

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Wellbeing & Tackling Poverty Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Ref AG/JC/AMcG

Date

26/04/24

## Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire – Tackling Poverty Strategy 2023 to 2026 Update

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### Executive Summary

In line with the Plan for North Lanarkshire and new Programme of Work (Resilient People), the purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Tackling Poverty Strategy 2023 to 2026, Local Child Poverty Action Report and associated Action Plans with a particular focus on the driver of **Holistic Supports**.

The Policy and Strategy Committee approved the refreshed '*Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire*' Tackling - Poverty Strategy for 2023-2026 and the Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The new and refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy is closely aligned with the *Resilient People* strand of the Council's Programme of Work and encompasses an integrated multi service approach, alongside an increased focus on working externally with all community planning partners, communities, and people with lived experience of poverty co-ordinated through the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group (TPOAG).

The TPOAG held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 agreed that actions in relation to community benefits should be moved to the 'Income from Employment' action plan and reported on at a later date. The meeting also agreed that the revised approach to Financial Education should be reflected in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, with reference to MACA/MACA Plus being removed. and the actions being split to reflect the work being targeted to adults and that to children and young people.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee:

- (1) Note and approve the update of the tackling driver 'Holistic Supports.'
- (2) Acknowledge that reports on the remaining Tackling Poverty Drivers will be submitted to the Committee over the course of the remaining 2024/25 reporting cycles.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition statement All ambition statements

Programme of Work Resilient People

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Policy and Strategy Committee approved the refreshed '*Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire*' Tackling - Poverty Strategy for 2023-2026 and the Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The Strategy and Action Plans sets out our ambition to continue to tackle poverty and child poverty, building on our previous actions and many of the positive foundations achieved through the previous strategy for 2020-2023. The new and refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy encompasses an integrated multi service approach within the Council, alongside an increased focus on working externally with all community planning partners, communities, and people with lived experience of poverty.
- 1.2 The Tackling Poverty Strategy supports the Plan for North Lanarkshire's new Programme of Work priorities and ambitions, to both mitigate and prevent the longer-term harms associated with poverty.
- 1.3 The holistic and integrated approach is fundamental to the *Plan for North Lanarkshire* and whilst maintaining strong links with other elements of the Council's Programme of Work. Tackling Poverty is embedded as a core strand of the '*Resilient People*' Programme, whose principal aim is to deliver whole family support locally, when families need it, in a way that is consistent with The Promise Principles and The Tackling Poverty Strategy. Fundamental to this is an integrated approach, working with partners, to provide an earlier and more effective response to need. This includes promoting the strengths and skills of individuals and families, increasing economic activity, and providing practical and emotional support, integrating this family support with the roll out of town and community hubs to maximise opportunities for community-led and strengths-based approaches.
- 1.4 The Tackling Poverty Strategy within the ***Resilient People*** programme of work recognises the importance of a holistic approach reflected also in the addition of holistic support within the national framework set by *Best Start, Bright Futures*, the current national child poverty strategy and that often the most direct, efficient and effective way of helping families is to provide responsive financial support and economic opportunities to achieve lasting change. The new Strategy reflects this, being structured around the four key drivers of: -
  - Increasing income via employment.
  - Maximising income via social security benefits.
  - Reducing the cost of living; and
  - Holistic Supports
- 1.5 The new Tackling Poverty Strategy also continues the approach of incorporating the Local Child Poverty Action Report (Action Plan), aligning both Plans into the same lifespan from 2023 to 2026. Both the local authority and NHSL have agreed that the Local Child Poverty Action Reports should be an integral part of the overall strategy also enabling our statutory duty to report to Scottish Government on an annual basis and recognising that child poverty is integrally linked with poverty and wellbeing within the wider community. To support reporting and measuring impact amongst targeted groups the action plan will detail which "strategy/plan" each action relates to, identifying those actions that are specifically aimed at the priority groups identified within the national child poverty strategy,

