MORAY POVERTY 2022-2025:

Proposed Governance Structure for Delivery

Contents

Background

The following draft discussion paper has been produced by Moray Council's Senior Policy Officer (Poverty) as an outline of a proposed Poverty Governance structure (**Figure 1**.) working in partnership on Poverty Policy & Action within Moray, with suggestions including improved communications, monitoring, reporting, delivery and governance across these groups. It is recognised that due to the passage of time and the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic, that activities, membership and structures have altered since the original remits were discussed. There is now an opportunity for refreshed partnership commitment and resource focus as we develop our next Poverty Strategy and Action Plan delivery.

Additionally, Moray like the rest of the Country must deal with post Covid recovery and a cost of living crisis. People are in dire need now and predictions suggest that the situation will worsen prior to recovery. While it has always been the intention to plan and act strategically to reduce future poverty, we must acknowledge that circumstances will force us to continue to respond to the situation on the ground and co-ordinate our resources accordingly. We must be capable of accurately measuring the urgent needs of the population and the progress we make on delivering effective and locally relevant anti-poverty measures.

Existing Poverty Strategy and Associated Action Plans

The current Moray Community Planning Partnership "**Child Poverty Action Plan**" was approved by The Community Planning Board at their meeting of 10 February 2021. At this meeting, it was also agreed that in relation to the LOIP Delivery Framework that the Board:-

*"note that work is underway to clarify and develop **working arrangements and governance for poverty** the outcome of which will be reported to a future meeting of the Board."*

The current Children's Services Plan (CSP) contains one (of 4 priorities) priority around mitigating the impact of Poverty and in future, it is anticipated that the Child Poverty Action Plan will be incorporated into the CSP. Although the Child Poverty Plan is not restricted to children and involves families, there is perhaps a need for a refreshed Moray Poverty Strategy (addressing people in Moray experiencing poverty who are not within the scope of the Child Poverty Action Plan), as there remains some familiar themes and priorities dating back to at least the 'Voices from the Edge' Moray Poverty Report from 2004. The issues of a low wage Economy, Aging Population, Rural exclusion and isolation are as challenging today as they have been for the last 20 years in spite of progress and our efforts to date. A Governance decision is required from within the Community Planning Board before the scope of new work can be delivered, however this document is designed as a mechanism for delivery in any event.

Addressing poverty within Moray will also be informed by evolving factors including our 2nd Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Poverty Topic within 'Raising Aspirations' Priority and, improved statistical data and intelligence gathering and updated partner agency strategic documents.

Clear strategic priorities (Poverty Strategy refresh)

We all have a role to play in achieving our aim of reducing and mitigating Poverty in Moray, and there is no theme, service, interest group or issue that isn't at least part of that story. However, it is essential that in these days of public and third sector constraint, we deploy our resources as effectively as possible, and this means that we must tackle the areas/issues that will make the biggest difference. Nationally, this is seen as Employability (getting a wage), Money Advice (Ensuring people claim benefits they are entitled to) and Housing (affordable rent costs and energy efficiency). It is and will continue to be our task to understand our Strategic Priorities in Moray, to reaffirm them after consideration of all current information and to cut our cloth accordingly, with very clear, very plain English projects and actions that flow from these strategic priorities that can be measured in some way that we can confidently claim to be making progress.

Improved Poverty Data

To give our efforts the best chance of success, it is imperative that our decisions and actions are based upon accurate data and assumptions. Much of our poverty related data is derived from the Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which is widely considered a useful tool, but it is also widely considered a very blunt instrument for rural authorities. Work is progressing to improve upon our sources of Data and officers from Moray council are participating in the 'Child Poverty Data and Intelligence in Remote and Rural Areas' national Working Group set up by the Improvement Service with funding from the Scottish Government.

Whilst as previously mentioned in this paper, many of the challenges facing Moray are not new to us, it is also true that we can have little understanding of the scale of issue facing us, or how effective our interventions are over time if we cannot accurately and relatively quickly track important key indicators of poverty.

