation(s): | It is recommended that: 1) It is recommended that the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee approve the Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision as set out in Section 2 of this report, as a starting point to coproduce a final version with our partners and communities. |
| Report Author: | Anthony Richards |
| Finance Officer: | Chris Davies |
| Legal Officer: | Aled Gruffydd |
| Access to Services Officer: | Rhian Millar |

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Tackling Poverty – so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential, is one of Swansea Council's six Corporate Priorities for 2021-2022.
- 1.2 Swansea Council's current Tackling Poverty Strategy – 'Working towards prosperity for all in Swansea 2017-2020' (See Appendix A), was due for review during the 2020/21 financial year. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that resources were reprioritised to the Council's response to the

pandemic. Subsequently, the planned revision of the strategy was delayed.

- 1.3 Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy 2017-2020 sets out its commitment to reducing poverty and the impacts that poverty has upon its residents.
- 1.4 This report presents the main headlines of the strategy together with the draft priorities for a revised strategy. This report recommends that this will form the basis of a starting position with which to coproduce a revised Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy with our partners and communities.

2. Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision

2.1 The current strategy establishes an approach in which tackling poverty is everybody's business across the council.

2.2 The current strategy defines poverty as:

- Income below the Minimum Income Standard. (The Minimum Income Standard is based on what the public think people need for an acceptable minimum standard of living as researched 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.

2.3 The current strategy establishes a Vision for Swansea as follows:

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 decision 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 transportation and childcare are removed.

2.4 Based on the experience of implementing the strategy since 2017, learning from the Covid response and the current social, economic and environmental position; it is proposed that the existing 'everybody's

business' approach (2.1), definition of poverty (2.2) and vision for Swansea (2.3), together with the following draft priorities for the delivery of the revised strategy, form the basis for coproduction of the strategy:

1. Enabling strong families and communities.
2. Improve educational attainment, routes to further education, training or employment and opportunities for learning throughout life.
3. Improve access to affordable and secure homes.
4. Improve opportunities for participation for all including social, cultural, leisure activities and coproduced solutions.
5. Maximise incomes and reduce costs.
6. Promote economic growth that is accessible, inclusive and benefits everyone.
7. Support people to improve their employability, find work that pays fairly and progress in work.
8. Reduce health inequalities and improve well-being.
9. Support people in crisis or risk of crisis / most vulnerable.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee approve the Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision as set out in Section 2 of this report, as a starting point to coproduce a final version with our partners and communities.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the public sector duties relating to equality and socio-economic inequalities as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010 , the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, 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.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 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'.

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 An IIA has commenced and will be finalised prior to taking to Council.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 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.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 as well as its duties under the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 .

Appendices:

Appendix A A Poverty Strategy for Swansea 2017 - 2020

Working towards prosperity for all in Swansea

A tackling poverty strategy for Swansea

2017-2020



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1. Introduction

Swansea Council is committed to reducing poverty and the impacts that poverty has upon its citizens. Poverty limits aspirations, damages relationships and ensures a loss of life chances.

Poverty is a multi-faceted concept. This strategy starts by defining poverty and comparing this with other useful current definitions provided by the Joseph Rowntree¹ and Bevan² Foundations. Our definition is not one relating solely to income, but to poverty of opportunity, participation and access to services. We aim to provide a foundation of common language and to begin exploring how different causes, impacts and aspects of poverty have different policy and service implications. As such, addressing poverty is not just an issue for the Council but a matter of concern for our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The impacts of poverty can last a lifetime and some interventions can take a lifetime to manifest themselves in a changed and improved situation. In short, tackling poverty takes time. This strategy outlines planned actions to fulfil the promise to tackle poverty in Swansea and to prioritise services where they will have the greatest impact.

The Council faces unprecedented challenges. Rising demand, changing demographics and increasing pressure on budgets mean that the choice for local authorities and public service providers is a difficult one. Unless we reduce demand and prevent need escalating, service provision in its current form will become unsustainable. People living in poverty often face complex challenges, increasing their personal and community demand upon services. It is not however, simply about reducing demand on services. We must also ensure we continue supporting people to become resilient and achieve outcomes that they want to see in their own lives, which will in turn reduce demand on services, alongside improving the assets and resilience in communities.

This strategy should be read in the context of our **Prevention Strategy**. Swansea Council has always taken a preventative approach. This was borne from a longstanding recognition that prevention activity is better, less time consuming and ultimately less costly and damaging to individuals and organisations than cure. This revised tackling poverty strategy presents a more ambitious direction, building upon previous work and recognising that all, including key partners and stakeholders, have a role in the prevention agenda.

¹ www.jrf.org.uk - An independent organisation working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice

² www.bevanfoundation.org - An independent, non-political think tank which develops ideas to make Wales fair, prosperous and sustainable

Two key aims are driving this and the Prevention strategy:

- **A desire for increased organisational and personal resilience;**
- **Sustainable services.**

Steeped in the principles of Sustainable Swansea,³ this strategy is about **delivering more sustainable services that meet people's needs and deliver better outcomes**. It is about supporting the development of a community and urban fabric, which has future resilience and independence in both the medium and long term. Our citizens are central to our future and delivery, and as such, are the focus of our developments, driving collaboration across Council Departments and with partners. Consequently, this strategy forms a key part of our corporate transformation programme and the way we will continue to develop our services with our partners. Our work particularly with and through Swansea's Public Services Board is essential to future delivery here.

In order to make this work, we will have to think differently, encouraging innovative solutions to existing problems and those that arise. We also have to be clear that savings do not drive our agenda: better, more personalised and joined up services do.

This strategy sets out our overarching corporate and partnership approach to tackling poverty, as well as outlining our key activities and expected outcomes. It starts, setting out our rationale, and how it supports national, regional and local policy, including our Plan for a Sustainable Swansea. We then provide evidence, further justifying need, our reasons for intervention and our approach. We have highlighted our delivery history in this area and early successes, giving a flavour of what prevention activity can achieve in reducing poverty. We link our activity closely to the recent advice given by the Joseph Rowntree and Bevan Foundations in their document, ***Prosperity without Poverty a framework for action in Wales***. Lastly, we provide a governance structure explaining how we will work. A time-bound delivery plan describing our activities in more detail: who is accountable and when we intend to achieve them supports delivery. Ultimately, the Poverty Strategy and its application have to advance and progress the culture of ***poverty is everyone's business across the Council***.

We hope you enjoy reading this strategy. Moreover, we look forward to working with local people and partners in the public, private and third sectors in delivery, making a positive difference to the lives of local people, improving their quality of life and contributing to a **Sustainable Swansea**.

³ For details of Sustainable Swansea, see Strategic Context on page 6

2. What is poverty?

There is no single, universally agreed definition of poverty. Our paper submitted to the Poverty Scrutiny Inquiry as part of the evidence *Understanding and Defining Poverty – A guide for Swansea*⁴ defines and explores many terms and concepts relating to poverty. It goes on to explain the basis for the definitions we are using in Swansea and for the vision we have of a Swansea where poverty cycles can be broken.

JRF's definition of poverty is when **a person's resources are well below their minimum needs, including the need to take part in society.**⁵

In Swansea, we define poverty as:

- **Income below the Minimum Income Standard.**⁶
- **Inadequate access to necessary services of good quality.**
- **Inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision making activities.**

Our vision for Swansea⁷

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.

People from Swansea's most disadvantaged communities are not excluded and **Inequalities are Reduced** between and within communities.