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## 2. Report

### Approach to measuring progress and impact:

- 2.1 The Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023, were advised that the TPOAG agreed new monitoring templates for the tackling poverty drivers to allow us to track *"How we will know if we are making a difference"*. Each TPOAG meeting will have a specific focus on one of the four drivers, supporting a 'deep dive approach' to allow the Group to analyse in detail each action, using national and local data (quantitative and qualitative) to ensure that the Actions within the driver, and the outcomes set by the Scottish Government and our Action Plan are being met and to consider further actions should progress not be achieved as anticipated,
- 2.2 The TPOAG have also identified 20 new measures and approved by the Resilient People Board in January 2024 which will in turn form part of the Council's wider Strategic Performance Framework.
- 2.3 In 2021/22 the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group also implemented a RAGG system that will continue to be applied to the Action Plan, for each of the poverty drivers and support management of the programme; the details of which are.
- Red – Action remains outstanding.
  - Amber – Work has started on this action but requires further work to complete.
  - Green – Action is completed and remains ongoing.
  - Grey – Action has been completed and requires no further action.
- 2.4 Using this approach the Tackling Poverty Officer Action Group will identify tasks that are completed (or ongoing), tasks that are amber or red will be taken to the Resilient People Board for further consideration.

### Update – Holistic Supports

- 2.5 Holistic Supports are the wrap around supports delivered collaboratively to address the impacts of poverty, not only the financial impact but the wider health and wellbeing impacts on individuals and families.
- 2.6 There are currently eight actions in "Holistic Supports" (appendix 1), however, further consideration by the TPOAG of the Action Plan has resulted in changes to some actions, this will mean the current eight actions reducing to seven.
- 2.6.1 'Community Benefits' will move from monitoring under 'Holistic Supports' to the 'Income from Employment' driver.
- 2.6.2 All reference to MACA/MACA Plus' will be removed from the Action Plan, and those actions referencing this or financial education under 'Reduce the Cost of Living' and 'Supporting the Plan' will be incorporated into two actions on Financial Education (one for adults, the other for children and young people) in Holistic Supports. This reflects the broader and more tailored approaches being taken to financial education across the partnership.
- 2.7 **Action One - Sustain Tenancies** – Tenancy sustainment is measured when a house has been let and sustained for over 52 weeks, houses returned within the year are considered a tenancy failure. In 2022/23 the measure for this action concentrated on the work done by Income Maximiser/Sustainability Officers who generated over £15

million in additional income via 4007 benefit checks for residents of North Lanarkshire Council properties. However, it was agreed at the TPOAG, that whilst ensuring income is fully maximised is the first step to maintaining a tenancy there are many other supports involved and the measure should reflect the holistic support provided towards the outcome of sustaining a tenancy and not simply the income maximisation work which would be reported under its own driver.

- 2.8 The TPOAG identified that the additional supports to maintain a tenancy included areas of work such as repairs, anti-social behaviour team interventions, garden maintenance etc. This is also linked to the commitment from the Council to deliver the Scottish Government initiative; *Home First*, which has driven a new focus and approach to increasing sustainable housing for people who have multiple and complex needs and who may have a history of rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.
- 2.9 Following discussion at the TPOAG, the group agreed that activity carried out by the CAB Housing Project (funded by NLC) should be reflected in this action in future reporting.
- 2.10 The tenancy sustainment for North Lanarkshire in the year 2022/23 was 90.99%, this is close to the national average of 91.2% and slightly higher than 2021/22 which was 90.92% with an National Average of 90.7%.
- 2.11 Action One has been given a green on the RAGG status, as this work in this area is progressing as planned.
- 2.12 **Action Two - Whole Family Support** – Whole Family Support will concentrate on early intervention and prevention services at a universal level to children and families. The services delivered will be bespoke packages integrating into existing GIRFEC and GIRFE pathways.
- 2.13 In line with the Tackling Poverty Strategy, Whole Family Support will adopt a cash first approach, the governance around this, together with ensuring work is targeted effectively and we are not duplicating but enhancing existing services, will be established and overseen by a Reference Group.
- 2.14 Action Two has been given an amber on the RAGG status, as there has been considerable preparation work done for enhancement of early support services however the roll out of new supports through our hubs is tied to the implementation of a new commissioned service via Barnardo's and linked Community and Voluntary Service Partners. Following confirmation of the contract award at Education, Children and Families Committee in February this will now begin from April 2024.
- 2.15 **Action Three - Arrest/Referral Service** – The Tackling Poverty Action Plan identified enhancing the existing Arrest/Referral Service provided by Phoenix Futures who will meet with people who have been arrested due to drug offences and offer support to them. The Tackling Poverty Strategy reflected the ambition to enhance this service, recognising the links between poverty and addiction, a direct referral route to the Tackling Poverty Team was established.
- 2.16 The referrals to the Tackling Poverty Team have been low from this initiative, however, in a bid to address this the Tackling Poverty Team will provide Poverty Awareness Sessions to the Phoenix Futures staff who deliver this service and provide them with literature that can be included in information packs for people.