OWNERSHIP

STRATEGIC DECISIONS &
OVERSIGHT (Programme
Board Level)

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING
AND PRACTICAL PROJECT
DEVELOPMENT &
MONITORING (Programme
Team Level)

FOCUSED GATHERING OF
RELEVANT INTELLIGENCE
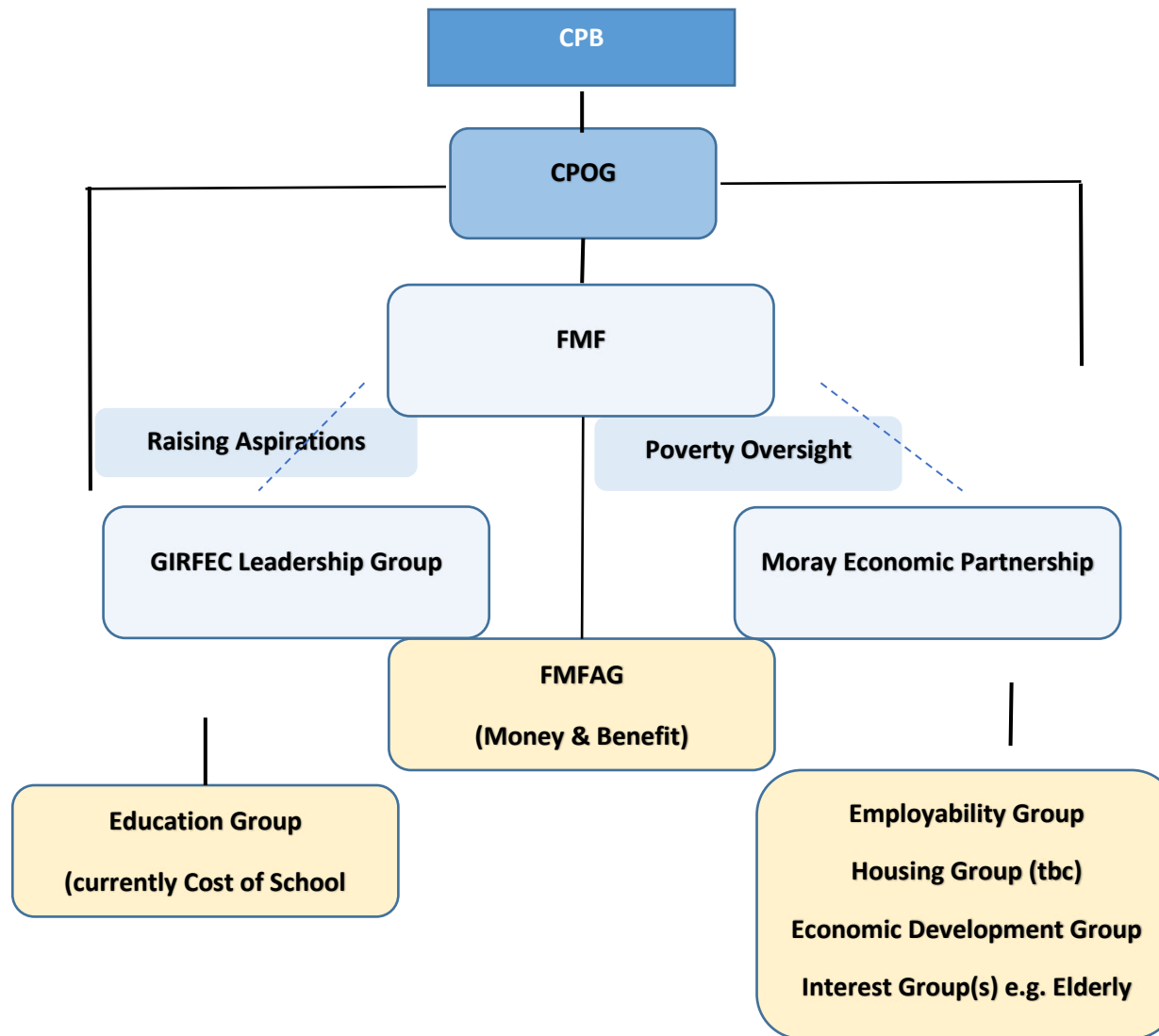AND DELIVERY OF
PROJECT ACTIONS

(Project Team Level)

CPB

CPOG

FMF

Raising Aspirations

Poverty Oversight

GIRFEC Leadership Group

Moray Economic Partnership

FMFAG

(Money & Benefit)

Education Group

(currently Cost of School

Employability Group

Housing Group (tbc)

