

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	29 May 2019
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Local Child Poverty Action Report
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ outline the draft South Lanarkshire Child Poverty Action Report and further consultation and approvals process

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the draft Local Child Poverty Action Report be approved; and
- (2) that the Council, NHS Lanarkshire and wider Community Planning approval process and timescales be noted.

3. Background

3.1. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a new requirement for local authorities and each relevant Health Board to prepare **Local Child Poverty Action Reports**, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year. The first report should be published by the 30 June 2019.

3.2. The report should describe any measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year and planned measures for the year ahead. These should contribute to the four national income based child poverty reduction targets to be achieved by 2030:-

- (1) Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty
- (2) Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty
- (3) Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- (4) Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty.

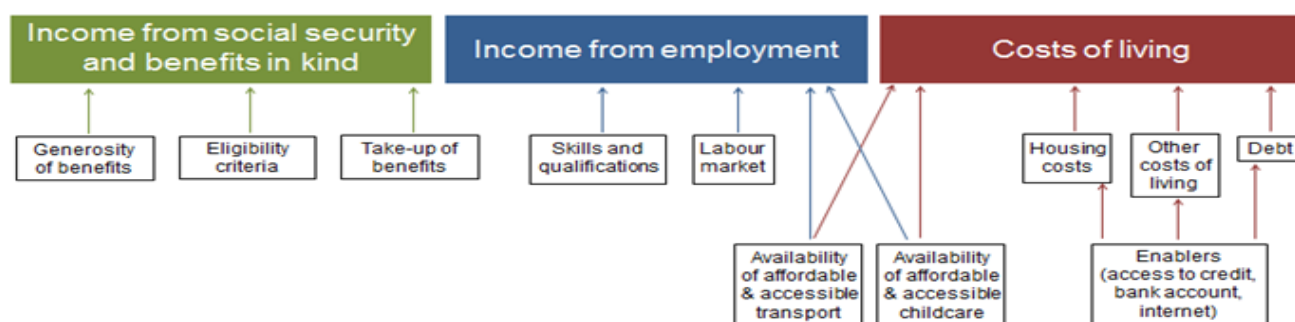
3.3. These are national targets and absolute poverty and persistent poverty levels are only reported at a Scottish level. The proportion of children in South Lanarkshire in relative poverty - currently sitting at 22% is slightly below the Scottish level (23%). 18.2% of South Lanarkshire's children are in combined low income and material deprivation again lower than the Scottish level (20.7%).

- 3.4. The Scottish Government has made it clear that the introduction of the requirement to produce Local Child Poverty Action Reports signals an imperative to undertake new activity and a new approach to tackling Child Poverty; effectively a step-change in tackling child poverty. Where local partners are continuing with existing activity, they should be clear about the supporting evidence base indicating its effectiveness.
- 3.5. The new Poverty and Inequality Commission has been tasked by the Scottish Government to provide feedback on all the local action reports. Bearing in mind that 32 reports are to be produced, it is likely that feedback to local partners will be staged over the 2019/2020 financial year.
- 3.6. South Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire and other South Lanarkshire Partnership members agreed at the Community Planning Partnership Board meeting of the 6 June 2018 to produce a single Local Child Poverty Action Report recognising a collective effort would be more effective.
- 3.7. A Local Child Poverty Leads group was established to produce the plan. All SLC Resources; NHS Lanarkshire and Skills Development Scotland are represented on the group. The Voluntary sector is represented by VASlan, South Lanarkshire CABs and the Machan Trust.
- 3.8. The LCPAR will be presented for approval to the NHS Lanarkshire Board on the 29 May and the Community Planning Partnership Board on the 19 June.

4. **Scope of the Plan**

- 4.1. Child poverty is caused by a complex blend of structural issues relating to macro-economic and political factors governing the labour market, employment and social security. Social factors make particular groups especially vulnerable to poverty, e.g. children, lone parents, disabled people and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. The following diagram from the Scottish Government provides an overview of what its research indicates are the main drivers of child poverty.

