



**REPORT TO:** COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD 9 NOVEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT:** POVERTY GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL (UPDATE)

**BY:** DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1. To ask the Community Planning Board to consider and approve the updated poverty governance structure set out for the Community Planning Partnership in **Appendix 1**.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Board:**

- i) **consider and approve the updated Poverty Governance Structure set out for the Community Planning Partnership in Appendix 1; and**
- ii) **remit the Community Planning Officer Group, in consultation with the Fairer Moray Forum, to review and update the focus and membership of the Fairer Moray Forum in line with the revised governance structure.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following agreement of a draft Poverty Governance structure by the Community Planning Board on 21 September 2022, this report proposed an updated structure that has captured the feedback from the Board and been further considered by the Community Planning Officer Group on 19 October.

- 3.2 As part of the further consideration of the governance arrangements, the role and membership of the Fairer Moray Forum (FMF) was raised. The Forum originated as a group outside the community planning partnership formal governance. Although its membership drew strongly upon the CPP partners, there is also wider representation from local politicians (MSP and councillors) and organisations involved in the poverty agenda but that are not formally within the CPP structure or legislative definition of partners. The Forum took on responsibility for the preparation of the CPP poverty strategy which included the statutory duties upon the NHS and Council to have in place a child poverty action plan. Therefore, its role became directly linked to community planning and the statutory responsibilities of partners in relation to poverty. There has been considerable effective and positive work led by the FMF and it is important that this is not lost moving forward. In essence, the FMF has been providing a dual role as a quasi poverty commission and a strategic group within the CPP arrangements. Consideration is required of how this can be clarified moving forward. There is a question as to whether there should be one or more groups with distinct roles and membership or given the potential cross over and demand on limited resources, whether a single body with refreshed membership can fulfil the combined requirements. Therefore, there is an outstanding action to be taken forward to review the membership and focus of the Fairer Moray Forum within the terms of the revised structure. This is reflected in the recommendations above.
- 3.3 For ease of reference, the background information set out in the report to the Board on 21 September is included below.
- 3.4 The Community Empowerment Act 2015 places specific duties on Community Planning Partnerships to produce a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) with a particular a focus on actions aligned to addressing the poorest outcomes and to prepare locality plans. The Partnership has an overarching priority of Raising Aspirations, which seeks to create an enabling environment where our residents can achieve expanded choices, improved livelihoods and wellbeing.
- 3.2 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on local authorities and health boards to produce an annual Local Child Poverty Action report and national guidance suggests that this is developed collaboratively with local partners.
- 3.3 On 13 September 2018, the Community Planning Board reviewed and agreed revised local governance arrangements for community planning in order to provide greater clarity and ensure a more focussed agenda as a result of the new requirements for a LOIP. The Board agreed that in relation to Poverty responsibility would sit with the Community Planning Officer Group and that the Fairer Moray Forum would fulfil the role of working group in relation to the resulting agenda.

- 3.4 Following this, a poverty strategy was developed and agreed by the Board on 18 April 2018 which set out the agreed strategic approach to prevent, mitigate and undo poverty and meet the statutory duties set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 through the LOIP.
- 3.5 During the peak response of the Covid-19 pandemic and on an ongoing basis, work of the Fairer Moray Forum focussed on the immediate response required of community planning agencies and wider partners in order to address the impacts on Moray's communities. Taking account of the statutory duties in respect of child poverty formal planning and reporting has been focussed on that poverty element since the pandemic began.
- 3.6 As a result, there is a requirement to refocus governance arrangements to ensure that the actions to address poverty can be taken forward and effectively co-ordinated across the priorities of the partnership as expressed in the LOIP.
- 3.7 The proposed Poverty Governance (**Appendix 1**) has been produced with the aim of improving partnership working on poverty policy and action and will be supported with improved communications, monitoring and reporting across groups to provide greater assurance on delivery. Arrangements need to be developed to ensure this if the governance is agreed. Although the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been to alter the activities, membership and structures of groups this presents an opportunity for refreshed partnership commitment and refocus of resources to develop a new Poverty Strategy and ensure there are links and co-ordination across actions for delivery.
- 3.8 The revision and refresh of the Poverty Strategy will also enable any adjustment and reset required as a result of the new issues and experiences resulting from the national escalating cost of living. A workshop has been held to capture the range of activity across the current partnership groups and actions plans. Further work is planned to develop a refreshed strategy which it is hoped can be brought forward in early 2023. However, as there is no partnership resource for this, the strategy work is principally undertaken by council officers alongside existing remits which means it is challenging for this to be accommodated and assurance to be provided on delivery.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The groups within the proposed Poverty Governance structure are drawn from suitable existing bodies/groups with clarity added to ensure they fulfil the role required. Where there is no current group, or it does not cover the full range of the suggested remit, further discussions will take place with lead officers to ensure that suitable arrangements are made that meet the requirement and can be managed within current resources.

- 4.2. 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, however it should be noted that Poverty work outwith the scope of those legal responsibilities will most likely carry additional resource requirements.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1. The proposed structure improvements detailed at **Appendix 1** seek to learn and develop from experience to date and establish a system capable of responding to the emerging agenda around poverty so that the Partnership is ready to address the priorities that are likely to feature in the refreshed poverty strategy that is in early development. The structure aims to provide improved co-ordination across the extensive poverty agenda, to ensure issues are identified and escalated where necessary and to inform and shape the ongoing strategic response to this area of escalating need.

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