Economic Development Group

Interest Group(s) e.g. Elderly

Table 1. Poverty Groups

GROUP	REMIT/PURPOSE/MEMBERSHIP (more details on following pages)	EXPECTED ACTIVITY	OUTPUTS
COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD	Statutory Body representing all partner agencies across Moray. 'Owners' of the Poverty Strategy & associated Action Plan.	Provide Senior Authority, guidance and direction via CPOG	• Guidance, approval and ongoing commitment at the highest Community planning Level
COMMUNITY PLANNING OFFICERS GROUP	Focussed group of partner lead officers, tasked with agreeing high level actions to create/initiate relevant work streams and remove organisational blockages.	To provide updates to CPB and to receive progress updates / issue escalations from FMF	• Final reporting sign off and resolution of escalated issues to remove any barriers to progress including resources. • Contribution towards statutory annual reporting requirements of Moray Council and NHS
FAIRER MORAY FORUM	**(Programme Board Function)** A strategic delivery group within statutory community planning partnership structures, including the strategic elements of MC and NHS Child Poverty statutory duties (GIRFEC Group). Planning for the future and advising on developing the agenda to respond to emerging issues, make progress and remove barriers. It should also be where partners agree to share, allocate resources, expertise and data intelligence.	To review existing activities/programmes/projects, local intelligence and consultation feedback, identify strategic gaps, review poverty data and measure attributable impact and receive relevant reports from partner agencies to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling poverty across Moray. Develop plans and strategies to address the agreed priorities relating to poverty. Provide advice and recommendations to CPOG & CPB on areas for development where greatest impact on inequalities can be effected	• Quarterly Meetings • Project delegation to FMFAG • Receive escalations and progress reports from FMFAG • Sharing of information (inc meeting dates, minutes and agendas) with FMFAG

GROUP	REMIT/PURPOSE/MEMBERSHIP (more details on following pages)	EXPECTED ACTIVITY	OUTPUTS
Fairer Moray Forum Action Group	**(Programme Team Function)** Bringing action focus to strategic work of FMF. This level is 'management and delivery' of operational matters to give effect to the strategies and plans and deliver day to day service developments. Also to work jointly across partners and co-ordinate efforts for best results and efficient use of resource. Provide Programme and Project co-ordination role to the Thematic Working Groups including an action focus to MC and NHS statutory child Poverty duties. Hopefully, this group can be drawn from existing groups and avoid duplication.	To investigate and deliver relevant current poverty project outcomes. To take practical actions and escalate recommendations or issues to the strategic FMF body based upon findings.	• Monthly Meetings • Issue/recommendation escalation to FMF • Provide intelligence and programme/project reports to FMF • Pilot projects based upon current issues and opportunities.

EMPLOYABILITY WORKING GROUP **(Already in development)**	**(Project Team Level)**
	
	Delivery of Employability focussed actions and projects Including:
	• Raising Income from Employment
	    o Overcoming barriers such as affordable Childcare
	    o Access to Training & Development for excluded groups and individuals
	    o Access to further Education for excluded groups and individuals
	    o Fair working conditions
		To provide organised and time bound delivery of specific projects and actions within a specialist field of expertise and knowledge.	• Project deliverables
			• Specific Anti-Poverty Actions
			• Poverty Intelligence and measurable impact feedback

GROUP	REMIT/PURPOSE/MEMBERSHIP (more details on following pages)	EXPECTED ACTIVITY	OUTPUTS
HOUSING WORKING GROUP *(This could be a new group but consideration needs to be given to how best to meet this requirement within resources)*	**(Project Team Level)** Delivery of Multi tenure Housing focussed themes, actions and projects Including: - Fuel poverty - Access to Affordable Housing	To provide organised 'themes' delivery of specific projects and actions within a specialist field of expertise and knowledge.	- Projects - Actions - Poverty Intelligence and measurable impact feedback
EDUCATION WORKING GROUP *(Cost of School Day Group as exists Further consideration to be given to oversight and co-ordination of whole education agenda)*	**(Project Team Level)** Delivery of Education focussed themes, actions and projects Including: - PEF & SEF - Cost of School Day - Access to free Period Products - Raising attainment and aspiration	To provide organised delivery of specific projects and actions within a specialist field of expertise and knowledge.	- Projects - Actions - Poverty Intelligence and measurable impact feedback
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP	**(Project Team Level)** Delivery of Economic Development focussed themes, actions and projects Including: - Access to Affordable Credit - Connecting 'Hot & Cold' Economic networks (opportunity and decline)	To provide organised delivery of specific projects and actions within a specialist field of expertise and knowledge.	- Projects - Actions - Poverty Intelligence and measurable impact feedback

