

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 AUGUST 2017
REPORT ON: DUNDEE FAIRNESS ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 273-2017

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents progress on the Fairness Action Plan for Dundee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no additional financial implications for Council revenue budget contained in this report.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Dundee City Council and the Dundee Partnership adopted the revised Fairness Action Plan for Dundee in November 2016 (Article IV of the Minute of the Policy & Resources Committee on 14 November 2016 refers). It was agreed that six monthly updates should be presented to committee and the Dundee Partnership.

4.2 The key actions were group under six strategic themes and progress is being achieved within each of these:

a) Strategic and Social Inclusion

- A new fairness commission was established in June 2017. It is jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the Dundee Partnership and members include a number of local people with lived experience of issues related to poverty, together with 'civic' commissioners including Councillors Alexander and Marra. The commission is scheduled to make final recommendations in Autumn 2018
- In 2016, 133 people from the council and other partners participated in poverty sensitivity training aiming to improve service delivery. To date a further 68 participants have attended six sessions in 2017. A capacity building programme has also been created to enable partners to roll out this learning across their teams and 27 people have attended across 3 sessions in 2017
- Officers are liaising with the Poverty Alliance to develop an event promoting the Stick Your Labels campaign in Challenge Poverty Week in October 2017. This will incorporate learning obtained at recent Poverty Alliance/Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Frame Works Institute training event on improving strategic campaigning communications

b) Work and Wages

- The Poverty Alliance has appointed the consultants Rocket Science to develop and pilot the criteria and process for accrediting a place as a Living Wage City. Dundee has been selected as a test site and officers are to work with Rocket Science to pursue accredited status. The current number of Living Wage accredited organisations based or headquarters in Dundee now stands at 28 almost 10,000 employees

- In recognition of the Scottish Living Wage rate of £8.45, Keith Brown, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work visited Dundee in July to congratulate Wise Group for becoming the 845th accredited Living Wage employer in Scotland
- The local employability pilots in Whitfield, Fintry and Mid-Craigie have recently doubled the number of sessions available to clients. A newly completed interim evaluation carried out by Skills Development Scotland acknowledges the outcomes being achieved by the pilot and has identified issues to be addressed as the service develops

c) Benefit, Advice and Support

- A new advice facility for patients and their families, the public and employees was opened in the Ninewells Hospital concourse in January 2017. It is supported through a rota of sessions provided by local financial inclusion agencies and is likely to be a venue for the new hub and outreach project
- The Council's bid to the Big Lottery Fund Scotland ESF Programme for a £3million contract to deliver Financial Inclusion support to the most disadvantaged individuals and households in Dundee over a 3 year period was successful. The bid involved a council led partnership including the following organisations from the third sector – Citizens Advice Dundee, The Wise Group, the Brooksbank Centre Shelter Dundee, Discovery Credit Union and SCARF. A total of 28 posts will be created to manage and deliver support to clients by engaging with 4950 people in total, and aiming to support 2141 people to completion of bespoke, personalised action plans, the key objectives of which are to improve financial capability and remove debt as an obstacle to social inclusion.

The project will develop up to 6 locality based hubs concentrating on community regeneration areas. The first is likely to be the Brooksbank Centre and others will be agreed and introduced on a phased basis. The project will also work with the Children and Families Service in a range of primary and secondary schools with links to pupils' families.

d) Closing the Education Gap

- Through the Scottish Attainment Challenge schools are gathering more robust assessment data on Literacy and Numeracy, such as standardised assessments and Curriculum for Excellence levels to provide evidence of the impact of targeted interventions. Such interventions from P1 to P7 include: precision teaching, one to one support, phonics buddies, beyond the school day lessons. Overall, there are increasing positive trends in outcomes for learners. In individual schools there is significant data such as the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) results for P1s to demonstrate a narrowing of the gap for children living in SIMD1&2. An area for focused attention in Early Years has been around early literacy and family engagement and this has demonstrated increased parent/carer/family participation in children's early learning. Feedback from families provides evidence that they are growing in confidence in supporting their children's play and learning
- The Big Noise social change programme through music will officially begin in September 2017 working with pupils in Claypotts Castle and St Pius primary schools. The project team leader was appointed in May 2017. Funding will be provided jointly over the first 5 years of the project by Optimistic Sound Dundee and Sistema Scotland.
- The Cost of the School Day project has carried out its initial work in 4 primary schools and 2 Early Years centres. It has produced a range of interim recommendations relating to the costs of school trips, uniforms, breakfast, lunches and school meals. These will be presented to committee in the coming months. A further phase will commence in August 2017

