

**REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
- 15 OCTOBER 2001**

REPORT ON: IMPLEMENTATION OF DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 665-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides members with a briefing on progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the council's Anti-Poverty Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Notes the progress achieved and further action to be taken on implementing the recommendations contained in the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

2.2 Acknowledges the support and collaboration of partner agencies from the statutory sector and the positive contribution from Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum on behalf of the voluntary sector in addressing poverty and social inclusion in Dundee.

2.3 Instructs the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development to bring forward a further report on progress in 12 months time.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In approving the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the City Council indicated that its ability to implement the recommendations contained within the report would be conditional on doing so within available resources.

3.2 No additional expenditure has been incurred outwith existing departmental budgets as a direct result of the strategy being approved. Where decisions about Prioritisation and targeting have required to be made, the strategy has provided a framework against which these decision could be considered.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 From the outset, the close relationship between the aims of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Local Agenda 21 objectives was noted.

4.2 Meeting needs, improving economic position and promoting social inclusion are the central foci for the Anti-Poverty Strategy and as such the recommendations contained in the report will have an impact on Agenda 21 targets.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 At its heart, the Anti-Poverty Strategy seeks to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion by targeting resources towards the most disadvantaged in Dundee and enabling everyone to play a full part in society.

6.0 PROGRESS

6.1 When the Anti-Poverty Strategy was approved on 6 December 1999, it was agreed that the Chief Executive should establish an Implementation Group, bringing together representatives from key Council departments, partner agencies and the Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum.

6.2 The remit of the Implementation group was agreed as follows:

- to provide strategic direction for the implementation of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- To provide a mechanism for ensuring the exchange of information on poverty issues between Council departments and key partner agencies.

- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy.

6.3 The Implementation Group first met on 11 February 2000 and has met on four subsequent occasions, establishing a pattern of working which enables progress to be monitored on the implementation of the recommendations contained within the Anti-Poverty Strategy between meetings.

Support from the Council's partner agencies (Tayside Health Board, Scottish Enterprise Tayside, the Benefits Agency, Employment Services and Tayside Careers and Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum) has broadened the scope for debate on poverty and in so doing, enriched the Strategy Implementation process.

6.4 Progress on the implementation of the Anti-Poverty Strategy recommendations detailed as follows:

RECOMMENDATION ONE - Review Council Information On Poverty

Progress

An integrated framework for monitoring Council information on poverty has been produced and Phase I of the data collection exercise is complete.

Council representation on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) Development Group and the Deprivation Index Working Group has been secured and feedback on the SNS Initiative work plan has been passed to the Scottish Executive.

Further Action

Consideration will be given to the submission of a partnership bid to SNS to develop a field project allied to the work of the Deprivation Index Working Group to establish an information system for managing strategic social justice data.

RECOMMENDATION TWO - Establish A Lone Parents Working Group

Progress

The Social Work Department have produced a proposal for establishing a Lone Parents Working Group which will meet for the first time on Tuesday 30 October 2001.

Further Action

The agenda for the Working Group will focus on the needs and issues identified by lone parents and access barriers to services, work and participation in community life.

RECOMMENDATION 3 - Establish A Working Group To Identify The Personal And Social Needs Of Unemployed People

Progress

Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum have agreed to research the personal and social needs of unemployed people.

Further Action

The Anti-Poverty Strategy Implementation Group will identify creative partnership responses to the needs and issues identified by Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum.

RECOMMENDATION 4 - Monitor The Implications Of Policy On Poverty

Progress

The Council has agreed to include the assessment of anti-poverty considerations alongside Local Agenda 21 implications within the committee reporting procedures.

Further Action

The mechanism for monitoring the implications of policy on poverty will be considered in order to find a credible way of monitoring without creating additional staff time/costs.

RECOMMENDATION 5 - Review Council Charging Policies

Progress

Dundee City Council's Review of Council Charges 2001-2002 and the concessions offered by individual Council departments have been established as the baseline for the Anti-Poverty Strategy Review.

