

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	17 th December 2018
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Service Area	People and Performance
Committee Date	8 th January 2019

Tackling Poverty

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the work being undertaken both across council service areas and wider to tackle the poverty agenda.
- 1.2 The report outlines the current themes that sit within the draft strategy and considers how best to move forward with this agenda.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The content of this report is discussed and noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 *Prosperity for All*, the Welsh Governments national strategy to take forward the Programme for Government, is designed to bring together the efforts of the whole public sector towards the central mission of delivering Prosperity for All. The long term aim is to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning and united and connected.
- 3.2 MTCBC's Tackling Poverty strategy represents our contribution to achieving Prosperity for All. The strategy takes three key themes and places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they fit with the wider partnership arena in order to deliver improved outcomes for all. The strategy is not just about what we deliver but *how* we deliver. Making a real difference in people's lives requires us to rethink how we do things, and this strategy provides us with the focus to better direct the energy and resources of the whole Council so that we can better address the fundamental challenges facing the County Borough.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 There were 4 main Welsh government funded anti-poverty programmes that the Council took the lead on:
- Communities First;
 - Flying Start;
 - Supporting People; and
 - Families First.
- 4.2 The responsibility for leading on these programmes was spread across several service areas of the council, preventing a more integrated and collaborative way of planning and using resources to achieve shared outcomes.
- 4.3 Without a common outcomes framework progress was difficult to measure and the governance arrangements were not consistent.
- 4.4 With the introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Council's new wellbeing duty, there was an opportunity to look at new ways of delivering on tackling poverty which crossed service area boundaries and would provide an integrated response to improving wellbeing.
- 4.5 Tackling Poverty Partnership Board was established in September 2016 along with the Tackling Poverty Strategic Group (see Appendix 1)

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 The Tackling Poverty strategy has three broad themes, each with strategic priorities that are designed to bring together a cross section of council service areas and wider partners in order to achieve a shared set of outcomes (See Appendix 2).

Theme	Regeneration
Strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce unemployment and worklessness;• Improve business growth and infrastructure;• Better town centre and communities.
Theme	Lifelong Learning
Strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better achievements;• Greater opportunities;• Better prospects.
Theme	Health and Wellbeing
Strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building resilient communities;• Strengthening families

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 6.1 From 1 April 2019, Welsh Government are introducing two new grants that aim to strengthen the ability of local authorities and their partners to deliver services focused on early intervention for those in greatest needs.

Children and Communities Grant, encompassing:

- Flying Start;
- Families First;
- The Legacy Fund;
- Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People;
- St David's Day Fund;
- Communities for Work Plus; and
- Childcare and Play.

Single Housing Support Grant, encompassing:

- Supporting People;
- Homelessness Prevention; and
- Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.

- 6.2 The Tackling Poverty structure will align the 2 grants to support the achievement of the strategy's shared outcomes by adopting a more integrated approach to resource planning across Council directorates, with a specific focus on early intervention and prevention.
- 6.3 Commissioned services will offer a joined up response to the key challenges affecting people living in poverty to ensure a more holistic provision of services that meet need. Consideration is being given to how we can refine the management of our internal and external funding to inform how MTCBC utilise these monies in order to properly resource the services that will deliver the real change for people.
- 6.4 Greater integration and collaboration between Council directorates, and with external partners who have a shared mission to tackle poverty and mitigate the impacts on people. The model for service delivery will be based on the sustainable development principle (the 5 ways of working) which will mean bringing together cross directorate services to work towards a common goal.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 To ensure that the 5 ways of working underpins how we take this strategy forward, we will be reviewing current operational working groups to ensure either improved alignment with the strategic priorities or developing an alternative (replacement) structure of operational working groups across the three themes: (Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, and Health and Wellbeing). These working groups will comprise of officers from across the Council and wider partners, with operational responsibility and service delivery knowledge to act as a conduit between the high level outcomes and the steps needed to achieve them.
- 7.2 In light of the new Welsh Government funding arrangements that will be introduced in April 2019 there is an opportunity for the Council to adopt a more flexible approach

to how it can better utilise monies available when planning and delivering services to ensure resources are targeted more effectively.

7.3 There is also the opportunity to dovetail this work with our commissioned services through the third sector. Having a comprehensive picture of what services we provide will help us better understand how best to deploy resources and improve our ability to self-evaluate how effective we are in delivering real change to those who need this strategy to be successful.

7.4 As part of the work to review the corporate wellbeing plan *Focus on the Future*, the Tackling Poverty Strategy will provide a framework for the refocus of the plan in Year 3. It will help ensure that the strategic focus for the Council is committed to addressing the threats to wellbeing that poverty presents to the people of Merthyr Tydfil.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

8.1 The Tackling Poverty strategy is the key organisational strategy to help deliver all of the four wellbeing objectives outlined in *Focus on the Future*. Poverty represents a serious threat to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Taking an integrated response to tackle poverty through the Tackling Poverty governance arrangements increase our chances of success in delivering real change to people’s lives.

**DIRECTOR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S NAME
TITLE**

**PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR’S NAME
PORTFOLIO TITLE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees		
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council’s Constitution?		