

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref AG/JC

Date 25/04/25

Review of Holistic Supports Driver

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Executive Summary

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** in line with the approach to progress reporting previously agreed at the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee involving a cyclical *deep dive* on the drivers around which our strategy is framed.

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 2024, on 1st November 2024. The new and refreshed 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).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee:

- (1) Note and endorse the update of the tackling driver 'Holistic Supports' and associated actions.

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 in September 23 and the Local Child Poverty Action Report 2024, on 1st November 2024. The Strategy and Action Plan

sets out our ambition to continue to tackle poverty and child poverty, building on our previous actions and some 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 current Programme of Work priorities and ambitions, promoting the strengths and skills of individuals and families, increasing economic activity, and providing practical and holistic support intervening upstream wherever possible to 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 now a central 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. This involves an integrated approach, working with partners, to provide an earlier and more effective response to need, promoting the strengths and skills of individuals and families, increasing economic activity, and providing practical and emotional support. This approach is also embedded within 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 an holistic approach reflected also in the addition of holistic support within the national framework set by *Best Start, Bright Futures* reflecting 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 NHS 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 each action relates to, identifying those actions that are specifically aimed at the child poverty priority groups.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee held on 3rd November 2023, were advised that the TPOAG had agreed new monitoring templates for the tackling poverty drivers to allow us to track "*How we will know if we are making a difference*", In line with our approach to progress reporting each tackling poverty driver being cyclically the focus of TPOAG meetings, 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.

- 2.2 The TPOAG have also created 20 new measures as part of the Strategic Performance Framework which were approved by the Resilient People Board in January 2024.
- 2.3 A RAGG system also continues to be applied to the Action Plan, for each poverty driver.
- 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 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 nine actions in “Holistic Supports” (appendix 1), however, the current measures under sustaining tenancies will be moved to “increase income from social security” and a new measure will replace this as outlined below.
- 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. The current measure is around income generated and number of benefit checks. The TPOAG were advised that from April 24 to January 25 the activity within housing had resulted in the completion of 6886 benefit checks and generated around £9.9 million.
- 2.8 The TPOAG in March 2024, agreed that included in this measurement should be our tenancy sustainment levels for new tenancies sustained for more than a year. It was reported that there had been an increase from 91% in 2022/23 to 91.5% in 2023/24.
- 2.9 The TPOAG agreed that current measure around income maximisation and benefit checks should be moved to “Increase Income via Social Security Benefits”, with the more appropriate measure of sustainment levels remaining together with a new action of “Implement a system of follow up wellbeing and tenancy sustainment “check ins” ins’. This is an enhancement of the existing system of resettlement visits for specific identified groups (young people and people with an identified support need).
- 2.10 The current Action One has been given a green on the RAGG status, as this work is ongoing as part of the Tackling Poverty Strategy
- 2.11 **Action Two - Whole Family Support** – Whole Family Support has a particular focus on early intervention and prevention services at a universal level to children and families tailored to individual need and building on existing GIRFEC and GIRFE pathways.

- 2.12 In line with the Tackling Poverty Strategy, a cash first approach is also embedded within our approach to whole family support.
- 2.13 Action Two has moved from the previously reported amber in April 2024, to green. The newly commissioned early help family support service named Families Here and Now Service (FHANS) has been operating since April 2024, where it started delivering in Newmains, quickly expanding to cover Wishaw. The service has since been expanded across other localities with FHANS now offering group work and drop-in sessions.
- 2.14 Key presenting issues for parents and carers engaging during early roll out of this service were parenting support, poverty and mental health whilst the presenting issues for children and young people were difficulties within education or attendance, additional support needs and mental health.
- 2.15 These key issues reflect fully the themes reported in our the mental health, wellbeing and resilience and family support task groups and the Strategic Needs Assessment underpinning our current Children's services plan with this in turn providing a level of assurance that this new early support service is providing a vehicle to support these key areas of need.
- 2.16 The families using the service, have children mostly between 1 – 12 years of age, and all except 2 families who worked with the service for long enough to report outcomes, reported these to be improved as a result of the right support. (the two families who reported decreased outcomes were linked to external factors and were not specifically linked to the support they were receiving).
- 2.17 The next step in joint work between this new service and the Tackling Poverty Team is ensure "cash first" solutions are available to Families Here and Now Service, enhancing access to the right support, at the earliest time using a relationship-based approach, to future proof and maximise the financial situation of families.
- 2.18 Work continues across North Lanarkshire to promote the service.
- 2.19 Action Two was given a green on the RAGG status due to the development of the service and the existing structures to allow for development.
- 2.20 **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 TPOAG were advised that from March 23 to April 24, there had been 5357 entries to the Coatbridge Custody Suite. In this same period 305 referrals to the Arrest referral service were made. Those who engaged in the support were connected to a range of holistic supports, including addiction services and community supports.
- 2.21 Referrals to the Tackling Poverty Team have been minimal. The service recognises this and that more work is required to understand the role of welfare support and income maximisation into 2025.
- 2.22 The service is currently going through an independent evaluation, and it is understood that this is an area that will be addressed in this.
- 2.23 Action Three remains an amber on the RAGG status, with this as an area for development following the evaluation.

