
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	13 September 2022
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/21/22/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	Progress and Development for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-2023		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy and 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.
- 1.3 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 £1.08 million 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 financial insecurities. Good progress continues to be made across the projects, with more detail provided in section 4 of this report.
- 1.4 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The Scottish Government Winter Support Fund allocated £512,000 to Inverclyde Council. How the Council allocated this funding is also detailed in section 4 of this report.
- 1.5 Ahead of winter 2022, the Council is also planning to respond to the national initiatives around the promotion and creation of 'warm spaces' to help people reduce their utility costs over the winter months.
- 1.6 Approval was granted via the use of Emergency Powers to make payments for free school meals during strike days. Further detail is in paragraph 4.13

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- notes the continued progress of the anti-poverty initiatives as detailed in this report;

- notes that officers are identifying any potential underspends and will report on this and plans for utilisation linked to cost of living pressures to the next Committee;
- notes the successful distribution of funding in relation to the Winter Support Fund;
- notes the use of emergency powers to authorise the initial payment of free school meals to entitled school pupils whilst schools are closed for strike action; and
- approves that if there is additional strike action that payments will be made to school pupils who are entitled to free school meals for the days that they are not in school.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director, Education,
Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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 £1.08 million 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.
- 3.3 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced £25m of flexible funding to local Authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The Scottish Government Winter Support Fund allocated £512,000 to Inverclyde Council.
- 3.4 As part of the 2022/23 Budget the Council agreed to make a payment of £300 to all households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction plus many households exempt from Council Tax, providing support to approximately 10,000 households. Following consideration by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee on 10 March, this sum was increased to £350 at a total estimated cost of £3.5million. This is in addition to the £150 Cost of Living payment funded by the Scottish Government which has been credited to the 2022/23 Council Tax bill of approximately 32,000 eligible households.

4.0 PROGRESS

- 4.1 The progress and next steps for each of the interventions funded by the £1.08 million from Inverclyde Council, in addition to the Scottish Government funds to mitigate poverty and deprivation, are detailed in this section and appendix 1 provides a summary of the spend against budget.
- 4.2 **RISE (Routes into Supported Employment): £1,037,000 (November 2021- November 2023)**

All of the clients currently engaged in the RISE project require a bespoke and intensive package of care and support to enable them to participate in employability opportunities. This intensive support package is necessary to support the men into employment. The RISE project has provided enhanced support for clients including; homelessness/ accommodation, education & training, relationships & engaging with services, social & leisure activities.

Committee approved in March 2022 that the RISE team could engage and recruit a wider age range cohort of men (20-40 year olds) to participate in the project with the aim of increasing the number of active clients engaging in the service. Currently there are 14 clients registered with the project however, this can fluctuate depending on the needs of the men engaged. Many of the clients engaged in the project are currently in recovery, from alcohol or drug misuse or mental illness with some of the men have long term trauma which affects their ability to engage with a range of services, thus making the support required more complex and long-term. Nevertheless a few clients are now pro-actively working with the project's occupational therapist to help them get ready for the pre-employment stage of the project.

The majority of the referrals into the project have been from the Community Justice Service, resulting in intensive support to prepare the men for employability support. Despite initial challenges implementing RISE, a new referral pathway has been established with Moving On

Inverclyde. It is expected that this partnership will increase the number of men within the identified criteria who will receive the RISE project support. It is anticipated that this partnership along with working with other referring agencies will ensure that the project achieves its targeted outcome 30 individuals across two localities by November 2023.

Next Steps

Planning and development for the second stage in the pathway - employment through the regeneration partnership pathway - is underway. The project team will continue to monitor the referral process to ensure that the men referred remain within the agreed SIMD zone areas.

Based on the cohort of clients available to the project it is unlikely that the full allocation will be utilised within the revised programme period. Officers are currently quantifying the underspend and will report on this and proposals linked to the mitigation of the cost of living pressures to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

The Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) project has enabled the team in both St Andrew's Primary School and Aileymill Primary School to focus on a small number of children and families who require additional support as identified by the school team. The children and families who have received the SWIS support have welcomed the support and have responded positively leading to improvements in both school attendance and parental engagement. Other emerging strengths of the project include; interagency communication and collaboration, as well as increased availability of access to workers for both the parents and the school team.