⁴ www.swansea.gov.uk/povertystrategy - Understanding and Defining Poverty – A Guide for Swansea

⁵ 'Prosperity without Poverty – a framework for action in Wales.' JRF – November 2016.

⁶ In 2017, single people needed to earn at least £17,900 a year before tax to achieve Minimum Income Standard, and couples with two children at least £20,400 each. JRF, July 2017 A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2017, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-uk-2017> These figures fluctuate annually.

⁷ The City and County of Swansea's Corporate Plan 2017/22

3. Strategic context

Sustainable Swansea Programme

Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future, is the Council's long-term plan for change. Financial, demographic and social challenges facing Swansea require radical approaches. Sustainable Swansea is a programme of activity, tools and techniques that will help us to take a managed approach to the challenges that the Council faces. The objectives are:

- To transform services;
- To deliver better outcomes for residents to achieve financial sustainability.

One of the key priorities for a sustainable Council is collaboration with others, including residents.

A whole council approach is far more likely to maximise impact. Our proposal to support the delivery of this strategy through involvement and participation will support the co-production of services with people experiencing poverty.

The One Swansea Plan

Swansea's Local Service Board (LSB) produced this. It highlights that in working as **Team Swansea, partnership working has never been more important**. The increasingly difficult social, economic and environmental pressures on public services, coupled with the substantial reductions in public funding, mean that service providers have to work together more innovatively than ever before to increase efficiency, effectiveness and reduce reliance upon intensive, costlier interventions. The Public Services Board (PSB) as the overarching partnership group for public services Swansea has succeeded the LSB. The PSB must set a Well-Being Plan for Swansea (the PSB is currently consulting on the Well-being plan with four objectives), and currently their approach retains the focus on the same **six Population Outcomes** in the One Swansea Plan. These are:

- A. Children have a good start in life**
- B. People learn successfully**
- C. Young people and adults have good jobs**
- D. People have a decent standard of living**
- E. People are healthy, safe and independent**
- F. People have good places to live and work**

Placing this strategy in a **One Swansea** context, we have aligned our intended outcomes to these outcomes as our headings for actions. These are referred to later in this strategy and within the associated **Delivery Plan**.

Swansea Council Corporate Plan

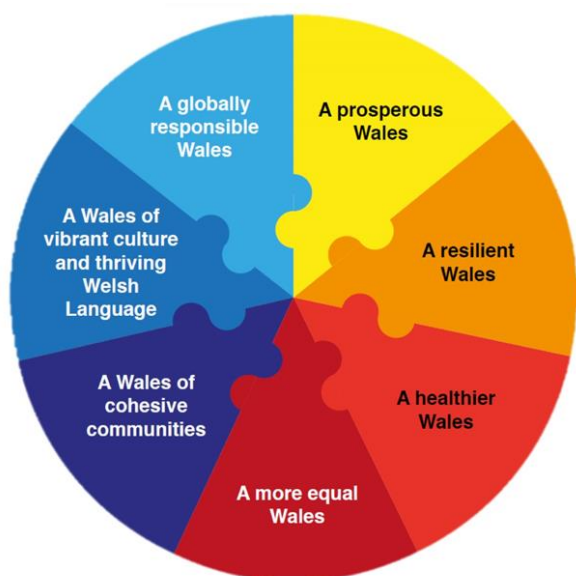
Tackling Poverty is one of the five key objectives of Swansea's Corporate Plan. In delivering this objective there are a number of key areas, which we as a Council are working to address, including:

- **Safeguarding people from harm** – so that our citizens are free from harm and exploitation.
- **Improving Education & Skills** – so that every child and young person in Swansea gains the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life.
- **Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure** – so that Swansea has a thriving mixed use City Centre and a local economy that will support the prosperity of our citizens.
- **Tackling Poverty** – so that every person in Swansea can achieve his or her potential.
- **Transformation & Future Council development** – so that we, and the services we provide, are sustainable and fit for the future.

We will continue to tackle poverty through the activities highlighted within the associated **Delivery Plan**.

Welsh Government

Welsh Government has a national picture and approach to well-being through new legislation within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The idea of embedding poverty prevention within the Council's work builds not only upon national requirements, but also emphasises a **Swansea approach** to its delivery. It is essential that our approach aligns with the wider direction of Welsh Government, implemented locally through our PSB. The wider strategic context can be seen here:



Well-being of Future Generations Act

Our Poverty strategy will make a positive contribution to Well Being Goals of the Act.

A resilient Wales - A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems supporting social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to (e.g. climate) change.

A prosperous Wales - An innovative, productive/low carbon society recognising the

limits of the global environment; using resources efficiently/proportionately and which develops a skilled and well-educated population, in a wealth generating economy, providing employment opportunities, allowing people to benefit from the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A healthier Wales - A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

A Wales of cohesive communities - Attractive/viable/safe and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language - Society promoting/protecting culture/heritage/Welsh language, encouraging participation in arts/sports /recreation.

A globally responsible Wales. When improving the socio-economic environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, we consider the positive contribution to global well-being.

Social Services and Well-being Act

The Act has a wide remit that will impact not only upon Social Services, but also on wide-ranging local authority services such as housing, education, leisure, regeneration, poverty and prevention and those of our partners, particularly the Local Health Board and third and private sector providers. Some services are provided regionally via Western Bay. Under Part 2 of the Act, General Functions, there is a duty to:

- *Promote wellbeing*
- *Provide preventative services*
- *Promote social enterprises, co-operatives, user led services and third sector*
- *Provide Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA)*

The Council's delivery of the Poverty Strategy takes into account the requirements of both Acts, alongside additional legislation, such as the Housing Act and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Swansea's Poverty Strategy 2014

Swansea Council has, for some time, been committed to reducing poverty and its impacts. Tackling poverty is a corporate priority and the first strategy to address this was written in 2014. It, like this strategy, focussed upon supporting the six population outcomes of One Swansea.

The original three themes⁸ are captured in this document, but as time has moved on, our ideas have matured and whilst these themes remain current, they have developed slightly to capture circumstances and reassert importance.

1. Empowering local people through involvement and participation

⁸ Original themes from Swansea's Poverty Strategy 2014, 1) Empowering Local People, 2) Changing Cultures and 3) Targeting Resources.

2. **Changing cultures to reflect that tackling poverty is everyone's business**
3. **Targeting resources to maximise access to opportunity and prosperity**

Our Delivery Plan links our activities under these themes for clarity. The Integrated Impact Assessment and Scrutiny of this document led to the following recommendations.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Carried out in 2016, this formed the first part of a much wider review of the tackling poverty strategy, feeding into the Poverty Strategy Scrutiny process. The key themes and recommendations from this process feed into this revised strategy and are in brief below.

Integrated Impact Assessment's key recommendations

Link to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Social Services and Well-being Act

Clear Sustainable Swansea focus

Develop clear and measurable milestones

Include a definition of poverty

Work with people experiencing poverty to develop provision

Make clear linkages to economic policy

Develop and deliver the strategy through the principle of 'poverty is everyone's business'

Tackling Poverty Strategy Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

This panel examined *How can the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy be improved*. This was chosen because Tackling Poverty is one of the Council's top five priorities (as highlighted in Swansea's Corporate Plan) a Peer Review of Swansea Council conducted by the Welsh Local Government Association in 2014 recommended that scrutiny should focus more on these priorities. It is also an issue that many scrutiny councillors feel passionately about, not least because they see the effects of poverty day to day in their communities. Specifically, the inquiry aimed to contribute to this vital debate by providing:

- Evidenced proposals that will lead to the strategy being more effective
- The views of people experiencing poverty
- The views of key stakeholders
- Consideration of the conclusions and recommendations from national reports and an assessment of the implications for Swansea
- Identification of good practice/research elsewhere and learning for Swansea
- Increased councillor understanding about the Tackling Poverty Strategy
- Greater public awareness of the work of the Tackling Poverty Strategy

The Report of the tackling poverty scrutiny panel was published in March 2017. Many of the Scrutiny Panel's ideas highlighted are in line with planned activities, and reflected in this strategy.