- 2.17 Action Three has been provided with an amber on the RAGG status, work has been identified to look at increasing the number of referrals via this Service.
- 2.18 **Action Four - Poverty Awareness Sessions** - Bespoke Poverty Awareness Sessions have been created to meet the interests of a range of audiences and to promote the potential contribution a range of staff and community groups to this agenda. To date 328 people have attended these sessions; internally we have delivered the sessions to 254 staff from education, social work and Community Learning and Development as well as to 74 people from NHS Lanarkshire and third sector organisations.
- 2.19 Internally the training is currently completed on an ad hoc basis at the request of managers. Recently the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group discussed how best to develop this, to ensure the sessions are delivered on a more formalised footing. The Group identified potential areas for this such as embedding sessions in induction for probationary teachers and newly qualified social workers. VANL and NHS Lanarkshire noted that a rolling programme of these sessions could also be included in their Workforce Development Training calendars.
- 2.20 Action Four has been given an amber on the RAGG status, this work is ongoing with actions being agreed at the TPOAG to ensure further roll out across our internal and external services.
- 2.21 **Action Five – Community Solutions** – Consideration has been given to moving the contribution of the Community Solutions model to a different driver, however, following the launch of the website the previous day by VANL, the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group made the decision that the driver should remain under Holistic Supports. Whilst the wider activity and impacts of this model are also reported elsewhere, specifically through the Health and Care Partnership it has been agreed that a future TPOAG meeting will receive a report focussing on areas most relevant to the Tackling Poverty Strategy.
- 2.22 Action Five has been given an amber on the RAGG status, this work is ongoing following the recent launch of the website.
- 2.23 **Action Six – Financial Education (Adults)** As noted above the decision to incorporate all actions related to financial education into two headings, under Holistic Supports was agreed at the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- 2.24 The Financial Education programme for adults is delivered through the Multiply Project, this has been funded for 2 years via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Since its inception in April 2023, 54 sessions have been delivered to 334 people. The evaluation of the sessions has been extremely positive.
- 2.25 Whilst the majority of the financial education sessions have been delivered in conjunction with Community Learning & Development, the Multiply Team also developed and delivered a programme to people due for release from Addiewell Prison. This has proven to be a successful programme and further sessions have been arranged throughout the year.
- 2.26 The TPOAG have identified that it would be beneficial for the Multiply Team to explore more delivery opportunities with partners in the third sector to deliver further programmes.

- 2.27 Action Five is green in the RAGG status, this work is established and whilst courses will continue to be adapted to meet the audience, this is now working as part of the Strategy.
- 2.28 **Action Seven – Financial Education (Children and Young People) During** the development of the Tackling Poverty Strategy Children and Young People throughout North Lanarkshire were asked “three questions.”
- How is the cost-of-living crisis affecting you?
  - How is the cost of living affecting others in the community?
  - What can we do to help?
- 2.29 In response to the last question “what can we do to help,” the children and young people identified Financial Education within their top three responses.
- 2.30 The Tackling Poverty Team are working with education to create a package suitable for primary school children. Discussions remain ongoing to consider how this is best delivered within Secondary education establishments.
- 2.31 Action Six has been given red in the RAGG status. Whilst discussions are taking place to produce material for primary school children, programme delivery has not yet started. There is a need for a co-ordinated approach for our school leavers. Given the importance of this area priority will be given to engagement with education colleagues over the period in order that a clear delivery plan is in place for the next school year.

