

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

4 OCTOBER 2016

REPORT TO CABINET

CORPORATE DIRECTOR - OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

TACKLING POVERTY PRIORITIES 2016/17

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- (i) inform Cabinet of the progress on the alignment of Tackling Poverty Project (Communities First (C1st), Flying Start, Families First and Supporting People);
- (ii) seek Cabinet's approval to delegate the position of Tackling Poverty Officer Champion to the Head of Service - Performance and Partnership Services;
- (iii) delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services, to determine the nature of any requests for 5% virement of funding between programmes, which is to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG) for approval; and
- (iv) seek Cabinet's approval of the 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17' as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

2.1 The Tackling Poverty Programme Alignment Project is cross cutting and impacts on the whole of the council. Additionally, the following Corporate Plan Priorities are supported:

- Priority 1. Supporting a successful economy
- Priority 2. Helping people to be more self-reliant
- Priority 3. Smarter use of resources

3. Background

3.1 On 20th January 2016, the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty set out 5 key recommendations to be implemented in 2016. The recommendations are intended to make the administration processes behind the programmes simpler, so that they are able to work together and focus on front line delivery:

3.1.1 **Recommendation 1: Changes in the frequency of payments and some budget flexibility.** It is proposed that:

- The number of grant payments for the programmes will be reduced and aligned;
- Some flexibility across the four programmes will be provided. This will be a total of 5% of any single programme budget.

3.1.2 **Recommendation 2: Reporting arrangements.** It is proposed that:

- Current reporting arrangements for all four programmes will be aligned and the overall frequency of reporting will be reduced.

- 3.1.3 **Recommendation 3: Collaboration and smarter planning.** It is proposed that:
- Welsh Government (WG) expects Local Authorities to jointly plan, commission and deliver programmes wherever possible; and
 - This includes joint working at both a regional level and across programmes.

- 3.1.4 **Recommendation 4: Team around the family (TAF).** It is proposed that:
- The TAF model should be used as the mechanism by which to engage other programmes and services, based on identifying the needs of the individual.

- 3.1.5 **Recommendation 5: Clarity of direction.**
- WG recognise it has a role to play in clearly stating the overall vision for the programmes and how they can work together towards tackling poverty.

3.2 In addition to the five key recommendations, above, WG have established a project to determine how the four programmes could be simplified, streamlined and where possible integrated in 2016-17. In response, the Council has:

3.2.1 Established, a project team consisting of members from the four tackling poverty programmes considered the 5 recommendations from WG and developed and populated a Tackling Poverty Intervention Matrix which identifies the following key data sets:

- Programme/ Theme /Name of Project / Service
- Service Provider name/ Service delivery settings/ Service or posts
- Details of posts/ Total Project / Service value per annum (delivery cost)
- Project / Service end date and option to extend contracts
- Stages of Intervention and Support i.e. Informal Engagement/ Informal Participation/ Self-service/ Support Assessment/ Structured Support/ Working with a statutory agency or service
- Corporate Plan Priorities i.e. Supporting a successful economy/ Smarter use of resources/ Helping people to be more self-reliant
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 i.e. Promote the prevention of escalating need/ Making sure you have your rights/ Being physically, mentally and emotionally happy/ You are protected from abuse, harm and neglect/ Having education, training, sports and play/ Positive relationships with family and friends/ Being part of the community/ Having a social life and enough money to live a healthy life/ Having a good home
- Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 goals i.e. A prosperous Wales/ A resilient Wales/ A healthier Wales/ A more equal Wales/ A Wales of cohesive communities/ A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language/ A globally responsible Wales

3.2.2 Established a Tackling Poverty Planning Group (TPP Group) which is a multi-agency group with representation from Communities First, Families First, Flying Start, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Housing Strategy, Western Bay Youth Justice EIS, Sports and Physical Activity, ABMU Health Board, Finance, Education and Family Support and the Third Sector represented by the Awen Trust and BAVO. The TPP Group is responsible for:

- i. Governance arrangements;

- ii. Endorsing the key priorities for 2016/17 for tackling poverty, as recommended by the project team;
- iii. Recommending requests for 5% virement requests between programmes to be submitted to the Tackling Poverty Officer Champion and WG for approval; and
- iv. Developing and agreeing a Tackling Poverty Local Delivery / Commissioning Strategy for 2017/18 onwards.

3.3 The key data sets identified in the Tackling Poverty Intervention Matrix provided an evidence base which has been reported to the TPP Group. This will enable the TPP to consider and recommend any requests for virement of funding between Programmes from 1st October 2016 to 30th November 2016. It also provides contractual information to highlight the Authorities obligations both in terms of contracts and staffing liabilities. The information will also form the basis for developing the Tackling Poverty Strategy for Bridgend for 2017/18 onwards.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Members of TPP Group have received an overview of the WG Tackling Poverty Programme Alignment Project and the draft 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17' and have had the opportunity to identify any gaps or priorities.

4.2 The TPP Group received and endorsed the following recommendations:

- i. Responding to Welfare Reform
- ii. Counselling and wellbeing services
- iii. Delivering Communities First projects outside of the Communities First areas
- iv. Helping people be more self-reliant
- v. Pre-intervention – informal early help support and engagement

4.3 The recommendations were reported to and consulted upon at the Tackling Poverty Conference 'Aligning our actions, increasing our impact', which was held on 15th July 2016. Delegates at the Conference ranged from Councillors, Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, Programme Leads, Partner Agencies, Stakeholders, Providers, and front line delivery staff.