Ideas from the scrutiny process

Make a new commitment to tackling poverty
Embrace the sustainable development principle
Focus on 'what works'
Involve people experiencing poverty at the centre of the strategy
Integrate the strategy into Swansea's Well-being Plan
Collaborate fully through Swansea Public Services Board
Strengthen the links to economic policy
Fundamentally rethink the target area approach
Ensure that tackling poverty is everyone's business
Continue to revise the strategy on a regular basis – keep it current

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Our thinking around poverty and its reduction/prevention fit well with the recently published 'Prosperity without Poverty: a framework for action in Wales'⁹ produced jointly by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Bevan Foundation. This document draws upon national research and evidence to provide a framework for actions in Wales, a summary is in the text box below. The actions are set at many levels, and one thing is key – ***addressing poverty is everyone's business.***

'Prosperity without Poverty' – A framework for action in Wales – JRF

Economic growth for everyone – better jobs, local jobs, supporting people to get work
Boost education and skills – excellent education, better apprenticeships, essential skills
Strengthen families and communities – thriving early years, galvanising community action
Cutting costs – cut the costs of essentials, housing, reduce demand,
Complex needs
Making it happen

We have considered the JRF recommendations (where possible and appropriate) in production of this document.

⁹ 'Prosperity without Poverty: a framework for action in Wales.' Joseph Rowntree Foundation – November 2016.

4. Why intervene

The cost of “mopping up” problems resulting from inequality is estimated at £78bn per annum UK-wide, compared to other similar countries

The UK experiences disproportionately high inequality with stark consequences. Some examples are below, making comparisons between the UK and the developed OECD countries:¹⁰

- 17th out of 23 in life expectancy.
- 19th out of 22 on obesity.
- 17th out of 21 on teenage births.
- 17th out of 23 for imprisonment.

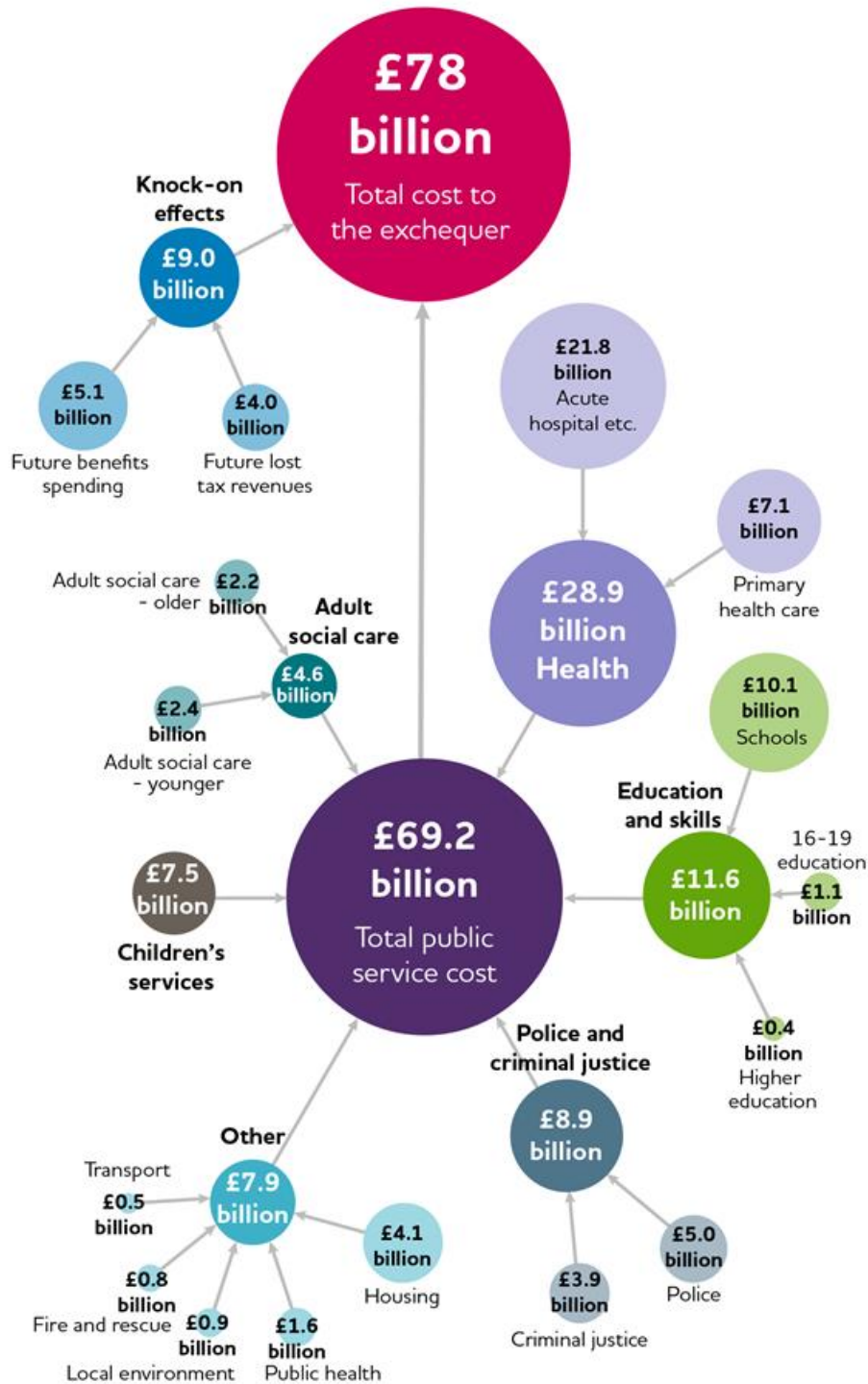
In stark contrast, societies that are *more equal*, top the table in almost every measure.

Crucially, for the delivery of public services, the financial costs associated with inequality are significant, affecting health, wellbeing and crime rates. Conversely, were we to achieve greater equality we would experience reductions in crime, consequent reductions in imprisonment, better physical and mental wellbeing, increased life expectancy and a more prosperous society.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation also highlight and support this theory in looking at the costs associated with poverty. The diagram on the following page estimates the costs of poverty in the UK at an even greater total of £78 billion per annum to the Exchequer.

¹⁰<https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Cost%20of%20Inequality%20%20-%20of%20full%20report.pdf>. P.2

The cost of poverty to the UK's exchequer



#solveukpoverty

¹¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-causes-costs-and-solutions> P.30

The effects of poverty

Poverty affects every stage of people's lives. Some of the key effects of this upon families and individuals living in low-income households are in the box below:

Children have poorer mental and physical health

People have fewer years free from illness and are likely to die sooner

Children achieve worse results at every stage in school, restricting earning potential and increasing the risk of passing poverty between generations

People pay more for essential goods and services such as fuel, transport and food¹²

Poverty restricts economic growth through limiting labour market skills and through limiting disposable income flowing in local and regional economies, reducing treasury tax revenues.

