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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 November 2021</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/21/21/TM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McEwan, Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712761</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Progress and Development for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-2023</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy & Resources Committee with progress and development of the initiatives that are being funded from the £1.08 million Anti-Poverty Budget, including additional Scottish Government policy initiatives for Holiday Meal Payments and Child Payment Bridging Payments.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In May 2021 the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to fund a series of targeted interventions to address poverty and deprivation in the areas with the greatest inequalities. The interventions would be funded with an allocated £1million from the Council and the Integration Joint Board to focus on initiatives to address unemployment and employability; support for people experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs; mental health or to support those experiencing food insecurities.
- 2.2 The issues faced by those experiencing poverty are often complex and multi-generational therefore an Anti-Poverty Steering Group, comprising of the two Corporate Directors and the two Interim Service Directors, Head of OD, Policy & Communication was established to provide strategic governance, leadership, and monitoring of the budget. An officer implementation group has also been established to take forward the workstreams.
- 2.3 The progress and development of each initiative receiving funding is detailed in section 5 of this report and Appendix 1 provides an overview of progress to date in terms of the recruitment of staff, identification of clients, and procurement of Third Sector organisations and delivery of services. Good progress continues to be made and each project has undertaken essential preparatory work in terms of recruitment and employment and lead officers for each initiative are confident key milestones will be achieved.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government has announced its intention to make the Holiday Meal payments on an ongoing basis. It is proposed by the MBWG to maintain the enhanced criteria for eligibility to Holiday Meals and the extra £0.50/day payment. If supported by Committee the proposal would be that this annual cost of £218,000 be funded from the Anti- Poverty Earmarked reserve in 2022/23 and then from the Anti-Poverty recurring Budget from 2023/24.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government also intends to continue Child Payment Bridging Payments until the end of 2022 and increase the payments to £130 per child entitled to free school meals/school clothing grant at specific times of the year. The MBWG would recommend continuing to make these payments to those pupils who meet the Council's eligibility criteria during 2022/23 with an extra one off cost of approximately £344,000.

2.6 On 29 October, the Scottish Government announced that it will provide £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The allocation to Inverclyde has yet to be confirmed and proposals for this spend will be brought to the meeting of full Council on 2 December 2021.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:

- a) notes the content of this report;
- b) notes the progress made in the implementation of the initiatives from the Anti-Poverty funding;
- c) approves the proposals for holiday meal payments and child bridging payments set out in section 6 of the report; and
- d) notes that further proposals in relation to the Scottish Government's Winter Support Fund will be considered at the meeting of the full Council on 2 December 2021.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director, Education, Communities &**  
**Organisational Development**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) report on 28 January 2020 identified Inverclyde as the area with the largest local share of deprived areas, with 45% of data zones among the 20% most deprived in Scotland. Greenock Central was ranked as the most deprived data zone in Scotland.
- 4.2 In May 2021 the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to fund a series of targeted interventions to address poverty and deprivation in the areas with the greatest inequalities. The interventions would be funded with an allocated £1m from the Council, and the Integration Joint Board to focus on initiatives to address unemployment and employability, support for people experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, mental health or people who are experiencing food insecurities.
- 4.3 The issues faced by this client group are often complex and not easily resolved by one service, therefore an Anti-Poverty Steering Group, comprising of the two Corporate Directors and the two Interim Service Directors, Head of OD, Policy & Communication has been established to provide strategic leadership, monitoring and guidance in relation to the Anti-poverty funding.
- 4.4 An officer implementation group has since been established to design and deliver the agreed projects and initiatives within timescale, within budget and in accordance with procurement policy. It also provides a forum for lead officers to share practice and reduce organisational barriers to progress. A part time Anti-Poverty team leader has also been employed to collate, monitor and evaluate progress of the individual initiatives, reporting to both the implementation and steering groups.
- 4.5 After the success of the Community Listening Events in March 2021, engagement with communities with lived experience of poverty and deprivation has continued through the establishment of locality based Communication and Engagement Groups. The Communication and Engagement Groups continue to develop to ensure that the initiatives meet the needs of the community.
- 4.6 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a £41m Winter Support Fund to support low income households. Included in this will be £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The allocation to Inverclyde has yet to be confirmed and proposals for this spend will be brought to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

## 5.0 PROGRESS OF INTERVENTIONS

A number of interventions have now been developed and these are detailed below. Appendix 1 provides a summary of progress. As with all projects of this type and scale, the first several months are taken up with safe recruitment of staff and the development of governance structures. Therefore, despite limited spend to date, good progress continues to be made in each of the anti-poverty initiatives and in the support, monitoring and guidance framework surrounding the anti-poverty work. There has been significant preparatory effort undertaken in terms of recruitment and employment and the lead officers for each initiative are confident that key milestones will be achieved. A summary of the key initiatives, the budget allocated and the timeline for delivery is provided below:

### 5.1 **Employment: £1,037,000 (November 2021-November 2023)**

Inverclyde HSCP has employed three dedicated community support staff to work directly with clients who live in the Greenock Town Centre area, followed by the Port Glasgow area. A cohort of 30 males in the 20-30 year old age group will be identified who have complex barriers to employment, including being long term unemployed, having alcohol and drug dependencies and poor mental health. Newly established Community Support Workers will work intensively with 30 clients in total, to build relationships and provide activities to ensure that the clients are ready for employment. Employment opportunities will be offered to clients, for one year

after their initial intensive support with continued ongoing support from the community support workers.

