
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	16 September 2025
Report By:	Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources	Report No:	PR/21/25/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Anti-Poverty Initiatives		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☒ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with new proposals for the use of Anti-Poverty Initiatives funded by the Inverclyde Council Anti-Poverty recurring budget for the period to March 2027 and to update the committee on the mentoring partnership with the Wise Group.

1.3 It is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- delegates powers to the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development to allocate up to £50K of the funding to projects linked to food insecurity over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 winter periods; and
- approves funding to support tenancies for homeless households as outlined in Appendix 2 to this report.

1.4 The report also provides the Committee with information relation to the emerging work on relational support with the Wise Group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- approves delegated powers for the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development to allocate up to £50K of Anti-poverty funding to projects linked to food insecurity over the 25/26 and 26/27 winter periods;
- approves that funding of £75K be allocated to support tenancies for homeless households; and
- notes the ongoing work with the Wise Group.

Tony McEwan
Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 In 2021 Inverclyde Council and HSCP agreed to create a £1.08 million recurring budget to fund a range of local initiatives to mitigate the impact of poverty and deprivation levels that were reported in the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020. The Full Council in December 2022 agreed a £600k saving from the Council's portion of the recurring anti-poverty budget of £830k, leaving £230k. It also agreed to add in existing Education funding for various education initiatives relating to anti-poverty, totalling £259k. Following reviews of the annual recurring funding as part of budget exercises, the total recurring anti-poverty budget available for 2025/26 is £472,000. This funding is allocated to Service Committee budgets and monitored through regular budget monitoring reports to Committees.
- 3.2 In addition to the recurring budget there is an Anti-Poverty earmarked reserve made up of the carry forward from previous years' Anti-Poverty funding, together with additional funding from reserves, agreed by Members as part of the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget processes. In 2025/26 this earmarked reserve is £2,351,000, of which £788,000 is currently unallocated. The Policy and Resources Committee has been keen that officers continue to review existing projects and also that they bring forward new proposals for the unallocated Anti-Poverty budget. New proposals are detailed in section 4 below.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 to this report gives a financial overview of the Anti-Poverty earmarked reserve budget. This demonstrates that if the new projects proposed in this report are agreed there remains £663,000 unallocated. A further report is planned later in 2026 detailing the impact of the spend from this budget.

4.0 PROPOSALS – NEW PROJECTS

- 4.1 Food insecurity: previously the Council has delegated powers to the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development to allocate funding to projects linked to food insecurity, this includes funding to support local foodbanks. It is recommended that delegated power is given again to provide up to £50K to support to foodbanks, food larders, community fridges and other organisations actively providing access to food and operating over the winter periods of 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- 4.2 Supporting Tenancies for Homeless Households: When clients are assessed as unintentionally homeless, and have secured a permanent offer of housing, the next step is to settle them into their new homes. The HSCP has two Resettlement and Support Workers (RSWs) whose principal role this is to support these households and assist by applying to the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) for vital goods that are essential to enable these households make their house a home. Due to recent changes in the Scottish Welfare Fund regulations, people are no longer provided with awards for carpets or washing machines, except for certain health conditions such as severe mobility, skin conditions or have children experiencing the same. It is therefore proposed to allocate £75K from the Anti-poverty fund to support approximately 100 tenancies over the next 3 years. Appendix 2 gives an overview of the project and associated costs.
- 4.3 Partnership with the Wise Group: The Scottish Government has provided funding to the Wise group to deliver Relational mentoring Support. This project aims to work in partnership with key public services and third sector organisations across local authority areas that have been identified as experiencing significantly higher levels of child poverty than the national average. Relational Mentoring Scotland is dedicated to creating and sustaining pathways out of poverty by fostering enduring, trust-based relationships that empower families. The Wise group pairs professionally trained mentors with families to provide personalised support. After a successful meeting with members of the officer Anti-poverty group the Wise group are now delivering a consistent weekly presence at the B-Hive, enabling closer engagement with families and improved referral pathways to specialist support. Work has continued with local services such as the New to Scotland team to strengthen partnerships and address barriers faced by newly arrived individuals in accessing timely support. Dialogue with housing and support providers has focused on continuity of care and community integration. Plans are also in place to re-establish a regular

presence at Greenock Job Centre to bridge support gaps and connect individuals with available services to aid their journey out of poverty.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty EMR	Food Poverty	2025/27	£50,000		Funded from AP EMR unallocated balance
	Homelessness Support	2025/28	£75,000		Funded from AP EMR unallocated balance