- 2.24 **Action Four - Poverty Awareness Sessions** - Bespoke Poverty Awareness Sessions continue to be created and delivered. To date 586 people have attended these sessions. Internally we have delivered sessions to staff from Scottish Welfare Fund, justice services, probationary teachers, numeracy coaches, school staff and social work. Externally the Sessions have been delivered to staff from Turning Point, Xavarien Fathers and Barnardos.
- 2.25 The delivery of bespoke sessions continues internally and externally on request.
- 2.26 A small working group has been established to create a digital online poverty awareness pack. The packs will have a core section for all staff with additional sections specific to children and families, older people, justice etc. The group is in its infancy, and consideration will be given to include the core module in mandatory training for all council staff.
- 2.27 Action Four has been given an amber on the RAGG status. The digital pack is in its infancy with decisions to be made in relation to including Poverty Awareness Sessions as mandatory for all staff.
- 2.28 **Action Five – Community Solutions** – Following the decision for this to remain within Holistic Supports. VANL provided an update to the TPOAG.
- 2.29 Community Solutions is a successful, cross sector health and social care investment and improvement programme for North Lanarkshire. The programme aims to improve people's health, wellbeing, quality of life and equality by investing in community led initiatives which build community, family and individual strengths and resources, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.
- 2.30 In 2023-24, over £3.8 million of funding was managed through the programme, awarded to 238 projects, delivered by 93 CVS organisations.
- 2.31 VANL reported that over 20,000 children and young people's health and wellbeing have been improved, 9055 family relationships were strengthened, and 10,475 children, young people and families became more resilient.
- 2.32 Action Five has been given a green on the RAGG status, reflecting the work being done by VANL.
- 2.33 **Action Six – Financial Education (Adults)** 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 22nd March 2024.
- 2.34 Building on the work of 2023/24 where 119 sessions were delivered with 420 people attending. The Multiply Project continues to grow and expand, offering more sessions and different topics to people. From April 24 to January 25, the Multiply Project had delivered 60 financial education sessions to 289 people.
- 2.35 The sessions cover; budgeting, reducing costs, affordable credit, savings, using online tools to remain on budget, scam awareness, fuel and energy savings tips and wage slips.
- 2.36 Sessions have been delivered to NLC Modern Apprentices, Mears Apprentices, Prison Leavers, Men's Space Groups, Disability Groups, Young Mothers, CAB to Careers and employers from Eurocentral.

- 2.37 Action Six 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.
- 2.38 **Action Seven – Financial Education (Children and Young People)** Committee were informed that in April 2024, this area was reported as a red, this was based on discussions with the children and young people via “The Three Questions” programme, where we asked; “how is the cost of living affecting you”, “how is the cost of living affecting others in the community” and “what would you like us to do about it”.
- 2.39 In response to the last question “what would you like us to do about it”, children and young people continually identified “financial education” within the top three solutions.
- 2.40 Education have responded to this request from the young people and a workplan was drawn up to ensure that financial education is embedded throughout the curriculum as reflected previously in a focussed report to Committee.
- 2.41 Scotland’s Financial Schools (SFS) have also provided support to North Lanarkshire’s schools. As of of January 2025.
- 20 North Lanarkshire teachers attended online financial education in terms 1 and 2, with a further 8 registered for the forthcoming term
 - 80 numeracy leads attended sessions
 - 17 school visits by SFS had taken place with 354 pupils attending
 - 9 further bookings had been confirmed
 - further schools were waiting to confirm the dates.
- 2.42 Action Seven has moved from red to green in the action plan. Work continues across our schools with the three questions, with one cluster being identified as a pilot to carry out intense work around the Cost of the School Day and Poverty Proofing.
- 2.43 **Action Eight – Community Boards to Support the Tackling Poverty Agenda** this would be addressed by delivering tackling poverty awareness sessions and the delivery of the Councils’ Tackline Poverty Agenda through the community boards supporting the strategy.
- 2.44 A pilot in Coatbridge was arranged to have poverty awareness sessions delivered to community groups, however, only one group proceeded with this, with residents of a sheltered housing complex receiving the session.
- 2.45 Action Eight is an amber in the RAGG; the creation of the digital poverty awareness sessions will be made available to all community groups, with work being done with corporate comms helping promote this. It is anticipated this will allow this action to move to a green in future reports.

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 24 – March 26



**Alison Gordon
Chief Social Work Officer**

5. Impacts

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty 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?</p> <p>Challenge Poverty Week is fully aligned with the requirements of the Fairer Scotland Duty, its purpose being to reduce the inequalities caused by socio economic disadvantage.</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact 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?</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact 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?</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact 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?</p>
<p>5.5 Data protection impact 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 dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</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?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

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)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group Sub Group developed a Communications Plan (Global Messages/Events) with Corporate Communications.