Conversely, work to reduce poverty premiums and boost benefit income helps the economy. Research looking at the impact of financial inclusion initiatives in Leeds by the West Yorkshire Observatory has shown that an investment of £3m has generated £26m additional income with a further regional economic impact of £28m.

Investing in financial inclusion boosts the economy as well as living standards. £3m spent on interventions = £26m in people's pockets.¹³

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)¹⁴

ACEs, or chronic stressful experiences in childhood, are demonstrated to increase the likelihood of adopting health-harming behaviours such as smoking, problem drinking, poor diet, low levels of exercise and risky sexual behaviour. These behaviours can cause premature ill health and in parallel lead to the development of linked antisocial behaviours and criminal activity. Links are seen in poor educational performance and skills development.

Consequently, children affected by ACEs, because of these trends and behaviours 'often end up trying to raise their own children in households where ACEs are more common'. (ACE Report, p.2) People living in communities with high deprivation have a far higher risk of experiencing single and multiple ACEs.

¹² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/prosperity-without-poverty>

¹³ <http://www.westyorkshireobservatory.org/Custom/Resources/FI%20Research%202009%20Final%20report.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.cph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ACE-Report-FINAL-E.pdf>

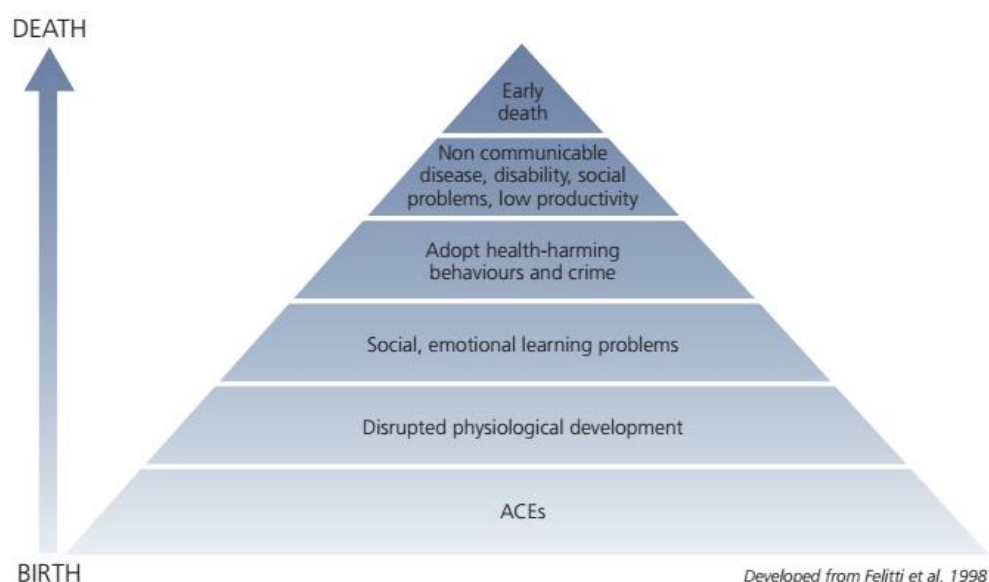


Figure 1: Model of ACE impacts across the life course [1]

15

This is why we have placed Tackling Poverty initiatives alongside ensuring children have the best start in life to mitigate some of the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

Aspiration and Opportunity

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁶ highlight that however great the aspirations of children – and their parents – from poorer backgrounds, they find it far harder to achieve them than children from better off families. Supporting low-income families to develop cultural resources, have quality time together, avoid risk and feel enthused about the future, enables natural aspirations to flourish.

Stigma (negative belief or attitude) and Discrimination (negative behaviour)

Stigma associated with poverty is corrosive. It affects self-perception and self-confidence, resulting, commonly, in: a) benefit under-claiming, hence reduced income; b) reduced participation and social isolation, as people avoid situations where they may be labelled by others; c) reduced access to services (due to lack of confidence). It also affects the way people experiencing poverty are viewed by others, resulting in discrimination. This creates losses in income, opportunity and support. Stigma silences the voices of those stigmatised. This reinforces exclusion and makes it more difficult for people to escape from poverty.

¹⁵ <http://www.cph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ACE-Report-FINAL-E.pdf>. P.7

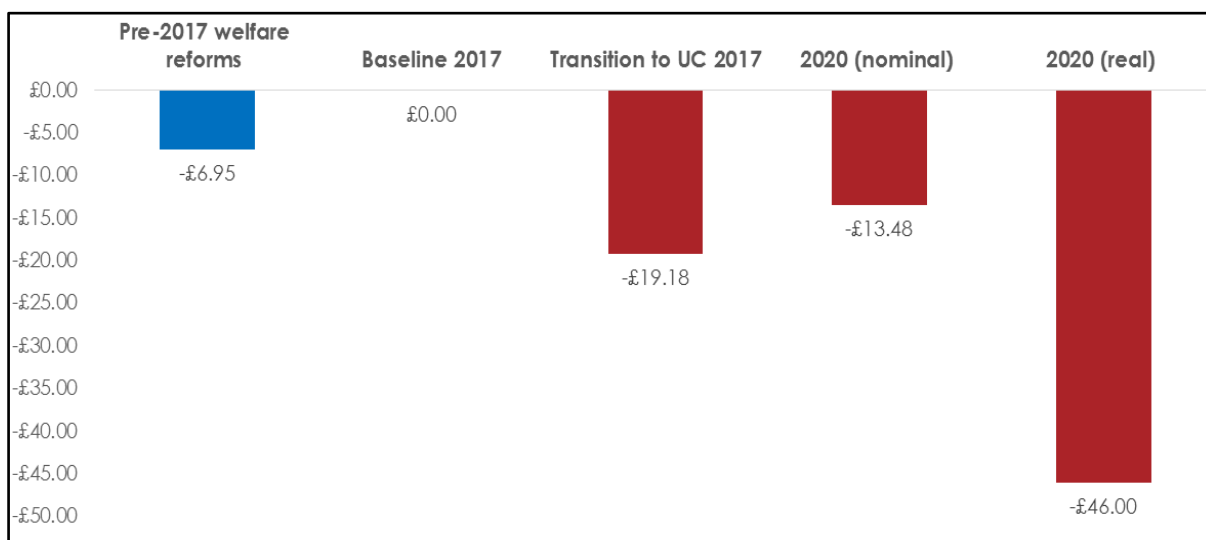
¹⁶ JRF. (2012) Carter-Wall, C. and Whitfield, G. JRF Roundup: *The Role of Aspirations, Attitudes and Behaviour in Closing the Educational Attainment Gap*. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-achievement-poverty-summary.pdf>

The Impact of Welfare Reform

Swansea Council commissioned Policy in Practice¹⁷ to investigate the impact of multiple welfare reforms at the household level in Swansea.

The Single Household Benefit Extract (SHBE) data March 2017, which contains information on every household in Swansea receiving Housing Benefit, was analysed to examine the impact of the main welfare reforms that have already taken place. In addition to those yet to be implemented, the mitigation measures put in place by the government and the cumulative impact of all these on individuals and low-income households in Swansea.

The below table breaks down the average weekly impact that each welfare reform will have on working age households in the cohort, taking 2017 as a baseline. The average household will be £46 per week worse off in 2020 compared to 2017. Policy and Practice concluded that when considering the real impact of welfare reform by 2020 they find that the percentage of households with lower disposable income would increase to 95%, 4.1% of households would see their income increase and 0.8% would face no change in income.



