



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 SEPTEMBER 2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – CHILD POVERTY

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Members to consider including the Notice of Motion that was referred by Council following its meeting on the 29th March 2023, in relation to Child Poverty, to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 consider the contents of this report; and
- 2.2 Agree the inclusion of this matter as part of the work programme of the Overview & Scrutiny, in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- 2.3 Agree to invite two members of the Education & Inclusion and Community Services Scrutiny Committees to form part of consideration of issues relating to Child Poverty. In addition, and if not already a member of the Committee, an invitation to the mover and seconder of the original Notice of Motion will also be extended to assist the discussions
- 2.4 Authorise the Head of Democratic Services to amended respective work programmes, and report the intended inclusion of the adopted Notice of Motion by Council on the 29th March, within wider considerations relating to the new Corporate Plan.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Confirm that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will progress the Notice of Motion (as amended) in respect of child poverty, as supported by Full Council at its meeting held on the 29th March 2023.



4. BACKGROUND

4.1 On Tuesday 29th March 2023, the Council considered the [Notice of Motion](#) presented by County Borough Councillor D Grehan and seconded by County Borough Councillor S Evans asking for child poverty to be considered as a priority for the council *'and steps should be taken to address the well evidenced link between poverty and educational attainment'*

4.2 Due to its overarching function and where its terms of reference states that *'Where there are matters that fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022 - 2027 Committee will determine which Committee has responsibility for its review'*, it is proposed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviews this matter and it is included on its work programme for consideration.

5. KEY AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 There are a number of key areas to consider when developing a Child Poverty Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf, gaining an understanding of definitions of poverty, including its causes and impact; establishing an understanding of the national context, including causes of child poverty on a national level and central government's strategies and priorities in addressing poverty; identifying the key causes of child poverty at a local level and the type of barriers local residents face in getting out of poverty.

5.2 To combat child poverty, some poverty reduction legislation has been and is currently undergoing implementation by Welsh Government. For example, the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 legislation have helped children in need. In addition, the [Childcare Funding \(Wales\) Act 2019](#) provides funding for 30 hours per week, up to 48 weeks per year, to working parents to assist in the education and childcare of their three- and four-year-old children.

5.3 The Welsh Government's draft [Child Poverty for Wales 2023](#) consultation launched on the 19th June 2023. It seeks views on its 5 objectives, considered as key drivers in changing the lives of children and young people in poverty:

- To reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families.
- To create pathways out of poverty.
- To support child and family wellbeing, including those with protected characteristics.
- To ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by support services.
- To ensure effective cross-government working.



It is considered that an updated strategy will provide national targets to reduce child poverty rates, with clear accountability across government and set specific targets and actions to reduce child health inequalities.

- 5.4 In November 2022, Audit Wales produced a report which looked at the challenges and scale of poverty in Wales and how government is responding. The report made eight recommendations including a target to alleviate poverty. Audit Wales commented that its recommendations '*are designed to support decision making in councils and their partners and improve how they target their work*' and it called on Welsh Government and councils to address the weaknesses identified in this review and ensure all tiers of government work together to support improvement and help people in need. This Council is co-ordinating a response to the findings and recommendations contained within the report.
- 5.5 On a local level, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has maintained its commitment to the child poverty agenda through a number of mechanisms. In May 2009, the Council (together with Gwynedd Council) was selected to undertake a Child Poverty Pilot project, in conjunction with Save the Children and the Welsh Local Government Association, which resulted in the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertaking a Child Poverty Review.
- 5.6 The review investigated the Council's robustness to reducing child poverty through a range of interviews with key stakeholders, council officers, teachers and young people and delivered its final report to Cabinet in January 2010 which proposed 22 recommendations. Cabinet concluded that Child Poverty was a high priority for the Council, and it was committed, together with its partners to tackling the root causes of poverty, and it endorsed all the recommendations of the Working Group believing that they built on the efforts already being made.
- 5.7 Through its Corporate Plan, the Council ensures that issues that impact on child poverty are at the core of all decision making. Its Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will seek to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of its residents and specifically by ***improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.***
- 5.8 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has opportunity to shape and influence the direction of the Council's Corporate Plan. In line with its Terms of Reference, it is requested to review the Council's Corporate Plan and form a view on the extent to which it sets out a clear vision and purpose for the Council. It will once again undertake pre scrutiny of the draft new Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

6. **PROPOSAL**



- 6.1 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to include the Child Poverty Strategy on its Work Programme as the most appropriate Scrutiny Committee in order to progress the Notice of Motion (as amended) in respect of child poverty, as supported by Full Council at its meeting held on the 29th March 2023.
- 6.2 It is evident that Child Poverty will need to form an integral part a new Corporate Plan, due to the demographic picture of communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the significant focus placed upon this area by the Welsh Government. It must also be noted that despite significant actions and interventions, reducing child poverty remains a challenge across Wales and in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and for this reason this issue will play a leading role in the development of the Corporate Plan.
- 6.3 The original approach considered had planned for this matter to progress by convening a Joint Education & Inclusion Scrutiny Committee and Community Services Scrutiny Committee. However, due to the development of the Council's Corporate Plan now being underway, it is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider this within its own work programme for consideration
- 6.4 Overview & Scrutiny has already considered its involvement in the early development of new Corporate Plan as part of work programme reporting.
- 6.5 The Council recently began consulting with the public upon on areas of focus and what services matter to residents. This consultation is currently ongoing and can be found at: [Let's Talk About What Matters To You | Let's Talk RCTCBC](#)
- 6.6 As a reflection of the cross-cutting nature of this subject, it is proposed that two committee members from the Children & Young People's Scrutiny committee and the Community Services Scrutiny Committee be co-opted to form part of these discussions. These members will of course be in addition to the representation of the respective Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs as substantive members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.7 Should Overview & Scrutiny members' support this approach, an update will be provided to Full Council in respect of the approach adopted to action the Notice of Motion (as amended) which was adopted by Full Council on the 29th March 2023.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes.

8. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT



8.1 There are no consultation requirements implications aligned to this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17th JULY 2023

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COMMUNICATION**

Item: **NOTICE OF MOTION – CHILD POVERTY**

Background Papers

None.