

Report of the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities

Cabinet – 15 June 2017

RESPONSE TO THE TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGY SCRUTINY REPORT. ACTION, PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION: HOW CAN THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGY BE IMPROVED?

Purpose:	To outline a response to the scrutiny recommendations and to present an action plan for agreement.
Policy Framework:	None
Consultation:	Legal Services, Financial Services
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The response as outlined in the report and related action plan be agreed.
Report Author:	Will Evans – Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Ann Williams

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Action, partnership, participation: How can the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy be improved? Inquiry report was submitted to Cabinet on the 16th March 2017 after the Tackling Poverty Scrutiny Inquiry Panel completed a detailed inquiry into How can the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy be improved? The scrutiny report is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 Having considered the contents of the scrutiny report, and specific recommendations made, advice to Cabinet on whether it should agree, or not agree, with each recommendation is detailed in this report.
- 1.3 Cabinet is also asked to consider, for each of the responses, any relevant policy commitments and any other relevant activity.

2.0 Points on the Panel Report

2.1 General

There is much to welcome in the report. We particularly welcome recognition that Swansea is something of a pioneer in Wales in anti-poverty work, and we acknowledge that our first corporate Tackling Poverty Strategy was bound to have weaknesses, hence the wisdom of committing from the outset to a thorough review only two years into its life.

The scrutiny process has been a valuable element of that review, analysing many areas for improvement in the strategy, which were already beginning to be noted and addressed.

We had begun a review of the Tackling Poverty Strategy prior to the Scrutiny Inquiry beginning and so we sought to run the review alongside the work that Scrutiny was undertaking. I'm pleased to say that we aligned these two processes very effectively and already have a revised draft strategy (that came to Cabinet in March), which includes most of the recommendations and proposes a much stronger approach in the future. (Appendix 2 & 3)

2.2 Economic Regeneration

We welcome the positive remarks about Beyond Bricks and Mortar and Workways. This approach and projects support our Economic Regeneration Strategies and key development proposals. Council in August 2016 extended the Beyond Bricks and Mortar strategy to a council wide policy for all goods and services.

We have already taken steps to integrate the tackling poverty agenda in our large-scale regeneration initiatives including Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay, City Deal and our City Centre regeneration plans.

We welcome the invitation to ensure that “the links between the Council’s economic development work and the tackling poverty strategy,” are clarified in order, “to celebrate the work and to ensure that the links with the Tackling Poverty Strategy are made” (3.1.35) the revised strategy addresses this.

3.0 Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

Recommendation 4.1 Long term challenges (12 months+)
<i>4.1.1 Undertake a further fundamental review of the strategy in no later than two years' time</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: The previous commitment was to review the strategy in 2016. This has been undertaken as planned. The revised draft tackling poverty strategy (APPENDIX C and D) is intended to be a living document and ‘...will undergo a mid – term review once the PSB outcomes are developed and published in 2018’ pg. 30 revised strategy.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.2 Medium term improvements (6 - 12 months)
<i>4.2.1 Create a Swansea Poverty Truth Commission in order to provide challenge and promote culture change</i>

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken:
New actions following from the recommendation: This is a proposal in the revised strategy delivery plan Theme 1 Objectives 'Consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea', and is therefore not a firm proposal at this time. The challenge will be that to be meaningful, it should be partnership owned and the Council would be an equal partner.
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED subject to the involvement of other organisations

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<p><i>4.3.1 Create a new, comprehensive and simplified Action Plan that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Balances and links long term goals and short term actions</i> • <i>Reflects the five point action plan from the 'Solve Poverty' JRF Report</i> • <i>Links closely with the emerging Wellbeing Plan</i> • <i>Is a "whole Council plan"</i> • <i>Builds the evidence base</i> • <i>Arises from a revised strategy and which involves partners and people experiencing poverty from the outset</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
<p>Action already being undertaken:</p> <p>There is a new Delivery Plan in the strategy out for consultation in June. The Delivery Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has long and short term actions • Reflects on the JRF report • Has been unable to link closely with the well-being plan as it is not yet written, but has drawn from the Well-being Assessment. The mid-term review can usefully draw on the Well-being Plan as it will have been produced by then. • Is a whole Council plan, with actions for all directorates • Page 6 Scrutiny Inquiry Report' 'see 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 'It is not just a commitment that is needed but also an evidence base and robust framework for monitoring progress. • The draft revised tackling poverty strategy for Swansea, demonstrates a firm evidence base. • The revised strategy involved partners in the IIA, commissioned as part of the strategy review process, and consultation will involve partners and people experiencing poverty
New actions following from the recommendation:

Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.2 Develop a statement setting out the renewed commitment to tackling poverty, including a clear vision and definition of poverty, with the involvement of people experiencing poverty and in collaboration with partners. Develop a tackling poverty awareness and training programme for staff and councillors along similar lines to the safeguarding programme and make available to partners.</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy revised and will be out for consultation during June • Tackling poverty awareness training will again be provided for members and staff
New actions following from the recommendation: Capacity will be also be considered for additional training for partners
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.3 Engage people experiencing poverty as part of the consultation for a revised strategy</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: This is part of the consultation plan
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.4 Ask Swansea Public Services Board to renew the commitment to tackling poverty as one of the commitments listed in its partnership manual</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: Agreed, though commitment is only part of the picture, specific actions will be needed too. The outcome of the needs assessment should help shape the PSB work which will include poverty issues
New actions following from the recommendation:

Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.5 Consider how the strategy might support frontline staff</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: Training for staff is included in the revised Tackling Poverty Strategy Delivery Plan. See Theme 2 'Deliver training with members and officers to promote the tackling poverty is everyone's business approach.'
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.6 Link the strategy more closely to the six population outcomes of Swansea's Wellbeing Plan particularly Outcome D (People have a decent standard of living)</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: The revised strategy aligns with the six population outcomes including Outcome D. Economic regeneration and education are also particularly important in reducing and preventing poverty.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.7 Create a new simplified structure to deliver the strategy in collaboration with partners against clear, agreed and measurable outcomes and within a Performance Monitoring Framework. Monitoring to involve those experiencing poverty as well as partners.</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: A simplified structure for delivery is included within the revised strategy. Monitoring involving partners and people experiencing poverty – for people experiencing poverty we will continue to expand our co-commissioning approach to the development and delivery of services. In addition, subject to the involvement of partners, we would consider the commissioning of an involvement and participation study for Swansea. Re monitoring involving Partners, this is a corporate City and County of

Swansea strategy – we can explore and request collaboration on delivery with partners but not dictate.
We will endeavour to demonstrate the impacts and benefits to Partners so they see the impacts of the strategy, securing their involvement in its monitoring.

New actions following from the recommendation:

Cabinet Member Comments:

Recommendation is **AGREED in part**

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)

4.3.8 Ensure that future economic regeneration schemes have the maximum positive impact on tackling poverty by promoting well paid jobs and improving skills

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty

Action already being undertaken:

We have already taken steps to integrate the poverty agenda in large scale regeneration initiatives, for example, Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay and City Deal. We have been doing this for some years.
Corporate Community benefits policy approved by Council.
Beyond Bricks and Mortar has secured valuable employment and training commitments in Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay's Employment and Skills Plan.
Training is available via ESF Employability schemes administered by our European and External Funding Team.

New actions following from the recommendation:

Cabinet Member Comments:

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)

4.3.9 Undertake an urgent investigation of the Target Area policy as part of the revised strategy, in collaboration of partners and with the involvement of the people affected

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty

Action already being undertaken:

We already target resources where they are most needed, consciously and unconsciously (it is where many of our client groups live) for example housing and tenancy support, family support, employability support, housing capital investment, Pupil Deprivation Grant, Flying Start, Communities First, Communities for Work, Child & Family Services revenue budgets and the Mayhill project. Essentially, our targeting is based upon need rather than geography.