The SWIS programme has supported enhanced transitions for children starting primary school who required additional support and for children who had not attended an Early Years Provision to ensure that they settle into primary 1. Staff from both schools and associated early years establishments have received trauma informed training from the SWIS programme to increase understanding of the adverse behaviour of children and the families they are supporting.

The Team Around the Child (TAC) practice has been implemented successfully in both schools, resulting in improved links between home, school and community. A weekly drop in session in partnership with Barnardo's attracts families in each of the school communities and food is provided as part of this drop in. Since the project was established, it has engaged with 24 families across two schools.

Next Steps The Joint Support team will be reviewing their work with a small number of children to fully explore impact of the service and the support provided. The review will identify gaps and future areas of improvement. By September 2022 the audit and evaluation tools will be in use and measurable outcomes of the children and families will be reported.

The project will start to develop the parenting peer support groups to provide knowledge and understanding regarding children's behaviour. The Health and Wellbeing Coach will support parents with children and young people with Asperger's Syndrome Disorder (ASD) to assist with communication and behaviour management through play.

4.4 Business Start Up: £167,000 (December 2021-May 2023)

The Business Development Team has launched the 'Boost Start Up Grant' to support local entrepreneurs establishing a business in the Port Glasgow or Greenock Town Centre area of Inverclyde. Current the team have engaged seven local potential businesses and successfully allocated the "Boost Start Up Grant" to 6 entrepreneurs with one further business receiving support

to be eligible for their grant. Since the 'Boost Start Up Grant' launch in March 2022 there has been a good level of community interest and engagement and the project is on track to achieve the target of 30 start-up businesses by May 2023. Currently there has not been any formal communications, marketing or advertising of this project, the entrepreneurs have found out about the project either through Business Gateway or word of mouth. However, the Business Development Team will monitor the level of engagement and if required, communications and advertising through social media or local press will be commissioned.

Next Steps

As this project seeks to encourage self-employment and entrepreneurialism, the Business Development Team will now work on potential events/workshops, bringing in expert support where required, to promote entrepreneurialism. The Team will also work with the businesses previously supported to ensure there is a sufficient package of aftercare support as often there is high rate of business failure within year 1 for fledgling businesses.

4.5 Food Insecurity: £124,000 for two years (October 2021 to 24 October 2023)

The Zero Waste Food Pantry Total Allocated - £60,000 (October 2021 until October 2023)

The first Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantry opened in early December 2020 in Grieve Road, Greenock and the membership has steadily increased to 880 members and this continues to increase weekly. Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT) opened Inverclyde's second Zero Waste Food Pantry in Port Glasgow on 6 June 2022. The membership is currently 345 members from the Port Glasgow/East End of Inverclyde area and this is increasing weekly.

Both Pantries receive 39 tonnes of surplus food through the Glasgow Fare Share memberships. The food from the Glasgow Fare Share is predominately frozen or fresh food as the number of tinned food delivered has reduced recently.

The volunteers and paid members of staff supporting the Pantries are fully supported by Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT), increasing their employability skills in retail and community work.

The Pantry at Port Glasgow is working in partnership with the Financial Fitness Team and Mind Mosaic to offer a wellbeing assessment to the members. The wellbeing assessment includes; benefits checks, welfare and debt/credit advice. Customers advise they like the option of knowing the support it is available and accessible from one location. The "Pay It forward Scheme" continues to grow funding which is reinvested back into the pantry to support people who are facing food or financial insecurity.

Both Inverclyde Pantries have an established agreement with Marks and Spencer Port Glasgow and also Aldi Port Glasgow on Friday and Saturday for additional surplus food. The Salvation Army also supports Port Glasgow Pantry. Grieve Road pantry continues to work collaboratively with local organisations such as the Inverclyde Shed to provide free locally grown vegetables to supplement a weekly shop.

ICDT recently applied for £10k from the DTAS "Pockets and Prospects fund" to continue to support The Inverclyde Zero Waste Pantry, the outcome of this will be known by the end of September 2022.

Fare Share Membership £64,000 for two memberships for two years ending in October 2023

The Fare Share Membership provided by the Council has now transferred from the free food distribution at Parklea Branching Out to the Port Glasgow Pantry. The families who received the

free food service during the Covid-19 pandemic are being encouraged to use The Zero Waste Pantry to subsidise their weekly shop.

Next Steps A five year strategy is currently being developed on the local Zero Waste Food Strategies. This is based on successful UK wide projects such as 'Feeding Birkenhead'.

Officers are currently working with the ICDT to determine its future funding requirements in relation to food poverty.