The complex nature of the support required for this cohort will rely on local services and organisations working collaboratively to create activities and support that meets the individual client's needs and reduce the risk of disengagement. A local partnership has been established to monitor, review and assist the delivery of these programmes. A scoping exercise has already begun to help to identify the first cohort and a basic work package will be established to capture the outcomes.

The immediate next steps for the project is to provide training and resources to the new staff to enable them to make initial contact with the people identified as the first cohort. The steering partnership will meet monthly to enhance the basic work package and support the interventions for the first cohort.

## **5.2 Social Workers in School (SWIS) project: £202,000 (November 2021 – June 2023)**

Based on the findings of the CELSUS work around early intervention and child neglect and the links to poverty, it is the intention for two full time social workers for schools to be recruited. These officers will work alongside the Request for Assistance Team in order to maintain their professional standards of practice and access to supervision. Recruitment is ongoing and staff are expected to be in post by January 2022.

The Social Workers in School (SWIS) project will work in Aileymill Nursery, Aileymill Primary School, Larkfield Children's Centre and St Andrew's Primary School, based in South/South West of Inverclyde. These establishments were selected due to the SIMD profiles of their pupil population and an assessment of need.

The expected outcome of the project is to enhance the wellbeing assessment of children and support the intervention process to facilitate change in children's lives. This impact of this project should be a reduction in referrals to statutory services, targeting children on the cusp of social work involvement rather than working with those children already known to social work, who are on Statutory Supervision Orders or the Child Protection Register. After initial discussion and assessment with the family, the Social Workers in school will develop a single agency wellbeing assessment plan to be shared with the Joint Support Team, in line with the Inverclyde Joint Support Team (JST) Model, to ensure consistency of practice. This model of practice will ensure that a greater level of time will be spent planning input and interventions for the child. A tracking mechanism has also been suggested as part of this for the JST to monitor the impact of its work and report.

The Inverclyde Joint Support Team has been established to create the systems required to support the Social Workers in School project, and will meet on a monthly basis. This specialist support team has engaged with local stakeholders, is building on the strengths of community based networks and will establish plans to address the link between poverty and other vulnerabilities (e.g. parental physical and mental health and substance misuse). This initiative is in line with the UNCRC and The Promise, 'help me, help my family'.

The next steps include a training event being planned for November 2021 with Educational Psychology, Social Work Service Managers, the designated establishments and partners. This event will introduce the rationale behind the Joint Support Team processes and operational structures and how SWIS will enhance the wellbeing assessment of children and support the intervention process ahead of key staff being put in place by January 2022.

## **5.3 Business Start Up: £167,000 (December 2021-March 2023)**

A business development officer is being recruited for a two year period to encourage local entrepreneurialism and self-employment and to support local businesses to sustain success and grow. Recruiting for this post has been challenging but it is currently being re-advertised. However, there are ongoing discussions with the business gateway contractor to deliver the service as an extension to their existing contract if recruitment is unsuccessful. Once in post,

the business development officer will be responsible for creating 30 new business start-up opportunities in the most deprived localities based on the SIMD 2020 data in the first two years of the initiative. A tailored programme of support, communication and marketing has been modified to ensure the service targets the identified communities.

The next steps will be to ensure the officer is in place and to further develop a start-up and marketing grant to support the 30 start-up businesses.

#### **5.4 Food Insecurity: £124,000 for two years (October 2021 to October 2023)**

The first Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantry opened in early December 2020 and the membership has steadily increased to the maximum capacity of almost 700 members. Funding has been provided to the Pantry from October 2021 with an option for review and continuation of funding in year 2.

The Zero Waste Pantry in Grieve Road will continue to supply the community with 39 tonnes of surplus food per year while working collaboratively with local organisations such as the Inverclyde Shed to provide free locally grown vegetables to supplement a weekly shop. The Pantry will continue to provide surplus food to help reduce the pressure on households who are struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table, before the need for food banks or food parcels arises. The Pantry provides access to affordable nutritious food at £2.50 per shop which can lead to a saving of £10-£15 per household per week.