5. Tackling poverty through early intervention and prevention

A relatively small group of people and families in poverty face additional and more complex challenges. This may include mental health conditions, homelessness, experiences of violence and abuse, substance misuse and involvement with the criminal justice system. We also include asylum seekers and refugees because they often face additional and complex challenges. The circumstances of these groups of people often overlap and interact, making escaping poverty more difficult and potentially increasing the risk of destitution.

The roots of these complex needs can be seen in their concentration in areas of long-term economic decline. The most effective prevention measure is therefore to reduce material

¹⁷ The cumulative impact of welfare reform in Swansea. Policy in Practice, May 2017

poverty itself, especially among families with children and unemployed young people living in disadvantaged areas.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlights five principles that underpin their **recommended** approach to groups facing poverty combined with complex needs:¹⁸

1. Personalisation – support based around the whole person or whole family;
2. De-institutionalisation – mainstream, ordinary housing and employment as far as possible, with support as required;
3. Re-integration – getting into work and ordinary social settings;
4. Asset-based – building on an individual's existing strengths; and
5. Poverty-informed – dealing with financial and material hardship, alongside complex needs such as addiction.

Welsh Government supports meeting the needs of people with complex needs through the provisions in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and **When I am Ready** scheme for care leavers. We describe our approach to support these policies in later sections of this document and the accompanying **Delivery Plan**.

Our history and successes

Swansea has a long and proud history of supporting our citizens through the delivery of statutory services. We have a key role in the delivery of public services for Swansea and as such, services such as public protection, health and safety and accident prevention are at our core in service delivery as is the Safe Looked-After Children Reduction Strategy. This has resulted in a significant reduction year on year (for the last six years) in the numbers of children needing recourse to care. The increased recognition of the value of prevention activity led to an acceleration in our prevention approach to improve the wellbeing of people in Swansea, driven by the Council's commitment to providing £1 million for pilot prevention projects in 2014. Here, we delivered a set of pilot preventative approaches, which sought to address gaps in services working with children, young people and adults. The proposals were based upon an **invest to save** approach which aimed to change behaviours and prevent the need for involvement in costly specialist services, often followed by a long-term support programme. Some pilots, because of their success in demonstrating new delivery methods, namely Local Area Co-ordination and Tackling Domestic Abuse (via the DV Hub) will continue having proved their effectiveness. Others have demonstrated better ways of working and have been embedded in service delivery, becoming **business as usual**. The nature of the projects involves individuals in finding better stability, helping them to prosper and develop resilience. We support the development of individuals, getting them on to a pathway of development and improvement, which gives access to opportunities, skills development and possibly employment in the medium to longer term. We have a number of examples (below)

¹⁸ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/prosperity-without-poverty>. P.26

where a preventative approach has delivered better outcomes and made cost savings in service delivery.

Case Study – The Family Support Continuum

A child was identified to have high levels of difficulty in speech and language and was referred to the speech and language team within early years. Home visits showed that he was looked after by his grandmother while mum and dad worked, spending most of his time in a play pen. His play skills were limited so the Early Language Development Team (ELDT) initially worked on these skills. At the same time, the family, including the grandmother, was encouraged to come to parent and toddler group and song and rhyme sessions at the library. They were also encouraged to access further support. The child and his family, once ready, were helped by the speech and language (SALT) team. This involved early language groups and 1-2-1 sessions. He has now moved on to nursery and his speech and language skills are on par with other children in his class.

Case Study – Local Area Coordination

A gentleman in his 60's with mental health problems and chronic pain on Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance met a Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC) at a Food Bank and they chatted about his money problems. Unable to use public transport for long distances, he was spending £40 per return taxi journey to hospital. The LAC told him about the community car scheme, which reduced his travel costs to £13 per return journey. He was also in desperately poor housing, but faced many barriers to changing this, including lack of funds for medical forms, and illiteracy. He was depressed and disheartened. Over time, the LAC supported him to identify useful resources including Housing Options, and friends, who lent him money and wrote forms for him.

He is now in sheltered supported housing, helping other neighbours who are less able than he is, reporting vastly improved mental health, and only comes to the Food Bank to say hello.

Case Study – Lift Employment Support

Trevor had been unemployed for over sixteen years and was referred to the Lift Programme in November 2014. Over a period of eleven months Trevor has been involved in a number of activities through Lift, including literacy and IT classes, Asbestos Awareness and Scaffolding courses, CSCS training and work experience with Gwalia Housing and Pentre-Graig School, through 21st Century Schools. 8 weeks' work experience was arranged through the Council's Beyond Bricks and Mortar initiative on a 21st Century Schools project at Pentre-Graig School. On completion of the work experience the Beyond Bricks and Mortar Team asked ASW (ASW Property Services Ltd, a national construction company) if they would consider employing Trevor to work on their Kitchens & Bathrooms Contract. Trevor was interviewed for a labouring position the next day and is now a valued member of the ASW team.

Trevor has been a pleasure to work with. He is polite, punctual and hard working. Trevor was just looking for someone to have faith in him, and offer him some support, so that he could gain a few much needed qualifications and finally find work.

We received a phone call to advise us that a representative from ASW was travelling down from Stoke and wanted to interview Trevor for a labouring position the next day. As Trevor does not possess a home or mobile phone, we dropped a letter through his letter box and crossed our fingers.

Later that day Trevor contacted us to confirm his attendance and the next day he cycled the eight-mile round trip to his attend his interview. Upon his return, he dropped into our office, to inform us that he had successfully secured a permanent position with the company. He also wished to express his gratitude to us for the continued support we have given him throughout the year.

6. Shared leadership and shared resourcing.

Poverty is everyone's business. We have seen and evidenced that the wider impacts of poverty affect intergenerational life chances. They also have a significant and costly impact upon public, private and third sector services. Within organisations such as the Council, the Police and the Local Health Board, they impact upon all customer-facing services, reflecting the complexity of needs that people in poverty face. It is therefore in our interests to work across Council Departments and with our partner organisations to address poverty. Most crucially, this will improve the quality of our citizens' lives. Consequently, this will impact upon the delivery of better, more coordinated and less costly public services.

The principles we will adopt as Swansea's approach to tackling poverty are:

- A whole Public Services Board and whole Council approach.
- Building resilience, social capital and social networks.
- Involvement and participation of service users.
- Implementing 'what works' in future delivery.

The importance of partnerships

We recognise that reducing poverty is everyone's business within the Council and is therefore our corporate approach. We have developed key performance indicators to reduce poverty across all Council directorates. Governments have a leading role in setting priorities and providing the framework, but businesses, citizens and communities have a vital part to play too. At the local level, the Public Services Board has a key potential role in making it happen, working across all sectors.

Government and publicly funded bodies

The Welsh Government has already started the process with its commitment to prosperity for all, plans to reform childcare and proposals on employability and skills. It must back its leadership on these issues with effective delivery on the ground, whether directly or through others. We are, however, yet to see and fully understand the impact of changes in the Communities First Programme, alongside renewed Welsh Government commitment to their highlighted priorities of **Empowerment, Employment and Early Years**. Our Poverty Strategy needs therefore to take a dynamic delivery approach to enable a response to such changes, minimising negative impact and maximising future opportunity for Swansea.

Local government's contribution is vital, as the front-line provider of education, social and economic development services. With our community leadership role, we have an unrivalled reach and profile in disadvantaged places.

Add to this the important role of health boards, further education colleges and higher education institutions and there is a great deal that the public sector can and must do. Swansea's Public Services Board is therefore vital in supporting poverty reduction.