New actions following from the recommendation:

Cabinet Member Comments:

The Welsh Government Communities and children's secretary has recently announced a new approach in dealing with the root causes of poverty focusing on early years empowerment, employability and resilient communities and not confined to defined boundaries as for example in the "Communities First Programme".

Recommendation is **NOT AGREED**

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)

4.3.10 Include specific Tackling Poverty responsibilities within each Cabinet portfolio, with the Leader holding overall political responsibility and Chief Executive taking lead role on staff delivery. Ensure that all councillors are informed and involved, and where particular actions are planned in wards the councillors must be fully involved and consulted. All councillors to have poverty awareness training

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty**Action already being undertaken:**

- Chief Executive will oversee the delivery of the Poverty Strategy
- Councillors have received many briefings on progress with previous strategy
- All Cabinet Members will take responsibility for specific actions within the delivery plan

New actions following from the recommendation:**Cabinet Member Comments:**

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)

4.3.11 Future evaluation of the poverty strategy should involve ward councillors, partners and people experiencing poverty rather than being solely evaluated by officers

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty**Action already being undertaken:**

Agreed

New actions following from the recommendation:**Cabinet Member Comments:**

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)

4.3.12 Revise and refocus the Poverty Forum Executive – to be chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Leader as Poverty Champion and Public Services Board Chair

Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: Arises from a misunderstanding - Forum Executive was an organising group, not an executive body as such. New strategy identifies no need for this group, and strengthens accountability at CMT instead, fulfilling the function identified by the Scrutiny Panel.
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is NOT AGREED

Recommendation 4.3 Quick wins (within 6 months)
<i>4.3.13 Revise and refocus the Poverty Partnership Forum against specific actions / priorities</i>
Relevant Policy Commitments: Tackling Poverty
Action already being undertaken: Agreed, and is taking place
New actions following from the recommendation:
Cabinet Member Comments:
Recommendation is AGREED

3.1 An action plan for the agreed recommendations is attached as **Appendix B**.

4.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 There are no equality and engagement implications for the response itself. Actions have been incorporated into the revised Poverty Strategy which has had an EIA screening and a full EIA is required, this will be opened as soon as possible and will be progressed during and after the strategy consultation period.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from the response to the scrutiny inquiry report, it should be assumed that any resultant future spending needs in relation to the revised Tackling Poverty Strategy for Swansea, will need to be contained within existing budget provision and have full and due regard to the budget principles set out in 'Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future', the medium term financial plan and the likely levels of future budgets.

Background Papers:

None.

Appendices

Appendix A – [Original Scrutiny Report](#)

Appendix B – Scrutiny Inquiry of Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – Cabinet Action Plan

Appendix C – A Revised Tackling Poverty Strategy for Swansea (Draft)

Appendix D – Tackling Poverty Strategy Delivery Plan 2017-2020 (Draft)

APPENDIX B

Scrutiny Inquiry of Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation		Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1.	4.1.1 Undertake a further fundamental review of the strategy in no later than two years' time	The previous commitment was to review the strategy in 2016. This has been undertaken. The revised draft tackling poverty strategy is intended to be a living document and '...will undergo a mid – term review once the PSB outcomes are developed and published in 2018' pg. 30 revised strategy.		Mid Term Review	Rachel Moxey
2.	<p>4.3.1 <i>Create a new, comprehensive and simplified Action Plan that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Balances and links long term goals and short term actions</i> • <i>Reflects the five point action plan from the 'Solve Poverty' JRF Report</i> • <i>Links closely with the emerging Wellbeing</i> 	<p>There is a new Delivery Plan in the strategy out for consultation in June:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has long and short term actions • Reflects on the JRF report • Unable to link closely with the well-being plan as it is not yet written, but has drawn on 		Complete	Rachel Moxey

