



**Report of the Director of Human Resources,
Performance & Communications,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
on 1st September 2015**

Draft Anti Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 – Cover Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update and summary of the work of the Anti-Poverty Board in the provision of their oversight, co-ordination and direction of partner activity to combat and tackle the impact of poverty upon Barnsley residents.
- 1.2 The recently developed Draft Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 (Copy C - attached) is provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation, to receive comments and suggestions to support this area of work.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Working together to tackle poverty in Barnsley is not new – we have been working together with partners in this arena for a number of years. This work needs to continue and develop to respond to the shifting policy and financial landscape impacting in our region and upon our residents.
- 2.2 The introduction of the Future Council Strategy in April 2015 set out the Council's vision and priorities. The Council's Corporate Plan details how these three priorities will be met to create a borough that has a '*thriving and vibrant economy*', with '*people achieving their potential*', living and working in '*strong and resilient communities*'.
- 2.3 To respond to the challenges posed by reducing budgets and growing demand for services, our plans to deliver against the three corporate priorities must describe how we will focus our resources and activities over the next three years.

3.0 Barnsley Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18: Overview

- 3.1 The widening gap in income and living standards, and the disproportionate effects of welfare reform and austerity, impact negatively upon the health, wellbeing and prosperity of affected residents. Therefore our Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 must support and feed into all of the three corporate priorities noted above, as it:

- identifies our key challenges in this arena and seeks to bring together the valuable work that is taking place to combat and tackle poverty across Barnsley
 - seeks to build upon the actions which are currently being undertaken by partners
- 3.2 Barnsley Anti-Poverty Board brings together members from across the Council and partners to oversee, co-ordinate and direct partner activity to combat and tackle the impact of poverty upon Barnsley residents.
- 3.3 The Anti-Poverty Board commissioned the 'Poverty Needs Assessment Evidence Base' and 'Key Findings' reports to inform our joint strategic response to poverty and its impact upon residents by identifying local needs associated with poverty so that we can tailor our response accordingly.
- 3.4 This evidence then helps us to better understand what living and growing up in poverty in Barnsley is like today for our residents, and led the Council and its partners to identify four specific challenge areas for our joint action with partners to combat poverty:
1. Increasing financial inclusion and capability
 2. Reducing child poverty in households
 3. Improving employment prospects and skills
 4. Building healthier communities
- 3.5 A workshop of Anti-Poverty Board members and associated colleagues came together to develop the attached Draft Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 under the four challenge areas above.
- 3.6 The draft Action Plan sets out key actions to:
- oversee, monitor and challenge progress against the poverty reduction objectives in associated strategies and plans
 - influence and develop the joint activities required to progress joint action to combat and tackle poverty under the four challenge areas
 - enable effective co-ordination of activities across services and partners with the objective of reducing reliance upon statutory services
 - focus on building resilience and developing a shared and responsive approach that promotes independent self management in communities and by individuals affected by poverty

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 A process of consultation and amendment will revise the Draft Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 to a finalised draft version which is scheduled for completion by mid-September to support a report to Cabinet on 4th November 2015.

- 4.2 The Anti-Poverty Delivery Group will continue the refinement of the Action Plan and co-ordinate the agreed activities.
- 4.3 The Action Plan will remain a live document under review and scrutiny through current established forums and going forward under new governance arrangements which are currently yet to be agreed.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The ongoing local impact of Government austerity measures, welfare reform and associated costs of living affecting Barnsley residents is detailed in the ‘Poverty Needs Assessment Evidence Base’ and ‘Key Findings’ reports which reference reported data from financial and academic bodies.
- 5.2 Despite reported national increases in employment, wages and average income (£2366 per month for a family of 2 adults + 2 children) and reductions in benefit costs; the gap between the better off and worse off is increasing with lone parents living on half the national average income (£999 per month). (Source: National figures from Aviva Family Finances Report 2014).
- 5.3 In Barnsley we have income data for 107,137 homes. The average net household incomes are:

MEAN	£30,265.53	(total income divided by number of homes)
MODE	£10,580.00	(most frequent)
MEDIAN	£26,769.00	(middle point in the range)

The data is updated every 6 months and is provided by Experian (MOSAIC).

- 5.4 Wider reporting upon the impact of poverty offers insight as to the disproportionately negative impacts upon vulnerable groups detailed in the ‘Poverty Needs Assessment Evidence Base’ and ‘Key Findings’ reports.

6.0 Consultation with Stakeholders

- 6.1 The Draft Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 has been compiled with the input of a stakeholder group as described above. Further consultation to refine and agree the plan with Anti-Poverty Board members and associated partners is detailed in the Action Plan.
- 6.2 The Barnsley Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 is the next stage development of the Barnsley Anti-Poverty Strategy 2013-2016 which includes activity to discharge the Council and partner responsibilities under the Child Poverty Act 2010 which includes the commissioning of a local

Child Poverty Needs Assessment which in Barnsley is incorporated into the 'Poverty Needs Assessment Evidence Base' and 'Key Findings' reports.

6.3 It is important to note that the Child Poverty Act 2010 applies to this work. The Act also requires that any amendment to a Local Authority (LA) Child Poverty Strategy includes consultation with families as stakeholders. This activity is referenced in the Action Plan 2015-18.

7.0 Invited Witnesses

7.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to provide information and answer questions with regards to this area of work:

- Wendy Lowder, Service Director, Stronger, Safer & Healthier Communities, BMBC
- Jayne Hellowell, Head of Locality Commissioning and Healthier Communities, BMBC
- Andrea Hoyland, Strategy Lead Early Intervention and Prevention, Communities Directorate, BMBC
- Michelle Kaye, Service Manager, Housing and Welfare, Communities Directorate, BMBC
- Councillor Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson for the Communities Directorate
- Murdo Macleod, Chief Executive of South Yorkshire Credit Union
- Jo Clark, Interim Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Barnsley

8.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

8.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What are the key challenges/main barriers to tackling poverty in Barnsley?
- To what extent are partners engaged and supportive of working together to tackle poverty in Barnsley?
- Have appropriate resources and capacity been allocated to implement the activities in the Anti-Poverty Action Plan?
- How effective and reliable is the collection and use of data with regards to tackling poverty in Barnsley?
- How will you ensure that performance/impact in relation to this work is monitored effectively?

- Has any learning taking place with regards to how other areas are effectively dealing with addressing poverty?
- What are the key actions which could be taken by Members to assist in tackling poverty in Barnsley?

9.0 Background Papers and Links

Copy C (attached) – Draft Barnsley Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2015-18.

Link to 'Barnsley Poverty Needs Assessment Evidence Base' & 'Key Findings' reports: <http://bmbc-online/intranet/departments/research-and-business-intelligence/?Page=Section&Section=20>

Link to 'Barnsley Anti-Poverty Strategy 2013-16':
https://www2.barnsley.gov.uk/media/3454472/anti-poverty_strategy_2013-16_final_published_version_.pdf

10.0 Glossary

BMBC - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
CAB – Citizen's Advice Bureau
DWP – Department for Work and Pensions
JCP – Job Centre Plus
LA – Local Authority

11.0 Report Authors and Officer Contacts

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