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

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?

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.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

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)?

Yes No

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.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

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?

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

Tackling Poverty Strategy Action Plan 2023 - 2026

Key	TP Strategy Only	TP Strategy and LCPAR
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HOLISTIC SUPPORTS													
Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	2022/23 Baseline	2023/24 Outcomes	2024/25 Outcomes	2025/26 Outcomes	Timescales	Status	Identify if applies to TPS &/or LCPAR	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Sustain Tenancies	Deliver increased financial advice and assistance via 8 income maintainers	Increase incomes from social security, reducing rent arrears and sustaining tenancies in social rented homes	Local Housing Strategy	Resilient People	£15,041,070 income generated - 407 benefit checks completed	£18,850,629 income generated - 7040 benefit checks completed	As of Jan 25 - £9,923,466 income generated - 6886 benefit checks completed *NEW MEASURE AROUND WELFARE CHECKS TO BE INCLUDED IN 25/26 ACTIONS		Ongoing	Ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Housing Solutions	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
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.	People have access to income maximisation, employability and money advice services at the right time.	Childrens Services Plan	Resilient People	n/a	Barnardos awarded the contract - Families Here and Now Service started June 2024	As of Jan 25 - 55 families, 67 children & young people, 47 parents and carers assisted		2023 - 26	ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Education, Children and Families	Inter service referrals
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.	Number of referrals to the tackling poverty team	Community Justice Improvement Plan	Resilient People	n/a	Meeting held - service leaflets provided	As of Jan 25 - 385 referrals to the Arrest Referral Project however, no referrals to the TPT		2025	ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	The service is delivered by Scottish Drugs Forum and Phoenix Futures and funded by North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership for a period of 18 months as a Test of Change.	number of referrals / income generated / debt advice provided / financial education
Poverty Awareness Sessions	Bespoke poverty awareness sessions for council, NHS and third sector partners	Number of people attending the sessions and ultimately the number of referrals this leads to	The Plan for North Lan	Resilient People	n/a	529 staff attended poverty awareness sessions (health/education/CLD/social work/NSW/ NLADP/ One Parent families/NL Disability Forum	As of Jan 25 - 586 staff attended poverty awareness sessions (health, education, social work, SWF, justice, Barnardos, Xavarian Families)		ongoing	ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions delivered / number of people attending / referrals following the training
Community Benefits	To increase the number of tackling poverty interventions / fair work interventions within community benefits	improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of our communities	The Plan for North Lan	transforming places	Recent figures show the local economy continues to grow, reflecting a positive position in North Lanarkshire compared to a negative growth position locally, however, moving forward we must see more tackling poverty related interventions within community benefits	no update available	moved to income from employment		ongoing	ongoing	TP Strategy Only	Enterprise and Communities	Number of Tackling Poverty interventions
Community Solutions Programme	Wide ranging community supports provided by Community and Voluntary Sector organisations to support residents wellbeing including those in poverty or at risk of poverty including: food, mental health and wellbeing.	Improved wellbeing	Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan 2023 and HSCNL Commissioning Plan 2023 - 26	Resilient People	n/a	no update available	As of Jan 25 - £3.8 million of funding was managed through the programme. 15,475 young people & families reported being more resilient - 20,013 children and young people health & wellbeing improved - 9055 family relationships improved		ongoing	ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	VANL	Learning and impact reports
Financial Education (Adults)	The Multiply Project is a government initiative 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.	people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to manage money well and make informed decisions.	The Plan for North Lan	Resilient People	n/a	start up and development (119 sessions delivered - 420 people attended)	As of Jan 25 - 41 groups, 60 financial education sessions 289 attendees		Project ends March 2025	On going	TP Strategy and LCPAR	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of courses delivered / number of attendees
Financial Education (children and young people)	Following the "three questions" delivery of a revamped financial education for the primary children	the younger children asked for financial education - the programme will ensure that we meet the needs and requests of our children	The Plan for North Lan	Resilient People	n/a	*Audit of financial education activity in schools *Discussions with Scotland's Financial Schools re delivery	As of Jan 25 - 20 NL teachers have attended online sessions with 8 in the next session 80 numeracy leads attended sessions 17 schools visits by sfs with 354 pupils attending		in development	in development	TP Strategy and LCPAR	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions completed in schools - Number of young people who attend the sessions
Community Boards to support the tackling poverty agenda	Through tackling poverty awareness sessions and delivery of the councils tackling poverty agenda the community boards will support the Strategy	understand their roles and responsibilities in raising awareness of key poverty messages, challenging stigma	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Tackling Poverty on agendas of community boards	trial focussed sessions in Coatbridge - in discussion - if successful will continue roll out		Ongoing	Ongoing	TP Strategy and LCPAR	Local Planning Partnership Teams	Community Board Sub Groups Reports