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### **3. Measures of success**

- 3.1 The successful delivery and outcomes of the 2023 – 26 Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Strategy Action Plan.

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### **4. Supporting documentation**

- 4.1 Appendix 1 Updated Action Plan “Holistic Supports” – April 23 to March 2024



**Alison Gordon**  
**Chief Social Work Officer**

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## 5. Impacts

<b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?  The work reflected in this report is fully aligned with the requirements of the Fairer Scotland Duty, its purpose being to reduce the inequalities caused by socio economic disadvantage.  If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

5.6	<p><b>Technology / Digital impact</b></p> <p>Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?</p> <p>Yes    <input type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes    <input type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.7	<p><b>Environmental / Carbon impact</b></p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes    <input type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.8	<p><b>Communications impact</b></p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>The Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group Subgroup has developed a Communications Plan (Global Messages/Events) with Corporate Communications.</p>
5.9	<p><b>Risk impact</b></p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p> <p>Tackling Poverty has been identified as a Corporate Risk, with the Chief Social Work Officer as the risk lead. Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire - Tackling Poverty Strategy sets out a planned approach which seeks to eliminate poverty or make very significant reductions in the level of poverty resulting in benefit to the residents and including improvement in the overall level of health and wellbeing of communities.</p>
5.10	<p><b>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</b></p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes    <input type="checkbox"/>                      No                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
5.11	<p><b>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</b></p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p>



Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In North Lanarkshire we recognise that tackling poverty and inequality does not fall to one Service, or one Sector, we must therefore work together to use our resources effectively and efficiently to ensure that all our communities have access to opportunities that will lead to better outcomes for people in terms of employment, wellbeing and inclusive growth.

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes ☒ No ☐

## Appendix 1

### Tackling Poverty Strategy Action Plan 2023 - 2026

TP Strategy  
and LCPAR

TP Strategy

No	Action	Brief Description	Holistic Supports		RAGG	applies to TPS &/or LCPAR	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
			Baseline April 2023	Current Status Feb 2024				
1	Sustain Tenancies	Deliver increased financial advice and assistance via 6 income maximiser/sustainability officers	£15,041,070 income generated 4007 benefit checks completed		green	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Housing Solutions	* Income generated via income max/sustainability officers * number of benefit checks completed <i>*tenancy sustainment levels</i>
2	Whole Family Support	To create a flexible, reliable and integrated support for families to ensure that every family who needs support gets the right support at the right time	n/a	Barnardos awarded contract in March 2024. Reference Group established	amber	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Education, Children and Families	* number of referrals * number of referrals go onto child protection * number on an Order from Children's Hearing * number coming off Orders * number of kinship carers * Number escalating or other supports and services * number of referrals out to other services
3	Arrest / Referral Service	The North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service is focussed on early intervention by providing support to people whilst held in police custody and connecting them to services within the community to address individual needs.	n/a	2 referrals received from the Arrest / Referral Service	amber	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Justice Services and the Tackling Poverty Team	* number of referrals * income generated * debt advice provided * numbers attending financial education
4	Poverty Awareness Sessions	Bespoke poverty awareness sessions for council, NHS and third sector partners	n/a	254 council staff 40 NHS staff 34 third sector staff	amber	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Tackling Poverty Team	* Number of people attending training * number of referrals following training
5	Financial Education - Adults (Multiply)	helping adults to improve their numeracy skills, people can access numeracy qualifications with the access of the community learning and development service and will be able to access financial education from the tackling poverty team	n/a	334 attendees 54 sessions	green	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Tackling Poverty Team	* number of people attending sessions * number of sessions delivered
6	Financial Education - Children and Young People	Following the "three questions" delivery of financial education to young people	n/a	discussions with education to look at financial education programme	red	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Education and Tackling Poverty Team	* number of people attending sessions * number of sessions delivered