Further Action

The corporateness/consistency of Council Charging Policies will be scrutinised and ways in which people experiencing poverty and social exclusion can access services more effectively, with no extra costs to the Council, will be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 6 - Review The Council's Common Debt Recovery Policy

Progress

The Dundee Advice Workers forum have been consulted on the new procedures introduced for the recovery of Council Tax arrears.

A copy of the Council's Debt Recovery Strategy has been made available for internal review, alongside a series of flow charts, demonstrating the trigger points which invoke debt recovery procedures.

Dundee City Council fed back comments to the Scottish Executive on its consultation Report '*Striking the Balance - A New Approach to Debt Management*'.

Further Action

A task group with representation from the appropriate Council departments will meet initially to review the policy and its impact on people living in poverty, within the context of the Audit Commission Report '*The Price is Right for Council Services*'.

RECOMMENDATION 7 - Develop A Co-ordinated Information And Advice Service

Progress

A review of Council-funded welfare rights service has been completed and work has begun on establishing standard referral procedures, a common set of quality standards and an integrated statistical recording system.

Further Action

Service Level Agreements will be reinforced with Ardler Information Point and established for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

A training/information programme will be developed for Council staff to ensure that relevant Council officers are aware of the network of welfare rights information providers.

Strategic links will be developed between the co-ordinated welfare rights information and advice services and the broader range of generic information and advice initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 8(a) - Develop An Employment And Training Strategy

Progress

The Dundee Local Employment Action Plan has been prepared in draft form by the Dundee Partnership Training and Employment Sub Group and will be presented to Committee on 15 October 2001.

Future Action

The Dundee Partnership Training and Employment Sub Group will take forward to implementation of the Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 8(b) - Protecting People From Marginal Employment

Progress

A report attempting to define the extent to which marginal employment is an issue in Dundee has been produced within the context of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum has produced a Labour Market Survey Report highlighting issues relating to low pay and temporary/part-time work in Dundee.

Further Action

The key stakeholders identified in the Report on Marginal Employment in Dundee will be asked to respond to the recommendations contained in the Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 8 (c) - Developing The Social Economy

Progress

A baseline study and option appraisal exercise for developing the social economy in Dundee has been completed.

Future Action

The potential for developing the social economy in the fields of childcare, community care and social housing will be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 9(a) - The Tayside Local Labour Initiative (TLLI)

Progress

370 individuals have found jobs in the construction industry through the job matching service, in the project's first year and a postal survey indicated a high level of satisfaction from potential employers.

Future Action

The TLLI will be developed to target unemployed people for work through training and skill development.

The potential for applying the TLLI model to the use of Council contracts to target unemployed people for work will be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 9(b) - Use Council Contracts To Target Unemployed People For Work

Progress

A scoping paper has been produced and Dundee has been included in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded research into the use of social classes in neighbourhood renewal.

Future Action

Stakeholders will be invited to attend a meeting to review the Joseph Rowntree Research findings and the issues and opportunities available for using council contacts to target unemployed people for work in Dundee.

RECOMMENDATION 10 - Review Council Facilities For Personal Transport

Progress

Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum has been consulted on the development of the Dundee Local Transport Strategy in which the review of council facilities for personal transport has been identified as a long term target.

Future Action

The Planning and Transportation Department will audit the Council's facilities for personal transport and establish a mini-bus brokerage agency for voluntary sector transport.

RECOMMENDATION 11 - Anti-Poverty Strategy Monitoring And Evaluation

Progress

A draft monitoring and evaluation framework has been produced for the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the monitoring of Council information on poverty is underway.

A system is in place for monitoring the implementation of the Anti-Poverty Strategy recommendations.

The Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum is currently engaged in research relating to the participative development of poverty indicators.

Future Action

A mechanism needs to be identified for monitoring and evaluating the impact of Council policies on poverty.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, and the Directors of Support Services, Finance, Social Work, Economic Development and Planning and Transportation, in the preparation of this report.

7.2 The content of the report has also been shared with departmental representatives, partner agencies and voluntary sector representatives on the Anti-Poverty Strategy Implementation Group.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development _____

Date _____