Generally, these roles require further development to ensure that at the various levels there is:

I)   Evidence led planning linked to strategic direction

II)   Action to deliver plans on a partnership basis

III)   Monitoring and checking to ensure progress is made, barriers are removed and good work is built upon

IV)   Responsiveness to emerging issues and that reported issues are endorsed and incorporated (or not)

V)   Horizon scanning and preparing for next steps and prioritising

VI)   Expertise to inform partner and partnership decisions

Structured and measurable progress on delivery of action plans including child poverty

The proposed structure improvements detailed below are derived from Programme and Project methodologies which seek to ensure progress happens and that this progress is visible and measurable. It would certainly improve communications and provide a delivery focus. The intelligence gathered from themed project activity within the working groups will inform the strategic approach taken and any gaps will be far easier to identify and remedy. Similarly, barriers to project progress can be escalated to senior partners and dealt with effectively.

It would be sensible for the **themed working groups** to be as flexible as possible in both membership and meeting frequency, being led by the project work required and co-ordinated and managed by the identified 'project manager'. To ensure project progress, it may well be necessary for these working groups to meet fortnightly or weekly, however as they are absolutely focused on action, it is far more likely that they would use calls or emails to progress matters and deal with issues. These groups would be action /project delivery focussed, with programme level guidance coming from the **FMFAG** and strategic direction from the FMF. These working groups would report project progress to **FMFAG** on a monthly basis. **It is desirable for suitable existing bodies/groups to fulfil the role of these working groups.**

- The **'FMFAG'** would effectively represent the 'Programme level' of Governance and direction, in that they would support thematic and project working groups with guidance and knowledge across a wide range of poverty relevant specialisms. Group membership should be reasonably flexible but given the statutory responsibilities relating to the Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, it would ideally continue with a constant representative from both Moray Council and the NHS.

  The **'FMFAG'** would collate the project reports provided by the Working/Project groups into higher level 'RAG Status' Programme reports into agreed groupings, such as 'Employability' or 'Housing' for example, or perhaps by groupings arranged around other strategic poverty priorities. These reports will allow FMF to measure strategic progress and be effective in dealing with any issues or new information requiring escalation. As a guideline, it would be appropriate for the **'FMFAG'** to meet monthly.

- The **FMF** would provide in addition to the development of the Poverty Strategy & Action plan, all strategic guidance and oversight of delivery, informed by the intelligence and project reporting coming from the **'FMFAG'** and working groups. The Membership of FMF is crucial and must comprise senior members of partnership agencies with the required authority to resolve escalated issues and remove wherever possible blockages to progress in reducing Poverty in Moray.
  The FMF would meet roughly quarterly and by responsible for providing progress updates to the Moray Community Planning Board/Officers Group/GIRFEC and have ownership of the Poverty Strategy & Action Plan.

Statutory Requirements – Child poverty

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places statutory responsibilities upon Moray Council and the NHS to reduce child poverty. Child poverty is inextricably linked to the wider poverty agenda and has many interdependent factors. Currently, Child Poverty is specifically discussed and progressed by the Child Poverty Group (CPG). If the proposed governance structure at Figure 1 is accepted, then this operational group will be amalgamated within a new **'FMFAG'** with a Strategic oversight role carried out by the GIRFEC Leadership Group. This move should try to avoid repetition of group membership and allow for clearer communications across poverty projects and actions. It will be necessary however to ensure that those partners with a legal duty to reduce child poverty (Moray council and the NHS) have representation at both the FMF and 'FMFAG' levels. It should also be noted that as part of these legal requirements, the Scottish Government currently require a progress report to be submitted annually. It is hoped that the annual frequency of these reports 'may' change to three yearly in future, to allow for a greater emphasis on a strategic approach to change and project delivery.

Glossary

Acronym	Full Name
CPB	Community Planning Board
CPOG	Community Planning Officers Group
MCPP	Moray Community Planning Partnership
FMF	Fairer Moray Forum
FMFAG	Fairer Moray Forum Action Group
GLG	GIRFEC Leadership Group
CPG	Child Poverty Group
LOIP	Local Outcome Improvement Plan
SIMD	Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation

Draft version 0.7 based on feedback received from:

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*Feedback was sought from other sources, the above list represents feedback received only.