Currently there are more than 200 members of the pantry who live in Port Glasgow or East/Central of Inverclyde, and access and the cost of transported has been reported as a challenge for some of the families who live in these localities. As such they have requested a similar service within their community. The Zero Waste Community Pantry has also successfully received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to establish a Pantry in another locality.

Therefore, the next steps for the project is to explore suitable locations for a pantry in a second locality in Inverclyde to meet the needs of other communities.

#### **5.5 Fare Share Glasgow (November 2021-November 2023)**

Inverclyde Council will continue to purchase two annual memberships from Glasgow FareShare to supply surplus food to the Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantry and to Parklea Branching Out in Port Glasgow. Parklea Branching Out has supplied and distributed the surplus food to their local community organisations, local schools and family support service users as a short term support to individuals and families identified as most vulnerable. The cost of the two Fare Share memberships is £64,000 for two years.

Next steps for the initiative is to begin explorative discussions on a wider food insecurity strategy for Inverclyde planned in early November 2021.

#### **5.6 Fuel Insecurity: £200,000.**

IHeat has received a direct award to continue with the allocation of funding for financial year 2022/23.

IHeat already supports older people over 75 years to prevent them falling into debt due to utility costs. IHeat currently offers advice, information and funding of £75 for utilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic this was increased to £150 grants to account for older people shielding or self-isolating and the likelihood that they will be using more gas and electricity. Given the current fuel crisis this funding will enable IHeat to include people over 70 years with the £150 grant at a total annual cost of £80,000.

In addition, Inverclyde households will receive support through the Wise Group Energy Crisis Fund (IHeat) to ensure that their energy supply is sustained whilst working with the household to equip them with the tools, skills and knowledge to manage their energy usage in future. Households with prepaid meters will receive a £49 top up fund if they are in danger of

disconnection. These households will also receive support and advocacy from IHeat to ensure the best utility deal is offered. Households who pay quarterly credit or monthly budget will receive support and advocacy and a one off charitable grant of £50 that will be allocated to the customer energy billing account.

#### **5.7 Financial Fitness Team: £60,000**

A direct award has been provided to the Financial Fitness Team for the continuation of funding for the financial year 2022/23. Inverclyde Council provides Financial Fitness with £30,000 of grants per year to offer support in benefits advice and financial management and provides people across the community with a choice of services for them to seek support and assistance regarding their finances.

#### **5.8 Starter Packs: £74,000**

Starter Packs is a small community organisation who provides those on the lowest income with a range of household products to assist with their first tenancy.

The award from the Anti-poverty funding ensures continuation of funding for the financial year 2022/23.

#### **5.9 Early Intervention Support and Mentoring for Families: £104,000**

Homestart Inverclyde has been provided with an award of £50,000 for one year from October 2021, with an option to continue in year 2 with the remaining £54,000. This funding has been awarded to provide increased staff capacity, recruit and train 15 new volunteers and to enhance early intervention family support to 20-25 new families in Inverclyde in the first year.

The Homestart Inverclyde project aims to provide support to mitigate the impact of poverty due to parental mental health. It offers wellbeing support and helps build resilience by providing a confidential, preventative service which supports parents who are or have been isolated, helping to prevent family stress and breakdown.

Homestart Inverclyde will provide specific early intervention, friendship, practical help and mentoring support for 20-25 new families with children under 5 years within the first year of the project. In addition, it will engage, recruit and train 15 new local volunteers as peer support volunteers to work with the families identified. This will impact on increasing skills, knowledge experience and capacity of local people, which will increase their employment opportunities.

#### **5.10 Tail o'the Bank Credit Union: £8,000**

Tail o'the Bank Credit Union has received funding for non-domestic rates relief for the period 2021/23.

### **6.0 HOLIDAY MEAL & CHILD PAYMENT BRIDGING PAYMENTS: 2022/23**

6.1 The Scottish Government has announced its intention to make the Holiday Meal payments on an ongoing basis. It also intends to continue Child Payment Bridging Payments until the end of 2022 and increase the payments to £130 per child entitled to free school meals/school clothing grant at specific times of the year.

6.2 Inverclyde Council has had in place a significantly more generous eligibility criteria for Free School Meals/Clothing Grants since 2018. In September 2021 Committee approved the maintaining of the enhanced eligibility to Holiday Meals and the extra £0.50/day payment for remainder of 2021/22 and to maintain the Bridging Payments for the remainder of 2021/22.

6.3 The Members Budget Working Group (MBWG), after considering the financial pressure on many families over the holiday period recommends maintaining the enhanced criteria for eligibility to Holiday Meals and the extra £0.50/day payment. If supported by Committee the

proposal would be that this annual cost of £218,000 be funded from the Anti- Poverty Earmarked reserve in 2022/23 and then from the Anti-Poverty recurring Budget from 2023/24.