	<p><i>Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is a “whole Council plan”</i> • <i>Builds the evidence base</i> • <i>Arises from a revised strategy and which involves partners and people experiencing poverty from the outset</i> 	<p>the Well-being Assessment. The mid-term review can usefully draw on the Well-being Plan as it will have been produced by then.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a whole Council plan, with actions for all directorates • Page 6 Scrutiny Inquiry Report’ ‘ see 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 ‘It is not just a commitment that is needed but also an evidence base and robust framework for monitoring progress • The draft revised tackling poverty strategy for Swansea, demonstrates a firm evidence base. • The revised strategy involved partners in the IIA, commissioned as part of the strategy review 			
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		process and consultation will involve partners and people experiencing poverty			
3.	4.3.2 Develop a statement setting out the renewed commitment to tackling poverty, including a clear vision and definition of poverty, with the involvement of people experiencing poverty and in collaboration with partners. Develop a tackling poverty awareness and training programme for staff and councillors along similar lines to the safeguarding programme and make available to partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy revised and will be out for consultation following the election period • Tackling poverty awareness will again be provided for members and staff 	Capacity will be considered for additional training for partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete • TBD 	Rachel Moxey
4.	4.3.3 Engage people experiencing poverty as part of the consultation for a revised strategy	This is part of the consultation plan		June 2017	Rachel Moxey
5.	4.3.4 Ask Swansea Public Services Board to renew the commitment to tackling poverty as one of the commitments listed in its partnership manual	Agreed, though commitment is only part of the picture, specific actions will be needed too. The outcome of the needs assessment should help shape the PSB work which will include poverty issues		Ongoing	Rachel Moxey

6.	4.3.5 Consider how the strategy might support frontline staff	The training for staff is in the revised Tackling Poverty Strategy Delivery Plan. See Theme 2 'Deliver training with members and officers to promote the tackling poverty is everyone's business approach.'		Ongoing	Rachel Moxey
7.	4.3.6 Link the strategy more closely to the six population outcomes of Swansea's Wellbeing Plan particularly Outcome D (People have a decent standard of living)	This is in the revised strategy Link not only to that outcome, but regeneration and education are particularly important in reducing poverty, not solely actions to support people experiencing poverty		Complete	Rachel Moxey
8.	4.3.7 Create a new simplified structure to deliver the strategy in collaboration with partners against clear, agreed and measurable outcomes and within a Performance Monitoring Framework. Monitoring to involve those experiencing poverty as well as partners.	In the revised strategy Monitoring involving partners and people experiencing poverty – for people experiencing poverty an appropriate mechanism will be developed to do this;. This is a corporate strategy – we can explore and request collaboration on delivery with partners but not dictate. Partners should see the		Complete / In Progress	Rachel Moxey

		impacts of the strategy so their involvement in its monitoring is agreed.			
9.	4.3.8 Ensure that future economic regeneration schemes have the maximum positive impact on tackling poverty by promoting well paid jobs and improving skills	<p>We have already taken steps to integrate the poverty agenda in large scale regeneration initiatives – TLSB, City Deal, City Centre. We have been doing this for some years.</p> <p>Corporate Community benefits policy approved by Council.</p> <p>Beyond Bricks and Mortar has secured valuable employment and training commitments in TLSB’s Employment and Skills Plan.</p> <p>Training is available via ESF Employability schemes administered by our European and External Funding Team.</p>		In Progress	Rachel Moxey
10.	4.3.10 Include specific Tackling Poverty responsibilities within each Cabinet portfolio, with the Leader holding overall political responsibility and Chief Executive taking lead role on staff delivery. Ensure that all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive will oversee the delivery of the Poverty Strategy • Councillors have received many briefings on progress with 		In Progress	Rachel Moxey

	councillors are informed and involved, and where particular actions are planned in wards the councillors must be fully involved and consulted. All councillors to have poverty awareness training	<p>previous strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Cabinet Members will take responsibility for specific actions within the delivery plan 			
11.	4.3.11 Future evaluation of the poverty strategy should involve ward councillors, partners and people experiencing poverty rather than being solely evaluated by officers	Agreed		Mid Term	Rachel Moxey
12.	4.3.13 Revise and refocus the Poverty Partnership Forum against specific actions / priorities	Agreed, and is taking place		In Progress	Rachel Moxey