4.6 **Fuel Insecurity: £200,000**

IHeat continues to engage with people who are aged 70 years and older to ensure they receive the £75 top up grant if they are facing fuel insecurity. By the end of the direct award in 2023, IHeat will have engaged with more than 800 vulnerable households in danger of disconnection, to offer fuel advice, advocacy and financial support.

During Quarter 1 (April –June) 2022 69 households received energy crisis funding. In June 2022, 240 households who had previously received a £75 grant received an additional £75 top up.

As a result, the project is progressing as intended.

4.7 **Financial Fitness Team: £30,000 per year, 2021 - 2023**

A direct award has been provided to the Financial Fitness Team for the continuation of service delivery for one further financial year 2022/23, this funding will end in March 2023. During the first quarter of 2022/23 90 new clients were engaged and Financial Fitness continue to be one of the key partners within the Inverclyde Financial Inclusion Partnership.

4.8 **Starter Packs: £74,000 to March 2023**

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 service continues to see an increase in referrals and additional pressures associated with increased costs of items required for packs. In the first quarter of 2022/23 106 households were supported which included 107 adults and 75 children.

4.9 **Early Intervention Support and Mentoring for Families: £104,000 to October 2023**

Homestart Inverclyde was awarded £104,000 for two years from October 2021. Homestart Inverclyde provides volunteer led parent to parent support working alongside families with mental health and anxiety challenges who have children under 5 years. This support aims to improve the family life chances and help children achieve their potential. Homestart Inverclyde has been successful in recruiting a Family Support Coordinator and Family Support Worker and a volunteer development worker, to engage and encourage families to participate in the programme.

Lone parent families, families on low income and families with children on the child protection register with children under 5 years are receiving Home Start support. In this period, families have reported the following successes:

- 40% are currently reporting improved Mental Health;
- 50% report feeling less isolated;
- 50% report increased self-esteem;
- 50% report increased ability to manage their home; and

- 62% report increased ability to manage their child(ren)'s behaviour, listening to them, and respecting their rights.

All families engaged in the programme are offered membership of the Zero Waste Food Pantry funded by Homestart Inverclyde. Parents have completed a budgeting course helping with debt and affordable credit advice and the 4 week healthy eating and cooking programme in June 2022. Women who have been supported have completed the perinatal Blank Canvas workshop to improve health and wellbeing during pregnancy and some of the volunteers completed Equip for Life training. Home Start Inverclyde provides ongoing supervision to the volunteers and monitoring of the caseloads.

Next Steps

The project aims to recruit new bank volunteers including the parents who have received support and are now ready to become volunteers. It also wants to deliver the volunteer preparation course to all new volunteers. The project will also implement the Cross Reach Bluebell Counselling Skills to local volunteers from September 2022.

Based on community feedback there will be the development of a New Scots community peer support group and a local dads group starting in September 2022.

4.10 Tail o'the Bank Credit Union: £6,000

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

4.11 WINTER HARDSHIP SUPPORT FUNDING 2021/22

On 29 October 2021 the Scottish Government Winter Support Fund allocated £512,000 to Inverclyde Council with the aim of reducing the pressure on household finances as a result of cost increases around fuel and food insecurity during Winter 2021/22. Inverclyde Council allocated this additional funding for the following initiatives:

Crisis grant awards and Community Care Grants £150,000

A further 20% increase in the level of Crisis grant awards for the remainder of 2021/22 plus allowance for increase in demand experienced in the last 2 months was awarded. Increase in funding to meet the significant increase in Community Care Grants administered via the Scottish Welfare Fund in 2021/22. This additional funding helped individuals with the costs of essential goods when moving into new tenancies/homes, and reduced the risk of homelessness. £110k was spent by 31st March 2022. The balance of £40k was carried forward and now fully allocated.

Starter Packs (£10,000)

Increased funding to Starter Packs to provide essential support to individuals /families settling into a new home during Winter 2021/22. This supported 70 new tenants with small electrical items and winter bedding packs including children's bedding. This funding is fully allocated.

Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment (£154,000):

Further support to families on low incomes who are entitled to the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment by £50 to £210/eligible child. This payment was made by the Council in February 2022 in respect of three thousand children living in the lowest income households.

Council Tax Reduction (£70,000)

£100 to approximately 700 Council Tax Reduction recipients with no children within their household not covered by earlier schemes. By the end of February 2022, 664 households received

the Winter Support Payment (£66.4k) directly into their accounts or by Council Tax account credits. This funding was fully allocated.