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

This supports the outcomes of the council and partnership plans.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Anti Poverty Earmarked Reserve

Appendix 1

Funding 2025/26

2024/25 EMR Underspend	£1,751,000
New Funding - Anti Poverty Initiatives (including Employability) (agreed 6 March 2025)	£600,000
	<u>£2,351,000</u>

Agreed Expenditure

Total Budget

Additional Food Insecurity Funding	£7,000
Scottish Welfare Fund	£75,000
3 Year Clothing Grant	£300,000
3 Year Clothing Grant Primary	£126,000
4 Year Free School Meals	£189,000
Duke of Edinburgh	£120,000
Warm Hands of Friendship	£264,000
Fuel Poverty	£382,000
Grieve Road Pantry 01/01/25-31/03/26 (agreed 4 February 2025)	£40,000
Playschemes (agreed 3 June 2025)	£60,000

Proposed Expenditure

Food Poverty	£50,000
Homelessness Support	£75,000

Unallocated Budget	£663,000
	<u>£2,351,000</u>

Appendix 2 Homelessness Support

Background

When people are assessed as Homeless, unintentionally, and have secured an offer of permanent housing, the next step is to settle them into their new homes. The HSCP has Resettlement and Support Workers (RSW) within the Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service whose principal role is to assist in procuring these tenancy essential items.

Both employees assist the client by applying to the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) for vital goods to enable them to make their house a home, increase the sustainability of their tenancy and ultimately preventing tenancy failure and repeat homelessness.

Inverclyde Council amended the SWF priority level from high to medium priority during the pandemic which allowed the approval of more grants and the payment of more generous grants.

However, the priority level has since returned to high priority in August 2021, increasing the threshold for meeting grant criteria and resulting in fewer applicants receiving awards for carpets or a washing machine, except for certain health conditions such as severe mobility issues, skin conditions or have children experiencing the same.

Financial overview

Reviewing 35 people recently housed, only 5 of them (14%) were awarded carpets and washing machines via the SWF.

Working on an average homeless applicant being assigned a 1 bedroom property, below is the costing for carpets and actual cost for a washing machine:-

- Carpets £500
- Washing Machine £250.92
- Total £750 (rounded off for ease)

If we were to be successful with securing this funding, which equates to approx. £2500 per month, this could provide entirely carpeted homes for an additional 4 people per month or washing machines to an additional 10 people per month.

The difference it can make – Resettlement and Support Workers (RSW)

Both employees confirm that when people receive grants for carpets or washing machines there is a reduction in anxiety with the client immediately. An uncarpeted home can increase noise to neighbours; it will be colder in the winter therefore more money to be spent on fuel to keep warm. A house with no washing machine means trips to a launderette, and the costs associated with that may be prohibitive.

The difference it can make – Rapid Rehousing Support Worker (RRSW)

The rapid rehousing support team's main objective is to empower individuals to achieve long-term stability and self-reliance, this funding would improve tenancy sustainment by creating a stable home environment. With almost all supported service users coming from a position of financial hardship, many of the things that we take for granted when moving into our new home may seem out of reach.

By providing these often-overlooked necessities, we can directly alleviate material deprivation and enhance dignity among our most vulnerable households.

A well-equipped home reduces stress, prevents housing crises, and fosters an environment of long-term stability for tenants. This investment would not only combat the immediate impact of poverty incurred by moving but also builds the foundation for self-reliance and tenancy sustainment.