7. Our approach

We highlighted earlier the three themes of this strategy, building upon those of the original Tackling Poverty Strategy for Swansea, namely:

Theme 1. Empowering local people through involvement and participation

Theme 2. Changing cultures to reflect that tackling poverty is everyone's business

Theme 3. Targeting resources to maximise access to opportunity and prosperity

Swansea's six Population Outcomes were adopted by Swansea's LSB and are retained by the PSB (mentioned earlier in this document). This approach helps us to look at all the ways that we can focus on tackling poverty through the framework of the Population Outcomes, which are forming the structure for Swansea's Well Being assessment under the Future Generations Act:

Integration – by looking at all six population outcomes, our tackling poverty approach will be comprehensive and corporately integrated.

Collaboration – no one organisation owns these outcomes, they are shared by the whole Public Services Board and within the Council, and different departments have relevant roles.

Involvement – Addressing the issue of poverty is not solely an issue for the Council but also a matter of concern for all agencies, whether they are private sector, public sector or third sector.

Theme 1 - Empowering local people through involvement and participation

We agree that participation and engagement are crucial if we are to give opportunity and voice to our citizens, hence our commitment to co-production of services with our service users and our community development work, particularly with communities experiencing multiple disadvantage. We already carry out regular service user surveys and are in the early stages of co-production of commissioned services in line with the principles of the Future Generations and Social Services and Well-being Acts.

The Council is the lead delivery body for Communities First and its successor programmes, and delivers a range of further community development services, including the commissioning of the Change Fund through the Third Sector. This work is essential in developing and maintaining services at the heart of communities as well as finding initial engagement opportunities to hook people into services that can help in their further development and involvement.

As a social housing provider, the Council also delivers our Tenant Participation Strategy, supporting tenant involvement and participation.

Baseline information is essential if we are to target our services effectively. If, for example, we know that a household has poor income, due to low pay and/or reliance on benefits, we can predict that other issues may arise. It makes sense to target that household giving benefits advice and/or employability support to encourage where possible and raise income. As an early win for this strategy, we have therefore **commissioned Policy in Practice to work alongside the Council's Revenue and Benefits Team to identify the cumulative effect of benefit reforms on households in Swansea** in order that we can target our services more effectively. We will present this information to the Council's Poverty Forum¹⁹ to analyse and develop a response, which could include:

- Targeting employability support
- Targeting financial inclusion support
- Helping people to be better off
- Identifying and delivering service cost savings

Poverty is an issue best understood by those who experience it and live with its effects every day. That is why in this strategy, the involvement and participation of people who themselves are affected by poverty is crucial. The Council is committed to working with local people in order to achieve long-term change. Without them, there is no delivery. Scotland held the first poverty truth commission in Fife in 2014. Another successful one took place in Leeds, from which our Scrutiny panel heard evidence, recommending that a similar approach be taken in Swansea.

'The Commission believes poverty will only be truly addressed when those who experience it first-hand are at the heart of the process.'²⁰

We have therefore committed in our Poverty Strategy Delivery Plan to **consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea**, one option being along the lines of the Truth Commission work and taking into account the work we are already involved in.

Delivering more

This strategy comes at a time of transition when Welsh Government are considering options for change to the Communities First programme, suggesting new direction around the themes of empowerment, employment and early years. We will **develop responses to emerging guidance in the delivery of Welsh Government funded community development programmes, maximising benefit and opportunity for our communities.**

¹⁹ See Appendix A, p31

²⁰ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/contact/poverty-truth-commission>

We will:

Business as usual

Continue to deliver community engagement services in line with emerging funding from Welsh Government.

Continue to use coproduction in recruitment of local area coordinators.

Continue to develop community enterprise activities to deliver services more flexibly.

Commission Policy in Practice to work alongside the Council's Revenue and Benefits to identify the cumulative effects of benefit reforms on households in Swansea

Early Wins

Consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea.

Delivering more

Respond to emerging guidance about Welsh Government funded community development programmes, maximising community benefit and opportunity.

Theme 2 – Changing cultures to reflect that tackling poverty is everyone's business

We highlighted that all Council Staff have a role in prevention activity in our prevention strategy and recognise that all Council and partner services can impact positively on reducing poverty. We also recognise that if they are unable to do so there will be adverse impacts upon their future delivery, particularly rising cost. The IIA and Tackling Poverty Scrutiny consequently reinforced that tackling poverty needs to be supported by all – internal Council Departments and our partners in the public, private and third sectors.

We will:

Business as usual

Continue to develop and deliver our prevention approach with partners as outlined in the prevention strategy.

Early Wins

Develop or identify and report appropriate KPI's with Council departments to ensure delivery.

Delivering more

Work with the Poverty Partnership Forum to identify shared projects and KPIs to support the wider poverty prevention agenda.

Ensure that management information systems are suitably robust to measure transition through ages and stages, measuring effectiveness through quality control.

Deliver training with members and officers to promote the poverty is everyone's business approach.

Theme 3 – Targeting support to maximise access to opportunity and prosperity

In delivery of this theme we have considered support at all ages and stages to enable a person to maximise their potential as a **skilled, prosperous and resilient individual**, hence the linking of the six population outcomes here.

Population Outcome A: Children have a good start in life

'Family stability enables children to flourish and two parents, living together, are better able to earn enough for a decent standard of living. Family breakdown increases the risk of poverty, especially persistent poverty. The goal should be to help parents stay together where possible and when they cannot, the aim should be to help parents to separate and parent well.' (JRF, 2016, p.18) ²¹

We will:

Business as usual

Continue the success in Child and Family services, of the effective approach to safe reduction in numbers of looked- after children and enabling them to be cared for either within Swansea or nearby.

Continue to deliver the Signs of Safety practice model, supporting the whole family.

Continue to deliver the Flying Start programme, measuring the impact upon attainment and attendance at the Foundation Phase.

Continue to deliver relationship support via the Equilibrium project.

Early Wins

Remodel support for families with children (including those with disabilities).

Deliver Team Around the Family (TAF) in schools within all primary schools in Swansea.

Work to improve speech and language provision through the Early Years Strategy Group.

Delivering more

Further develop the Teenstart pilot, providing multi-disciplinary and multi-agency team support to parents under the age of 25.

Deliver the extended childcare pilot in Swansea, testing new and best approaches.

Roll out extended childcare approaches across Swansea following pilot and future funding decisions from Welsh Government.

Population Outcome B: People learn successfully

Building skills across the spectrum through education and training is essential, both economically and to individuals in realising their potential. We believe in Swansea, that skills are an important factor in driving growth, focusing on reducing the proportion of individuals with very low skills or qualifications. Skills development has to be at all stages from basic and

²¹ JRF (2016, p.18) *Prosperity without Poverty – a framework for action in Wales*. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/prosperity-without-poverty> (Accessed: 17 January 2017)

essential skills, encompassing employability skills to academic, professional and vocational skills. In addition, the quality of advice and guidance about skills development and career choices is essential in realising personal dreams and developing achievable aspirations. There are gaps in the provision of career advice.

We will:

Business as usual

Support pre 16 children to improve school attendance with a focus on free school meals pupils.

Contribution at post 16 to continued NEET reduction and improved young person and family wellbeing through the NEETS reduction strategy.

Early wins

Quick review of Council employability provision to maximise skills outcomes.

Develop school-to-school support to share and develop good practice in the use of Pupil Development Grant (PDG).

Maximise training and employment opportunities through our Council- wide apprentice and trainee strategy for young people, targeting those in greatest need.

Provide additional support to young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, through Cynydd.

Delivering more

Support pre 16 to improve school attendance, through 'Education other than at school' (EOTAS) reforms and improvements.