4.4 Feedback from the Conference can be summarised in these main themes:

- i. Partners/Stakeholders/Front Line delivery staff not understanding the 4 Programmes and the services and projects that are available;
- ii. Not able to identify opportunities for joint commissioning or where duplication in services exist;
- iii. Not able to refer between Programmes i.e. family accessing Families First Support who do not live in a C1st Cluster Area cannot access C1st Services/Projects; and
- iv. The need to provide more timely Counselling Services for all client groups across all areas to prevent to need to access Statutory Services.

4.5 The feedback from the conference together with the key data sets identified in the Tackling Poverty Intervention Matrix have been used to develop the 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17', which is an overarching strategy for the four submitted WG delivery/commissioning plans as set out in Appendix 1.

4.6 Next steps:

Future Development will be informed by the assessments being carried out under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. It will also be dependent on WG guidance for the four Programmes being available. WG Officers from the C1st team have confirmed that Employability continues to be a Priority for the Minister and the Programme; for Supporting People Grant, Homelessness Prevention continues to be the focus and Priority; and for Families First the Cabinet Secretary has considered advice on the future of the Families First programme and has come to the following decision:

- The key elements of the JAF, TAF and disability focus will remain unchanged, with £3 million per year ring-fenced funding for disability-related services being retained and flexibility to deliver JAFF/TAF in a way that best suits the needs of local population. The Tackling Poverty Programme Alignment Project Team have identified the need to respond to local need by increasing the provision of early intervention, preventative work through the JAFF/TAF arrangements which is reflected in the 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17'.
- The focus of the strategic projects commissioned through the programme will be narrowed to concentrate on the delivery of parenting support and support for young people.
- There will be a transitional period of at least six months from 1 April 2017 before these new arrangements are rolled out nationally. There will be a need for the Council to set out its commissioning intentions for the four Programmes for 2017/18.

4.7 Having regard to 4.6 above the Tackling Poverty Programme Alignment Project Team and the TPP Group will focus on the following key areas:

- i. Developing a Tackling Poverty Local Delivery / Commissioning Strategy for 2017/18, the aim of which will be an overarching strategy for the four programmes to be submitted to Cabinet ahead of WG for approval;
- ii. Review of the Performance framework / payment process (central team function) around the four programmes, subject to WG guidance on reporting arrangements being available;
- iii. Tackling Poverty Conference (Partners, Providers, Stakeholders and Front Line Staff) - feedback on agreed Priorities for 2016/17 and developing Priorities for 2017/18 onwards; and
- iv. Consultation and Engagement with Service Users and Communities.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken following the consultation on the 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17', and in particular, its relevance to the Council's public equality duties and potential impact on protected equality characteristics. It has determined that the Priorities will have no negative impact on protected equality characteristics.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 WG have indicated that any virement of budgets should be considered in the 3rd quarter based on projected underspends across the four programmes. Any requests for slippage must comply with the funding guidance and criteria for that Programme and is subject to WG approval. It is difficult to state more specifically what the financial implications will be at present.

7.2 BCBCs total grant funding allocation for the four tackling poverty programmes is in excess of £12.5 million. The current position is:

Grant Programme	2016-17 BCBC Allocation	5% Virement Limit
Supporting People	£5,816,385	£290,819
Communities First	£1,738,315	£86,916
Families First	£1,689,259	£84,463
Flying Start	£3,330,600	£166,530
	£12,574,559	

7.3 The maximum amount of funding that can be vired out of each single programme is 5% as set out above.

- Some flexibility across the four programmes will be provided. This will be a total of 5% of any single programme budget;
- Any requests to move funds between any two programmes will need to be agreed by both local heads of programmes (or equivalent) that funds are being transferred from and into and by WG officials from both programmes.

7.4 Cabinet needs to be aware that although WG have indicated the ability to re-allocate 5% of programme budgets in the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2016/17, the ability to strategically re-allocate any funding may be delayed by procurement processes if projects are to be commissioned. However commissioning and virement considerations will be dependent on the grant conditions issued by WG, any existing contractual constraints and/or TUPE considerations (where the potential transfer of a service is anticipated) and procurement legislation.

7.5 The annual funding of programmes does not lend itself to long term commissioning of services and this has been relayed to WG together with the suggestion to be able to re-allocate 5% of a budget outside of current programmes to meet the outcomes of a programme. C1st WG Officers have indicated they are happy to consider proposals/pilots to this effect.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- 8.1.1 note the progress on the alignment of Tackling Poverty Project (Communities First; Flying Start; Families First; and Supporting People);
- 8.1.2 delegate the position of the Tackling Poverty Officer Champion to the Head of Service - Performance and Partnership Services;
- 8.1.3 delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services, to determine the nature of any requests for 5% virement of funding between programmes, which is to be submitted to Welsh Government for approval;
- 8.1.4 approve the 'Tackling Poverty Priorities 2016/17' as set out in Appendix 1 of this report; and
- 8.1.5 note that Cabinet will receive a further report setting out the commissioning intentions of the four Programmes for 2017/18.

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Background Documents: None