



Report of the Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty

Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee –
16 September 2024

Update on Refresh of the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy

Purpose:	The report is for information purposes only.
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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 and enabling communities. Tackling poverty is also one of the key priorities of the Human Rights City approach.
- 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 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. Work has been progressing with the refresh of the Council's Tackling Poverty and a draft version is about to be shared for engagement and consultation purposes. This report provides an update on the progress of the work and the headline information within the draft strategy.

2. Approach to strategy development

2.1. 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. One of the key challenges during this process has been to identify and directly involve people with lived experience of poverty in the early stages of strategy development.

2.2. Development of the draft version of the refreshed strategy has therefore involved:

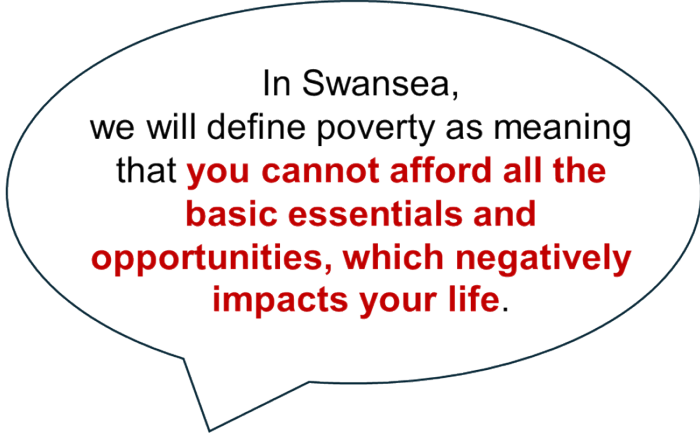
- Conducting a public survey in August/September 2023 which received over 300 responses from individuals and organisations across Swansea;
- Face-to-face engagement sessions including the One Stop Information Shop at the National Waterfront Museum and two public drop-in sessions at the Opportunities Hub in the Quadrant Shopping Centre;
- Analysis of various policies, strategies, studies and research findings that have been co-produced with people who have experienced policy from organisations such as Joseph Rowntree Foundation;
- Engaging with the Council's internal and external poverty forums to connect with teams and organisations who have direct contact with people who have experienced poverty.

2.3. The Tackling Poverty Development team has taken the lead on collating, analysing and exploring these insights and data sources to create a draft Tackling Poverty Strategy that is suitable for wider engagement and consultation, which will include:

- Further face-to-face engagement sessions with the general public and our key partnerships and forums;
- Quality review with colleagues from Council departments who are involved in tackling poverty, coordinated via the Enabling Communities Group and Swansea Council Poverty Forum;
- Direct engagement with the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission (SPTC) and other existing clients and contacts with lived experience of poverty;
- Public consultation – schedule to be confirmed by due by the end of the calendar year – to capture feedback from the general public.

3. Headlines of draft strategy

3.1. Feedback indicated that the **definition of poverty** within the current strategy is not fit for purpose and there were opportunities to make it easier to understand for everyone. We reviewed various existing definitions of poverty from international and national sources, incorporated contributions from our survey findings and collaboratively developed the following:



In Swansea,
we will define poverty as meaning
that **you cannot afford all the
basic essentials and
opportunities, which negatively
impacts your life.**

- 3.2. This definition is supported with a fuller explanation and examples of the different characteristics of poverty. Having a definition that is easy to understand will help more people to identify that they need help and support.
- 3.3. We have considered the various aspects of tackling poverty against the wider strategic ambitions for Swansea to develop a vision for poverty in Swansea based on three key aims:
 - **Earlier help** - people can access the right advice, guidance, support and help at the right time – based on their needs – before their needs escalate or worsen;
 - **Better outcomes** - communities, organisations and people with lived experience of poverty play a vital role in helping others to break free from poverty in a safe and sustainable way, to reach their potential and achieve their ‘best life’;
 - **Less poverty** - there is less poverty in Swansea because everyone is working together to support people and communities;
- 3.4. The refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy defines broader principles and themes for tackling poverty in Swansea, which will underpin all of our work across multiple sectors, organisations and communities. The ethos of the refreshed strategy is that this is a “**One Swansea**” **approach**, which means that it’s not just the Council’s strategy but a call for all of our partners and supporters to work together to achieve this vision.
- 3.5. Translating the strategy into action is going to be the key next step once the refreshed strategy is published. The draft document proposes how this will be coordinated through a **Tackling Poverty Action Plan** and we will establish the processes required to make sure that our actions are co-produced with people who have lived experience of poverty. To start this process, we have identified the following eight priorities for change that will constitute our initial programme of transformational action.

Basic Essentials	We will take action to help people in poverty to afford or get access to the basic essentials they need to survive (such as food, clothes and financial support).
Child Poverty	We will take action to identify and address the needs of children and young people impacted by poverty, to ensure that their growth, development and prospects are not adversely affected
Community-enabled Support	We will take action to enable communities to provide more direct and local support for people in poverty including helping people to deal with the impacts of poverty.
Digital Inclusion	We will take action to help people access the internet and do more things online that will help them to avoid, mitigate or break free from poverty.
Health and Wellbeing	We will take action to protect, improve and safely maintain the emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing of people living in, or at risk of poverty.
Homelessness	We will take action to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to ensure that there are appropriate homes, resources and support available to meet their needs.
Information, advice and guidance	We will take action to ensure that people can access the latest information, advice and guidance in the channels and formats most suitable and accessible for them.
Stigma and Discrimination	We will take action to ensure that everyone is aware of what stigma around poverty looks like, and everyone is informed to help identify, address and prevent stigma and discrimination.

4. Next Steps

4.1. As work on strategy development has been delayed – in part due to restructuring of the Tackling Poverty Service in early 2024 as a result of changes in external grant funding circumstances – our revised plan is as follows:

- September – Engagement and Co-production (internal and external).
- October and November – Formal consultation phase.
- December – Finalising draft strategy based on feedback
- January to March – Final approval process in readiness for publication and launch.

- 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