

<b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
<b>11 NOVEMBER 2013</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## Report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services

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### TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is to present the final draft of the strategy and action plan to tackle poverty in Peterborough.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and scrutinise the final draft of the attached strategy and action plan, and recommend it to Cabinet for approval.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Tackling poverty in Peterborough is fundamental to the wellbeing of our residents, the strength of our communities, the investment made in our city, and the success of our business sectors. This is therefore a cross-cutting priority for the whole Sustainable Community Strategy.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Child Poverty Act 2010 sets four challenging UK-wide targets to be met by 2020. These targets are based on reducing the proportion of children living in:
- relative low income (whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole)
  - combined low income and material deprivation (a wider measure of people's living standards)
  - absolute low income (whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms)
  - persistent poverty (length of time in poverty)
- 4.2 Peterborough's strategy to tackle poverty has been under development for some time. It is a complex piece of work that needs to be broad enough to encapsulate all of the key issues, but specific enough to be measureable. Significant amounts of work are already underway across Peterborough to help tackle poverty and the impacts of poverty, including work we're doing to manage the impacts of welfare reform. This strategy provides a structure and a common accountability to this work and ensures we are clear about our longer term goals.
- 4.3 The strategy and action plan now being presented to the Committee has been produced in collaboration with a small working group comprising members of the Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Day and Cllr Shearman) and a representative from Peterborough Against Poverty, a voluntary organisation set up to support those affected by poverty. Cllr John Fox and Cllr Forbes, in their capacity as members of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee, have also been consulted.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Levels of poverty in Peterborough are above the national average. As a result of this, the accompanying strategy has identified six areas for priority focus:
- that no individual or family is financially excluded
  - that those most vulnerable and excluded play a full part in the community
  - that our city is a dynamic economic base of people with diverse skills working for a living wage
  - that the people of Peterborough are living healthy and resilient lives in decent homes
  - that children are enjoying their childhood and expressing their skills and potential in life
  - that our city is a place where business succeeds and places thrive
- 5.2 Alongside a series of statements of intent, the strategy sets out a number of high level measures that will be used to identify, in broad terms, whether or not we are on target with achieving our aspirations. However, accompanying the strategy is a more detailed action plan, identifying actions beneath each of the six priorities identified above. This action plan will run for three year periods, and will evolve and change according to the evidence of need available to us.
- 5.3 This evidence of need has been initially identified through the data analysis that forms part of the strategy. This document draws together a wide range of information and evidence to compare Peterborough's performance with other areas across a range of domains. This analysis of data will be a continuous process. We propose to hold live data on our existing systems so that it can be updated as frequently as it changes, enabling us to respond quickly to trends and issues. For example, if we see a spike in unemployment we will undertake some immediate work to better understand why this has happened before it becomes a longer term issue, allowing us the opportunity to put some mitigating actions in place.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are likely to be a number of implications relating to or as a result of this work, including some that have a financial or legal impact. As the strategy and action plans develop these will be identified and appropriate measure put in place to deal with them.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The work to develop the strategy to tackle poverty has been undertaken in close partnership with council departments and with partners across the public and civil society sectors. The working group previously referred to has played a key part in helping reflect the needs of Peterborough in the final draft. Subject to approval by the Committee, the tackling poverty strategy and associated work will be taken forward and overseen by the Communities and Cohesion Board, which comprises wide ranging and senior representation from all sectors in Peterborough.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 If the strategy is approved by the Committee it will be presented to Cabinet for approval. The development of the headline projects will also be developed into a series of in-depth action plans. The strategy itself will also be reproduced in a more user-friendly format using imagery and design.

8.2 Work is underway to broaden the scope of the existing Communities and Cohesion Board so that it focuses more fully on broader community issues and opportunities. The Board has been in existence for a number of years, and has an excellent track record of understanding issues that affect cohesion amongst communities. By broadening its scope to include other factors that impact on communities, we will have a senior body able to hold officers and partners to account. We are proposing that the responsibility for overseeing and directing the work to tackle poverty rests with the Communities and Cohesion Board, with some of the existing groups such as the Financial Inclusion Forum reporting into it.

**9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

**10. APPENDICES**

Final Draft strategy to tackle poverty in Peterborough by 2020

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