



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	5 th January 2017
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Service Area	Community Wellbeing
Committee Date	18 th January 2017

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Tackling Poverty Agenda

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report outlines the proposed governance arrangements of the tackling poverty agenda and establishes a unified approach that will improve integration of services and maximise the resources available of both grant and core services that contributes to the anti poverty agenda. However it should be remembered that all services across the council play a part in reducing or tackling poverty and is evidenced in the importance being placed on the preventative agenda and wellbeing by Welsh Government, especially in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.2 The report also identifies the critical areas for development that will enable elected members and officers to better understand how community based preventative services contribute to the strategic priorities of the council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

2.1 The content of the report and the next steps be noted and challenged.

2.2 The Governance Structure of the Tackling Poverty Partnership Board and Strategic Group as outlined in section 5.3 be discussed.

2.3 The tackling poverty scrutiny arrangements through the Joint Scrutiny Committee as outlined in 5.2 be noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It has been requested that this report comes to scrutiny to ensure that the Governance arrangements for the proposed Anti Poverty agenda are appropriate. Members are asked to consider whether the proposed structure will ensure stronger strategic direction of the Anti poverty agenda and how this fits with the priorities for the Council and the County Borough as a whole. Scrutiny of the governance arrangements and regular reporting on the future priorities (in line with terms and conditions of the grants) will enable members to shape the future prevention agenda to meet the identified needs of the communities of Merthyr Tydfil.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 The Council has been leading on the 4 main anti poverty programmes which are funded by Welsh Government for a number of years, with 2 of the programmes namely Communities First and Flying Start having been delivered for over 10 years. There are also 2 additional substantive programmes from Welsh Government that contribute to this agenda in Families First and Supporting People. Alongside these are a number of smaller grants most of which are managed by Council departments or in some cases directly by schools eg. the pupil deprivation grant.
- 4.2 The governance arrangements across the main anti poverty programmes have differed significantly and in 2016 the following was understood to be the position:
- 4.2.1 Flying Start – Multi agency early years steering group in place operating to a council agreed strategy.
 - 4.2.2 Communities First - Cluster boards in place but no strategic governance.
 - 4.2.3 Supporting People –collaborative approach across Cwm Taf.
 - 4.2.4 Families First – the steering group dissolved approximately 3 years ago.
- 4.3 A number of heads of service have had responsibility for these programmes and therefore the opportunity to develop a cohesive and integrated approach was not exploited to the full.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 There has been significant work undertaken to develop a wider understanding of all the grant resources being received by the council to address the poverty agenda. Alongside this these prevention and early intervention resources have been mapped against individual priorities which are either set by the terms and conditions of the grants or have been identified locally. The information collated was shared with an internal working group representative of directorates across the council in order to consider the future direction of the poverty programmes.
- 5.2 The working group in looking at the future direction have proposed that the agenda be led by a Tackling Poverty Partnership board and a Strategic Group to ensure that future prevention and early intervention services work collaboratively within a strategic framework of priorities that are agreed by elected members of the county borough (APPENDIX A). Through this approach it is recommended that the

progress and performance of the Tackling Poverty agenda be regularly reported through the Joint Scrutiny arrangements because of the cross cutting nature of poverty.

5.3 **Tackling Poverty Partnership Board** – It is proposed that the partnership board be made up of the following members:

- Poverty Champion
- Cabinet Member for Social Services
- Cabinet Member for Education
- Chief Officer for Social Services
- Chief Officer for Learning
- Chief Officer for Community Regeneration
- PSB representative.

5.3.1 The purpose of the Tackling Poverty Partnership Board will be to:

- approve the strategic direction in line with the corporate priorities presented by the tackling poverty strategic group
- hold the tackling poverty strategic group to account for achieving the agreed outcomes
- ensuring that all anti poverty grants are utilised in line with the purposes set out in the grants terms and conditions

5.4 **The Tackling Poverty Strategic Group** – it is proposed that the strategic group consist of the following members to ensure an inclusive approach with partners across the county borough and that the group be chaired by the Chief Officer for Social Services

- Chief Officer for Social Services
- Chief Officer for Learning
- Chief Officer for Community Regeneration
- Chief Officer for Neighbourhood Services
- Head of Service for Community Wellbeing
- Third Sector representative (VAMT)
- Leisure Trust representative
- Local Health Board representative
- Public Health Representative

5.4.1 The Tackling Poverty Strategic Group will explore new ways of working across and with organisations, in partnership it will adopt innovative solutions to address issues or barriers that prevent achieving better outcomes for the people of Merthyr Tydfil. Through the tackling poverty agenda the group will make recommendations over the future use of both external and internal resources to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services that have their focus on tackling poverty in all its forms. Through this process the group will assist the Tackling Poverty Partnership Board in tackling the most challenging issues facing Merthyr's population.

5.5 Through the recent restructure of the senior management team of the organisation the council has brought a large number of the community focused services and the Anti poverty agenda into a single structure reporting to the Chief Officer for Social Services.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

6.1 Through this structure and the Tackling Poverty Strategic Group it is intended that more efficient and effective use of resources can be developed to drive key priorities for the council and the poverty agenda by investigating opportunities for joint commissioning of preventative services. The Strategic group will be seeking to agree a set of shared outcomes across the Tackling Poverty agenda in order to support a Tackling Poverty Action Plan for Merthyr Tydfil. This will equip the strategic group with the ability to measure the impact of the approach being taken and of how this has impacted on the desired outcomes. The group will also be striving to establish value for money assessments against service areas and the potential cost benefit analysis of the preventative approach.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

7.1 In taking this agenda forward the following key priorities have been identified:

- Agree the terms of reference for the Partnership Board with its members.
- Restructure and shape the future delivery of Communities First in light of recent guidance from Welsh Government and minimise the impact as far as possible.
- Reshape the delivery of the Families First grant by September 2017 in light of recent guidance given by Welsh Government.
- Develop and agree a shared outcomes framework for tackling poverty.
- Develop and agree a tackling poverty action plan.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 All services across the council and its partners contribute towards the tackling of poverty within Merthyr Tydfil due to the far reaching impact of poverty on individuals and the community as a whole. Therefore the Tackling Poverty agenda has to consider both the immediate issues and the long term strategy for tackling poverty through an effective preventative approach. An assessment of the tackling poverty grants and identified core funded services contribute to the following corporate plan and single integrated plan priorities.

Corporate Plan

Attainment (PA 1)
Promoting Independence (PA 2)
Meeting the needs of Vulnerable Children (PA 3)
Active Lifestyles (PA 4)
Employability (PA 6)

Single Integrated Plan

Learning (PO 1)
Employability (PO 2)
Healthier Life (PO 3)

LISA CURTIS JONES
CHIEF OFFICER (SOCIAL SERVICES)

COUNCILLOR LINDA MATTHEWS
**CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL
SERVICES**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		

ACCOUNTABILITY

PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

JOINT SCRUTINY

CABINET/COUNCIL

TACKLING POVERTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGIC GROUP

**OPERATIONAL GROUP
(Lead by head of service)**

- Service areas**
- Community Resilience
 - Employability
 - Economic Development
 - Communities First
 - Families First
 - Flying Start
 - Youth services
 - Supporting People
 - Housing

PROVIDERS
Grant and core funded