- 6.4 It should be noted that it is intended that the Child Payment Bridging Payment will cease once the new Scottish Child Payment is rolled out to Under 16s in early 2023. Therefore the financial implications for this are time limited. If the Council was to continue to use its enhanced criteria the extra cost would be £86,000/ occasion. The MBWG would recommend continuing to make these payments to those pupils who meet the Council's eligibility criteria during 2022/23 with an extra one off cost of approximately £344,000.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Finance

Committee allocated extra funding for Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments in 2017. It was agreed to vire the unallocated £80,000 from the Welfare Reforms Budget to the Anti-Poverty Budget thus increasing the annual sum available to £1.08million.

In addition there remains almost £800,000 in the Anti -Poverty Earmarked Reserve. Officers will develop further proposals for Members to consider later in 2021.

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty Fund	External Payments	2022/23	£562k		Cost of proposals in section 6 for 2022/23

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty Fund	Holiday Meal payments	2023/24	£218k		Funded from the recurring £1.08million budget

### 7.2 Legal

There are no legal implications other than those highlighted in the report.

### 7.3 Human Resources

Any HR implications are highlighted in the report.

### 7.4 Equalities

#### Equalities

- (a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

X	YES – Can be accessed using the following link: <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2021">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2021</a>
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	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, no Equality Impact Assessment is required
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(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

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

X	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
	NO

(c) 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

**7.5 Repopulation**

Tackling the deep seated inequalities in Inverclyde will have a positive impact of the area's population.

**8.0 CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 The MBWG support the proposals in this report.





**9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 Equality Impact Assessment





9.2 Fairer Duty Scotland Statement





## Appendix 1

Intervention	Progress to November 2021	*RAG Status	Estimated Total Cost	Approved Budget 2021/22	Revised Estimate 2021/22	Actual to 23/09/21	Estimate 2022/23	Estimate 2023/24
Dedicated Team Leader	Employed and back-filled post in place.		£72,000	£36,000	£27,000	£10,169	£36,000	£9,000
Employment	Inverclyde HSCP has employed three dedicated community support staff to work directly with 30 clients who live in the Greenock Town Centre area and Port Glasgow area.		£1,037,000	£518,500	£216,040	£0	£518,500	£302,460
Social Workers in Schools	Two full time social workers for schools have been recruited. The Social Workers in School (SWIS) project will work in Aileymill Nursery, Aileymill Primary School, Larkfield Children's Centre and St Andrew's Primary School, based in South/South West of Inverclyde. These establishments were chosen due to the SIMD profiles of their pupil population.		£202,000	£101,000	£42,080	£0	£101,000	£25,250
Business Start Up	A business development officer is being recruited for a two year period to encourage local entrepreneurialism and self-employment and to support		£167,000	£83,500	£33,400	£0	£133,600	£0

## Appendix 1

Intervention	Progress to November 2021	*RAG Status	Estimated Total Cost	Approved Budget 2021/22	Revised Estimate 2021/22	Actual to 23/09/21	Estimate 2022/23	Estimate 2023/24
	30 local businesses to sustain success and grow.							
Food Insecurity	Funding has been provided to the Pantry from October 2021 with an option for review and continuation of funding in year 2.		£124,000	£62,000	£47,000	£0	£62,000	£15,000
Fuel Insecurity	The Direct Award memo has been prepared and agreed by procurement. IHeat will to continue to include people over 70 years with the £150 grant. Inverclyde households will receive support through the Wise Group Energy Crisis Fund (IHeat) to ensure that their energy supply is sustained whilst working with the household to equip them with the tools, skills and knowledge to manage their energy usage in future.		£200,000	£100,000	£100,000	£50,000	£100,000	£0
Financial Fitness	The Direct Award memo has been prepared and agreed by procurement.		£60,000	£30,000	£30,000	£7,500	£30,000	£0
Starter Packs	The Direct Award memo has been prepared and agreed by procurement.		£74,000	£37,000	£37,000	£18,500	£37,000	£0

## Appendix 1

Intervention	Progress to November 2021	*RAG Status	Estimated Total Cost	Approved Budget 2021/22	Revised Estimate 2021/22	Actual to 23/09/21	Estimate 2022/23	Estimate 2023/24
Early Intervention Support & Mentoring for Families	Homestart Inverclyde has been provided with an award of £50,000 for year 1 from October 2021.		£104,000	£52,000	£25,000	£0	£52,000	£27,000
Tail o' the Bank Credit Union	Tail o' the Bank Credit Union has received funding for non-domestic rates relief for the period 2021/23.		£8,000	£4,000	£4,000	£0	£4,000	£0
Contingency			£112,000	£56,000	£72,830	£0	£72,840	£0
			£2,160,000	£1,080,000	£634,350	£86,169	£1,146,940	£378,710

### Legend – RAG Status

Red – behind schedule, corrective action required

Amber – progressing well but slightly behind initial timeline

Green - good progress and on track