IHeat (£100,000)

Increase funding to iHeat to increase the amount of financial support offered to people over 70 years as part of the Elderly Heating Project. This has funded the approved increase of the payment from £75-£150 in 2021/22.

Inverclyde foodbanks (£28,000)

A Direct Award was made to support to two Inverclyde foodbanks so they can support the most marginalised households with both food and fuel vouchers when necessary. This funding has been fully allocated and spent.

- 4.12 The anti-poverty officer group discussed support that could be put in place to help with the cost of living this winter and linking into initiatives such as ‘warm spaces’ and the provision of ‘warm boxes’. A sub-group has been convened to identify locations that are warm and open to the public during the winter months and how this is communicated this to public. The sub-group is also investigating the provision and distribution of warm boxes to help households to mitigate the impacts of increasing fuel prices.
- 4.13 Officers sought authority through the use of Emergency Powers in terms of the Council’s Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to pay a daily amount of £3 to pupils entitled to free school meals (or a clothing grant in P1-5) who attend schools that will be closed during the intimated strike period of 6, 7 and 8 September 2022. Authority for this was granted under delegated authority by the Chief Executive, following consultation with Councillor McCabe, Councillor McCluskey and Councillor Robertson. The cost of this for 3 days will be in the region of £27,000 and this will be funded from unallocated resources in the Anti-Poverty Ear marked reserve. If there is future strike action then it is proposed to adopt a similar approach to the payments for free school meals using either the unallocated Anti-Poverty fund balance and/or savings in the amount of food needed on those days.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
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 Initiatives EMR (for fsm payments during strike)	Other expenditure	2022/23	£TBC		Costs over and above the £27,000 already approved in the event of further Industrial Action
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Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Strategic

The Council's anti-poverty fund aligns with the Inequalities theme of the local outcome improvement plan.

5.4 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(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.

5.5 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.
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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.
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5.6 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	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.

5.7 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.

Appendix 1

Recurring Anti Poverty Funding

<u>Intervention</u>	Original Estimated Total Cost	Revised Estimated Total Cost	Actual 21/22	Approved Budget 2022/23	Revised Estimate 2022/23	Actual to Period 4 15/08/22	Estimate 2023/24
Dedicated Team Leader	£72,000	£72,000	£27,000	£36,000	£36,000	£13,735	£9,000
Employment	£1,037,000	£1,037,000	£36,500	£518,500	£518,500	£44,364	£482,000
School Linked Social Workers	£202,000	£151,500	£31,500	£101,000	£101,000	£39,431	£19,000
Business Start Up	£167,000	£167,000	£1,000	£133,600	£133,600	£9,540	£32,400
Food Insecurity	£124,000	£124,000	£25,000	£62,000	£62,000	£29,856	£37,000
Fuel Insecurity	£200,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£24,999	£0
Financial Fitness	£60,000	£60,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£0	£0
Starter Packs	£74,000	£74,000	£37,000	£37,000	£37,000	£12,332	£0
Early Intervention Support & Mentoring for Families	£104,000	£104,000	£26,000	£52,000	£52,000	£0	£26,000
Tail o' the Bank Credit Union	£8,000	£6,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£0	£0
Contingency - Transferred to Anti-Poverty EMR	£112,000	£164,500	£0	£164,500	£164,500	£0	£0
	£2,160,000	£2,160,000	£317,000	£1,237,600	£1,237,600	£174,257	£605,400

Winter Support Fund 2021/22

<u>Intervention</u>	Approved Budget	Revised Estimate	21/22 Spend	EMR Carry Forward	Spend to 15/08/22	EMR Budget Remaining
iHeat Funding	£100,000	£100,000	£40,000	£60,000	£60,000	£0
20% Increase in Crisis Grant awards	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£0	£0	£0
Increase in Community Care Grants under SWF	£110,000	£110,000	£110,000	£0	£0	£0
Starter Packs - Increased Funding	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0
Winter Child Bridging Payments £50 additional	£154,000	£154,300	£154,300	£0	£0	£0
CTR for individuals with no children £100 Payment	£70,000	£66,400	£66,400	£0	£0	£0
Foodbank payments	£28,000	£28,000	£0	£28,000	£28,000	£0
Contingency	£0	£3,300	£0	£3,300	£0	£3,300
	£512,000	£512,000	£420,700	£91,300	£88,000	£3,300