



Inverclyde Alliance

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 10**

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Alliance Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 October 2020</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Aubrey Fawcett Chair of Programme Board</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Louise McVey</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712042</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Anti-Poverty Initiatives</b>		

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**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Alliance Board with an update on the proposals on the Anti-Poverty initiatives to be progressed in the current financial year.

**2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 As part of the 2020/21 Budget the Council and IJB allocated £1 million for Anti-Poverty initiatives and in March 2020 a process was agreed through the Alliance Board and the Policy & Resources Committee as to how the sum was to be allocated and the use determined. The intervention of the Covid pandemic changed matters and made progression of the process to identify the use of the originally approved £1 million impossible. Additionally extra funding from the Council and Scottish Government have supported a number of interventions during the Covid period to those most vulnerable within the community.
- 2.2 Considerations have been given to a range of options to deliver proposals to help drive a real reduction of levels of poverty and deprivation within Inverclyde totalling £1.5million and would largely be delivered over the next 12 months.
- 2.3 Throughout the Covid period the Council and partners have been delivering a wide range of support to vulnerable individuals and families around food, direct financial, digital and humanitarian aid. The funding for these initiatives has come from a cocktail of sources including the Scottish Government, Council and IJB and has been significantly enhanced by the involvement of Community Groups and a large number of volunteers.
- 2.4 The key proposals are:
- Employment opportunities and Employability £657,000
  - Food Insecurity £210,000
  - Welfare Support £370,000
  - Digital Connectivity £60,000
  - Strengthening the Community/3rd Sector Base £200,000

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Alliance Board:

- I. Notes the proposals in the report for the utilisation of the Anti-Poverty £1million and other funding received from the Scottish Government
- II. Notes that a further progress report providing more detail around the proposals will be brought back to a future meeting of the Alliance Board.

**Aubrey Fawcett**  
**Chair, Programme Board**  
**Chief Executive, Inverclyde Council**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A report was presented to the Inverclyde Alliance and the Policy & Resources Committee in March 2020 which proposed a timescale and methodology for identifying projects on both a locality and Council wide basis but unfortunately due to the impact of Covid this timetable and process was unable to be progressed.
- 4.2 Throughout the Covid period the Council and partners have been delivering a wide range of supports to vulnerable individuals and families around food, direct financial, digital and humanitarian aid. The funding for these initiatives has come from a cocktail of sources including the Scottish Government, Council and IJB and has been significantly enhanced by the involvement of Community Groups and a large number of volunteers.
- 4.3 Whilst the number of Covid cases has greatly reduced within the population, the impact of the 4 month lockdown and the gradual withdrawal of Government funding will result in a high level of need within the Inverclyde Community for some time to come.

## 5.0 Proposals

- 5.1 It is recognised the current need to get a balance between proposals which provide a sustainable improvement in the lives of those impacted by poverty and deprivation whilst also recognising that the need for many is immediate and therefore short term interventions will also have a significant part to play. The proposals are including in the following paragraphs.

### Employment opportunities and Employability £657,000

- Offer the pre-apprenticeship programme for a second cohort of twelve pupils from across Inverclyde and offer a level 2 apprenticeship to the year 1 cohort in the area of last year's development over a period of 18 months from August 2020.
- offer the five modern apprentices who are due to finish on the Councils existing modern apprenticeship programme a two year contract at an entry level post to allow them time to gain further experience and enhance their job prospects.
- to create an Inverclyde Furlough Scheme which would support 20 employees with 50% of their wages for 6 months in those sectors where jobs are most at risk

### Food Insecurity £210,000

- In addition to the £25 per fortnight payment to every child/young person entitled to receive free school meals throughout the Covid period until 28<sup>th</sup> August a one off payment made in the middle of December to each child/young person in receipt of free school meals and would allow qualifying families to buy healthier food over the Christmas period.
- Continue the Fare Share Community Food initiative for a further 12 months with an annual membership. This will continue to provide food aid through local community organisations to people living in communities and localities that need it.
- Establish a local Food Pantry within one location in Inverclyde working closely with the Scottish Food Pantry to develop a local community shop which displays a variety of good quality food, sourced from FareShare Glasgow, where members of the community can choose from a subscription and/or membership fee. The pantry model targets those on a low income and/or recovering from crisis providing fresh and healthy food at a price that is affordable.

### Welfare Support £370,000-

- It is proposed to award DHP up to 100% of the difference between Universal Credit Housing costs or Housing Benefit entitlement capped at £200 per month with the payment being made for a period of no more than 6 months.
- The Council maintained the payment of Crisis Grants throughout the Covid period and took the decision in March to increase payments by 20% to provide greater financial support to

those in most need. It is recommended that the 20% enhanced payment is continued for the remainder of 2020/21.

- In addition it is proposed that the Community Care Grant which assists with individuals setting up home be paid to not only high priority cases but also medium priority cases. This will allow payment to be made to more individuals and for additional items for the home including washing machines, floor coverings and additional furniture.

#### Digital Connectivity £60,000 –

- The Council has received an allocation of £433,000 from the Scottish Government to ensure that all secondary school pupils in receipt of free school meals have access to an appropriate device and connectivity. This makes significant inroads into many households suffering from digital exclusion.
- The Council has previously approved an £80,000 investment from the Anti-Poverty earmarked reserves to provide free Wi-Fi for a five year period in 8 Community Centres in addition to the existing infrastructure within the Council Libraries estate.
- Provide individuals who are engaging in learning, development and training with an opportunity to receive a device to complete their learning.

#### Strengthening the Community/3rd Sector Base £200,000 –

- It is proposed to build on the excellent Community response to the Covid pandemic to improve capacity and resilience and creates a fund to receive applications for support to allow projects which support the vulnerable and isolated to continue.

5.2 It is proposed that further information is reported to the next meeting of this group on the development of the Community/3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Base, the digital connectivity and the Food Pantry.

## 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Legal: none at present

Finance: It would be proposed that any unspent sums from the £1million allocated to Anti-Poverty initiatives in 2020/21 at 31 March, 2020 be added to the Anti-Poverty Earmarked reserves and utilised as outlined in this report.

Human Resources: none at present

Equality and Diversity: none at present

Repopulation:

Inequalities: the Anti-Poverty Initiatives will be working specifically to tackle inequalities on a geographic basis.

## 7.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 n/a

## 8.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None