Children and young people showing improved social, emotional and behaviours outcomes through EOTAS intervention.

Facilitate development of pathways to skills or trades linked to economic development opportunities such as City Deal.

Target resources on need and personal circumstances, rather than on participants' age and previous qualification level.

Increasing participation and improving outcomes in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects and other demand sectors.

Work with partners and through the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership to focus on outcomes such as the incomes of participants and productivity of employers, not just qualifications achieved.

Work with schools and colleges to provide good-quality, expert careers advice to young people.

Develop programmes to provide adults with independent, personalised advice and support services to enable low-paid workers to move into better-paid roles.

Population Outcome C: Young people and adults have good jobs

We are keen in Swansea to support an economy where people can find better local jobs, with the right level of support to help them to access opportunities.

We will:

Business as usual

Deliver Swansea's Beyond Bricks and Mortar principles across all our procurement processes to bring local benefit from service and construction contracts.

Use Welsh Government Community Benefit Measurement Toolkit to report community benefit and wider economic impact.

Continue to deliver Employability Programmes and work based learning help for local people to develop skills and access job opportunities.

Early wins

Maximise work experience benefits and employment outcomes to young people who are NEET via the Cam Nesa Project.

Actively encourage employment practices that reduce poverty including the Living Wage.

Review our welfare to work provision to maximise the use of resources and job outcomes.

Encourage local recruitment to entry-level positions within the Council through simplified recruitment processes.

Use HR processes to share work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships across a range of abilities, including disadvantaged individuals and particularly looked after children.

Benchmark the number of disadvantaged Swansea residents accessing entry-level posts.

Develop an appropriate wage approach re traineeships and apprenticeships.

Extend social value principles across our full development process to maximise opportunities.

Delivering more

Maximise skills and job opportunities from key developments such as City Deal.

Maximise our purchasing power and that of partners to deliver targeted recruitment and training and other community benefits.

Work to identify resource to deliver specialist support such as an Intermediate Labour Market programme for those furthest from the labour market, combining work experience with ongoing support and job search activity.

Encourage the further delivery of employability skills within schools.

Develop our partnership with Jobcentre Plus and key Welfare to Work Partners to maximise access to skills and job opportunities for Swansea citizens.

Maximise work readiness and experience opportunities for local people within Council Departments and through PSB partners.

Work with third sector partners, PSB partners and within the Council to maximise volunteering opportunities for skills development.

Examine public transport routes to link people in disadvantaged communities to areas of jobs growth by efficient and affordable public transport.

Population Outcome D: People have a decent standard of living

We have already seen that people living in poverty often have to pay more for essential goods and services (including energy costs). In addition, personal circumstances such as disabilities can also increase personal costs. Cutting the cost of essentials and ensuring that people access their full entitlements can have a significant impact upon household income, poverty and local economies. These factors are compounded by people having to pay comparatively high rents to private landlords because of shortages in the social housing sector.

We will:

Business as usual

Continue to deliver advice services for council tax and housing benefit entitlements. Continue to support in the resolution of benefit disputes and maximise benefit incomes through our Welfare Rights Service.

Continue to provide engagement services through Council Cultural and Community Development Services.

Continue to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness through ensuring successful financial outcomes and maximising income for people receiving support from the Tenancy Support Unit (TSU).

Continue to provide support and advice to council tenants in arrears with debt and financial difficulties.

Continue to support the development of energy- efficient affordable mixed tenure housing within Swansea.

Early wins

Develop social finance capacity through for example the credit union to widen credit access and reduce spiralling debt.

Coordinate partner activity through the Council's Poverty Forum and partner activity through the Poverty Partnership Forum in support of digital inclusion, financial inclusion and benefits advice.

Consider the use of research through Policy In Practice to target support to residents at risk of income reduction through benefit changes.

Maximise community engagement activity through Welsh Government's Fusion programme.

Delivering more

Work with partners to support innovation in the provision of good-value essential goods and services through social and not-for-profit enterprise.

Develop a Rents Strategy. Part of this strategy will ensure that the arrears recovery process is easy to understand and takes account of customer needs, particularly those who may be vulnerable.

Using Policy In Practice research to target services around income maximisation.

Population Outcome E: People are healthy, safe and independent

The IIA and Scrutiny processes have identified the important role that local people living in poverty have to play in helping to inform upon and co-design provision and support. We have seen in earlier sections too, intention to consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea.

We are also aware of the key role that our third sector and social business partners play in local community support and tackling poverty. We already deliver a personalisation agenda around local and community services in Swansea, supporting greater independence as a preventative approach. This co-productive means of supporting people challenges poverty in itself and fosters resilience. We have already experienced the positive impact that better incomes have upon people's health. We already invest in Swansea in a number of initiatives with this at their core.

We will:

Business as usual

Continue our successful approaches to tackling domestic violence, coordinating activity through the Domestic Abuse Hub.

Continue the successful approach of the Supporting People Programme.

Early wins

Consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea.

Extend Local Area Coordination approaches to strengthen community relationships and address barriers such as loneliness, isolation and stigma.

Delivering more

Increasing digital literacy, increasing access to a wider range of Council Services including Financial Inclusion.

Population Outcome F: People have good places to live, work and visit

Our wider environment and investment portfolio have a long-term impact on the opportunity, ambition and ultimately, people's decision to live in, work in and visit Swansea. The success of our local people and their relative prosperity will have a direct impact on wider decisions in Swansea as a place to invest. This cyclical relationship will have a great impact upon our future. This outcome is greatly affected by the previous five.

We will:

Business as usual

Deliver a range of activities across core Council services such as culture, leisure, community centres and libraries to encourage participation.

Provide parks and open spaces for recreation and exercise, encouraging more active lives.

Continue to invest in achieving Wales Housing Quality Standard in our council housing to improve the accommodation and wellbeing of our citizens, reducing fuel poverty.

Further encourage private landlords to improve conditions and affordability in the private rented sector.

Continue to prioritise the supply of genuinely affordable housing further to meet objectively assessed need.

Continue to maximise the installation of insulation measures in Council Houses to reduce fuel poverty.

Early wins

Implementation of the adult services optimum model and the recommendations from the adult services commissioning reviews.

Implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act and in particular the establishment of the information, advice and assistance service.

Delivering more

Invest in opportunities through proposed developments such as City Deal.

Ensure our investment provides a strong legacy of employment and opportunity for future generations in Swansea.

8. Outcomes for the strategy

A 'One Swansea' Approach

We will judge outcomes of this strategy in line with achievements towards the expected outcomes of **One Swansea, linked to the three themes of this strategy**. In this way, as we further develop activities with our PSB partners, we can add them in to our **dynamic three year delivery plan**.

These key priorities can only be achieved through corporate and partnership approaches to tackling poverty in Swansea. The issues we face can only be tackled through focusing on **what works**, new ways of working where required, including joined up partnerships around shared issues, which build individuals, families and communities resilience and support people to achieve outcomes for themselves.

The poverty performance framework and its measurement is challenging. The period for change is lengthy as it relies upon addressing the complex needs of many individuals. There is also a range of partners involved in and crucial to development, including UK Government.

The attached **three-year delivery plan** outlines our more detailed activity.