- The Growth Mindset programme for young people has supported 2 high schools, 9 primary schools and assisted over 20 organisations that work with children, young people and families in community regeneration areas. In the 2017/18 term, the project will roll out support to all local primary schools within the Scottish Attainment Challenge

e) Housing and Communities (including Food and Fuel Poverty)

- The Private Sector Area Enhancement pilot has begun. A pilot area of 5 tenement blocks in Stobswell has been identified. Preliminary surveys of the tenements have been carried out and additional security measures are being prioritised. Section 80 notices and fixed penalty notices have been served and this is leading to arrangements to clear and maintain the rear areas of buildings. A full report on the pilot will be presented to Committee in September 2017
- A pilot fuel voucher project was trialled at Dundee Food Bank earlier in 2017. There was evidence of considerable demand from local people to the degree that operational challenges were experienced and the supply of fuel vouchers were quickly used. Council officers worked closely with the Food Bank to address referral systems and connections to other crisis support
- The Dundee Bairns Food and Fun programme has run through the school summer holidays. It is estimated that up to 25,000 meals will have been provided on weekdays between 3 July and 11 August, alongside activities offered by 51 community projects
- Dundee has been selected as one of three areas to participate in the Menu for Change project. Facilitated by Oxfam, the Poverty Alliance and Nourish Scotland, the project aims to make it easier for people in a crisis to access financial support so they do not need to rely on foodbanks. It will also widen access to money and debt services and help people to claim benefits

f) Improving Health

- The Scottish Government has agreed to provide funding for a further 9 social prescribing link workers to support patients to access non-medical sources of support within communities. Discussions are underway with GP practices that qualify to participate in the programme. Additional resources have also been secured through the Integrated Care Fund to test the link worker approach in one locality out with a GP setting
- The Making Recovery Real Partnership has held 2 peer support events and delivered peer group facilitation 'tasters' and training sessions to involve and support people with lived experience of mental health programs. A peer support co-ordinator has been recruited. A mid-point project evaluation has been produced along with an updated action plan

4.3 The full Fairness Action Plan has been loaded on to the Council's new project management system. It includes over 100 commitments. Efforts are underway to develop a clear and simple reporting template to capture the latest position against each action and it is anticipated that this will be available for the next 6 monthly progress report.

4.4 In setting its budget for 2017/18, the Council also made significant additional commitments to tackle poverty, reduce inequality and promote community regeneration areas, including:

- Freezing the cost of school meals and increasing the value of school clothing grants from £81 to £100
- Increasing the budget for Discretionary Housing payments by £100,000 to £250,000
- Increasing the funding delivered through Community Regeneration Forums by £153,000 to £1million

- Introducing the Community Infrastructure Fund, adding £509,000 to existing capital funding to create a total fund of £1.2million
- 4.5 Since the initial fairness action plan was agreed, additional measures have recently been secured.
- Breakthrough Dundee has been agreed utilising £1m funding from the Northwood Trust to establish a mentoring programme for 'care experienced' young people in all 8 Dundee secondary schools
 - The Dundee Partnership and its colleagues in Dundee Social Enterprise Network have secured funding from the Scottish Government to prepare business cases for organisations to respond to social inclusion issues. Two local organisations involved in delivering childcare – One Parent Families Scotland and Dundee International Womens Centre – are supporting a 6 month research project into alternatives for providing affordable and sustainable childcare through a social enterprise model. Similarly, third sector partners including Dundee Pensioners Forum and Faith in Community in Dundee are working with University of Dundee and others to research the potential for a social enterprise approach to tackling funeral poverty. Both are likely to report before the end of the year and lead to stage two applications.
- 4.6 Dundee's approach to pursuing fairness is being increasingly acknowledged by the Scottish Government and its leaders. Angela Constance, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities, welcomed members of the original Dundee Fairness Committee to the Scottish Parliament in December to formally receive the commission's report. She then visited Dundee in February to launch the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill while meeting young people who were attending the Fairy Job Mother programme run by the Discover Opportunities Centre
- 4.7 Dundee City Council was invited to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Social Security Committee as part of its stage 1 consideration of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill and the Council's lead officer has joined the reference group advising civil servants who are drafting support guidance.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/iia
- 5.2 The progress presented in this report and all actions in the Fairness Plan for Dundee will make an impact on reducing the levels of poverty experienced by people in Dundee.

6. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Council Management Team was consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Integrated Impact Assessment.

David R Martin
Chief Executive

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