Drivers of child poverty targets



- 4.2. The Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) is expected to provide background/contextual information; governance and reporting arrangements and a progress and action plan which is organised around the three child poverty drivers above.
- 4.3. The process of gathering and analysing data to inform our actions has identified that there is scope to improve local data collection and analysis including service data to get a clearer profile of service users and the circumstances that drive use. This will improve our understanding of the extent to which child poverty impacts on South Lanarkshire families; how our services are engaging with families and in particular

low income families and identify potential gaps/areas for improvement. This issue will need to be addressed by improving our information management systems to ensure appropriate data is collected and can be extracted and reported on including the child poverty target groups. Training and Development sessions will be offered to appropriate SLC and partner services in 2019/2020 to support this improvement work.

5. Meeting the Scottish Government Expectations

- 5.1. The Local Child Poverty Leads group has been working closely with the National Coordinator for LCPARs within the Improvement Service and shared an early draft of the report. Feedback was generally positive and helped to further shape the LCPAR.
- 5.2. The Scottish Government is very clear about their desire to see step change at a local level. However this is challenging for a number of reasons not least the financial climate. The agreement by the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership to focus on a single Overarching Objective in the adopted Community Plan to tackle poverty, deprivation and Inequality in advance of the new requirement to produce the LCPAR has been very helpful. Partners are already committed to this and an additional focus on child poverty has been well received.
- 5.3. Whilst some of the improvement actions reflect a step change, there is scope to build on what is presented within this initial report. Engaging with low income families and our communities where outcomes are poorer will help us to get a better understanding of the needs of low income families and how these can best be addressed. Neighbourhood Planning and other planned engagement activity will help to provide more evidence to inform service design, planning and delivery.

6. The Report

- 6.1. The report includes a foreword from the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the NHS Lanarkshire Board affirming our commitment across the Community Planning Partnership to tackle Child Poverty in South Lanarkshire.
- 6.2. It describes the scale of the challenge locally and nationally. In South Lanarkshire just under 14,000 children are living in poverty equating to 22% of all children however this figure varies significantly between and within the four localities and between different groups with lone parents being more likely than other groups to experience poverty.
- 6.3. The governance and reporting arrangements are outlined, the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership being accountable for the report, providing strategic leadership and overseeing delivery of the improvement actions.
- 6.4. The main body of the report is organised around the three child poverty drivers (detailed at 4.1). In addition to providing a progress report for 2018/2019 it sets out our actions for 2019/2020 for each of the drivers.

Driver	Themes
Increasing income from benefits	Actions to maximise awareness and uptake of welfare benefits and entitlements. Actions to support financial wellbeing
Reducing Living Costs	Actions to reduce homelessness and support affordable housing. Fuel Poverty actions. Cost of the school day activity. Digital Inclusion activity. Actions to tackle food insecurity. Promoting affordable credit. Supporting access to affordable leisure.
Increasing income from employment	Supporting low income parents and young people into work and supporting progression to maximise income. Living Wage/fair work promotion and support. Inclusive growth activity Tackling under employment.

6.5. Finally a list of links to relevant local plans and reports is provided.

6.6. A PDF of the draft plan is available via this intranet link –
<http://intranet.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/childpovertyactionreport>

7. Employee Implications

7.1 No immediate employee implications

8. Financial Implications

8.1. The Council has already identified some additional funding to enable measures to tackle Child Poverty (increasing the school clothing grant).

9. Other Implications

9.1. The Poverty and Inequality Commission will be scrutinising all LCPARs following publication as will others locally and nationally given the focus. This could have positive and/or negative impacts on perceptions of the Council and its partners and proactive PR approach will be required.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. There is a requirement to carry out an equality impact assessment and an initial assessment has been undertaken. Indications are this will have a positive impact on the protected characteristics of age; disability; race and sex.

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Michael McGlynn
Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

8 May 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve the Quality of life for everyone in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ Focussed on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Excellent Employer
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for inclusive growth

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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