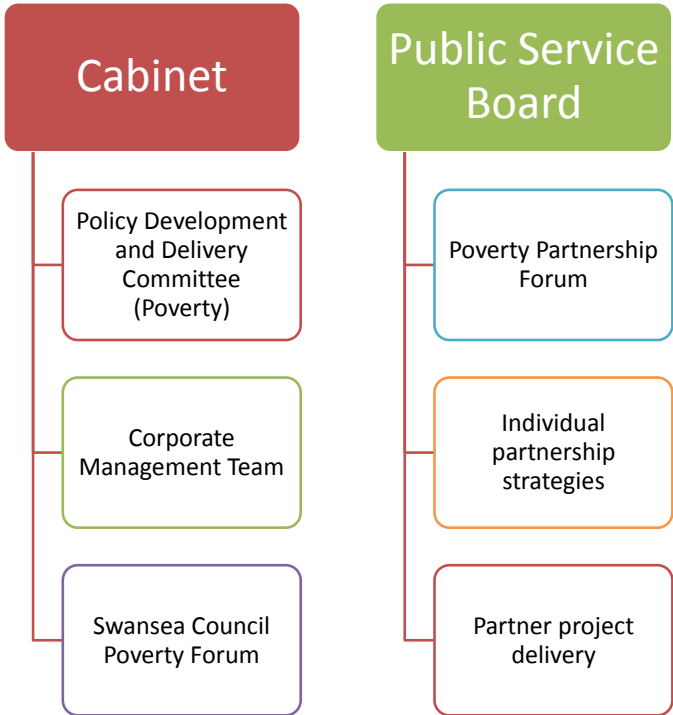
How will we know if we have been successful?

We will know that we have been successful when we see progress against the following outcomes.

- Key progress is made against the KPI's associated with our six population outcomes.
- Tackling poverty activity is embedded across Council Services and across the services of our PSB partners via the adoption of key performance indicators.

9. Governance

The diagram below shows how the Poverty Strategy will be managed within Swansea Council.



Explanation

The Poverty Forum and Poverty Partnership forum²² will support the principle that *poverty is everyone’s business*, promoting the message and developing projects and services to support this principle. Actions will be reported to the Cabinet, escalating through the above structure for decision where this is required. Progress of key performance indicators will be reported via the Council’s dashboard system on a quarterly basis.

Corporate Directors take responsibility for work and actions in their area and manage these through regular performance and financial monitoring meetings and reporting mechanisms. Progress is reported through Corporate Management Team and onto Swansea’s Cabinet. Decision making is regulated through Swansea’s scheme of delegation and standing orders. This plan will undergo a mid-term review once the new PSB outcomes are developed and published in 2018.

In addressing ‘making poverty everyone’s business’ specifically, **each** Directorate will develop key performance indicators to support delivery. These will also be governed through the above structure.

²² See Appendix A

10. Three-year delivery plan

The Delivery Plan outlining key activities and quarterly outcomes is attached to this document. The Delivery Plan is dynamic. For consistency, actions are grouped under the key aims of **One Swansea** – the adopted plan of the Swansea Public Services Board. A mid-term review will take place to reflect any changes made in the outcome profile from Swansea’s PSB in 2018.

Appendix A

Swansea Council Poverty Forum

The Chief Executive chairs the Swansea Council Poverty Forum and membership comprises of operational and senior managerial representatives from across the Council and health. The operational staff act as departmental poverty champions, with backing from their senior managerial representative.

The forum is the leading group bringing together all Council departments into a one Council tackling poverty approach, prioritising resources to tackle and alleviate poverty within and between departments. The forum champion and track delivery progress of the Tackling Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan on behalf of Swansea Council.

Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum

The Swansea Partnership Poverty Forum membership comprises of senior representatives from PSB member organisations and wider partners to lead and co-ordinate action to tackle poverty in Swansea. The membership includes representatives from South Wales Police, the Health Board, SCVS, Housing Associations, Credit Unions, Department of Work and Pensions and charities including Crisis, YMCA and Citizen’s Advice.

The partnership supports the development of new initiatives and programmes to tackle poverty throughout the county, and shares good practice. It develops processes and policies to focus resources, to generate new resources and align existing resources to tackle poverty.

Agenda Item 5



Report of the Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities

Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee – 26 July 2021

Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy Development

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Purpose: | To adopt a policy which embeds a corporate approach to the collection of personal debt. |
| Policy Framework: | Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy Welsh Government's Financial Inclusion Strategy Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Socio-Economic Duty 2021 LGA 1972 / Financial Regulations / Council Constitution |
| Consultation: | Access to Services, Finance, Legal. |
| Recommendation(s): | It is recommended that: 1) It is recommended that a Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee Working Group be established together with relevant service representatives invited to develop of a Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy. |
| Report Author: | Anthony Richards |
| Finance Officer: | Paul Cridland |
| Legal Officer: | Aled Gruffydd |
| Access to Services Officer: | Rhian Millar |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy would set out how Swansea Council would work with its customers and partners to collect personal debt and what it would do to help those who are in debt.
- 1.2 Debt could be defined as 'any amount owed that has not been paid by the due date.'
- 1.3 The policy could cover all personal debts owed to the Council, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Housing Rents
- Council Tax
- Parking Penalty Charge notices
- Social Care fees
- Housing Benefit Overpayments
- Overpaid Council salaries and wages (current and former employees)
- Parking season tickets
- Housing recharges
- Berthing charges
- Fines for littering and dog fouling
- Other debts owed to the authority

2. Developing a Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy

- 2.1 The Council recognises that a significant proportion of Council services are funded through taxes and service charges. If income is not collected effectively, then the authority will be unable to properly fund the vital services it provides for the citizens of Swansea or it will simply mean costs fall to others to pay more to make up the shortfall.
- 2.2 The Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) is required under The Local Government Act 1972 to ensure proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council. One such area of administration relates to the collection of income due to the Council. The Chief Finance Officer's responsibility, along with other officers, in the collection of income due to the Council is outlined in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.3 Swansea Council also recognises that early engagement from those at risk of debt or in debt, can prevent debts from escalating, reduce indebtedness and increase the ability of citizens to meet their financial responsibilities.
- 2.4 We know that anyone can experience financial difficulties at any time and that money problems do not just affect the person in debt. Families and communities thrive when people can afford healthy lives and avoid the stress of money worries.
- 2.5 We want Council policies to reflect this and our customers to know that we will help people with money worries to get free and impartial help if they want it.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that a Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee Working Group be established together with relevant service representatives invited to develop a Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the public sector duties relating to equality and socio-economic inequalities as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, 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.

4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 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'.

4.3 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.

4.4 An IIA screening has been opened and will be completed prior to corporate briefing. A full IIA may be required dependant on the outcome of the screening.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 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. Should that be the case, additional consideration will need to be given to how the additional costs / resources will be provided at that time.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 as well as its duties under the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Appendices: None.

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Chair

Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee – 26 July 2021

Work Plan 2021-2022

| Date of meeting | Agenda items and Format |
|-----------------|---|
| 28/06/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Promoting Affordable Credit Draft Policy. (Anthony Richards)Work Plan Discussion 2021-2022 |
| 26/07/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision. (Anthony Richards)Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy. (Anthony Richards) |
| 23/08/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Working Group |
| 27/09/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update on the Campaign to Increase Benefits Take-up (Jane Storer)Green Fairness Policy (Martin Nicholls)Community Food Growing Policy (Martin Nicholls)Garden Sharing (Martin Nicholls) |
| 25/10/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Swansea Poverty Truth Commission |
| | |
| Topics | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Corporate Debt PolicyImplementation on the Socio-Economic duty & the Community Food Growing PolicyGarden sharingSocial Care Financial GuidanceVolunteering PolicyPassport to LeisureWorking to Prosperity: Tackling Poverty StrategyPeriod Poverty |