



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2ND JUNE 2015

SUBJECT: ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report relates to a proposed Caerphilly county borough Council Anti Poverty Strategy. The report is seeking the views of Members prior to its presentation to Cabinet and Council.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council delivers a significant programme of work that contributes to tackling poverty. An Anti Poverty Strategy has been developed which brings together that activity at a high level. The draft Strategy has been the subject of consultation and a final draft is appended to this report for views and approval. The draft Strategy sets out the Council's position and aims, actions and measures in relation to tackling poverty.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The proposed Anti Poverty Strategy supports all of the priorities within the single integrated plan, Caerphilly Delivers.
- 3.2 The Council's Corporate Priorities and Aspirations support the aim of tackling poverty.
- 3.3 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure places duties upon Local Authorities in relation to child poverty.
- 3.4 The proposed Anti Poverty Strategy supports Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan and Child Poverty Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Caerphilly Council delivers a significant programme of activity that contributes to tackling poverty. This includes the Welsh Government funded programmes of Communities First, Families First, Flying Start, and Supporting People as well as the Welsh Housing Quality Standard investment and a range of other services and activities. Caerphilly Council has a significant track record in regeneration and was the first in Wales to become a Living Wage Employer.

- 4.2 High levels of deprivation exist within Caerphilly county borough and not just within the valleys communities. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the Welsh Government's official measure of deprivation for small areas in Wales designed to identify where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. WIMD is calculated for all Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in Wales. 1909 LSOAs are defined in Wales with an average population of around 1600 per LSOA.
- 4.3 Caerphilly County Borough has 68.2% of its LSOAs within the top 50% most deprived category – this is the fourth highest proportion in Wales after Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff. In the 2014 release of the WIMD St James 3 is the most deprived LSOA in Wales, with Twyn Carno 1 also falling within the ten most deprived LSOAs in Wales. This relative disadvantage leads to significant inequalities across our communities so that, for example, the gap in life expectancy in males between the most and least deprived fifth is 8.5 years; for healthy life expectancy the gap is even bigger at 18.7 years.
- 4.4 The Anti Poverty Strategy at Appendix 1 has been drafted recognising that there are still individuals and households in the county borough living in poverty. It sets out the Council's position and brings together a range of actions all of which contribute to tackling poverty. Those actions have been set out under four areas as promoted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation:
- Prospects:** policies concerned with improving the life chances of individuals and their families, so people are able to escape poverty in a sustainable way.
- Pockets:** policies concerned with boosting households' resources now – primarily by increasing their income – so they are better able to meet their needs.
- Places:** where people live shapes their lives, affecting their job prospects and access to essential goods and services and affordable housing.
- Prevention:** almost anyone can experience poverty during their lifetime, so policies that insure against sliding into poverty are important.
- 4.5 It is intended that the Strategy will be reviewed annually and progress reported. It is also proposed that an Anti Poverty Board is established to provide oversight of the Strategy. Membership would include the Member and Officer Anti Poverty Champions, the Chief Housing Officer, the Chief Education Officer, the Head of Regeneration and Planning, and others as the Board considered appropriate. There will be a standing invitation to the Leader and Chief Executive to attend. Representation would also be sought from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. There are a number of fora contributing to the tackling poverty agenda in the county borough and the Anti Poverty Board would also be tasked with determining the most appropriate structures and governance arrangements for these going forward.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Caerphilly Council is committed to ensuring that its residents are able to live fulfilled lives, regardless of who they are as an individual, and are not prevented from enjoying an acceptable standard of living due to economic, social or cultural disadvantage.
- 5.2 In this way, the Anti-Poverty Strategy links with the Strategic Equalities Plan and Welsh Language Scheme on an operational level where it matters most to the residents of the county borough, and operates on their behalf across the range of protected characteristics and wider equalities, human rights and language issues, and also ex-servicemen.

- 5.3 As examples, projects and action plans under Skills Development would ensure that people from different protected characteristic groups on low income receive support, as they could be doubly disadvantaged in terms of their ability to progress - disability issues around employment and training for instance. Parenting Skills would need to ensure that it covered all types of families and parenting models, not just the more traditional types of family.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications for the Authority, as financial budgetary provision has been identified and provided to each Service area of the Authority, inclusive of any specific budgetary provision for service initiatives used to assist in anti poverty strategies.
- 6.2 Any identified need to provide additional financial resources in support of the Council's anti poverty strategy over and above that identified in the 2015/2016 budget would require further consideration and approval.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The report has been sent to the consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.
- 8.2 The Draft Anti Poverty Strategy was subject to a 4 week public consultation during April 2014 and subject to some amendments as a result. A summary of the consultation responses is included at Appendix 2 of this Report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee are asked for their views prior to presentation of this Report and Anti Poverty Strategy to Cabinet and Council for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To seek Members' views.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000.

Author: Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection & Anti Poverty Champion
Consultees: Cllr Keith Reynolds, Leader
Cllr Elaine Forehead, Anti Poverty Champion
Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive,
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Pauline Elliot, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sian Phillips, Human Resources Manager
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager
David A. Thomas Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Caerphilly Anti Poverty Strategy

Appendix 2 Summary of Consultation Responses