

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 th June 2003	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		<i>Developing Southwark's Anti-Poverty agenda</i>	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Borough-Wide	
From:		Director of Regeneration	

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 That members note progress in developing Southwark's Anti-Poverty programme.
- 1.2 That members agree Southwark's [draft] Anti-Poverty Statement which reiterates the Council's approach to tackling poverty
- 1.3 That members agree to the next stage of work in this area which is focused on practical delivery of anti-poverty objectives as part of the [Forward@Southwark](#) Improvement Programme

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Tackling anti-poverty was adopted as a political priority in May 2002 with responsibility for its development placed with the Director of Regeneration.
- 2.2 Southwark's efforts coincide with a national target of reducing child poverty by a ¼ by 2005, with 60% of the average median household income being adopted as the poverty threshold. The emphasis has mainly been on macro-economic policy via reform of the Tax and Benefits system and the introduction of Child Tax and Working Tax Credits. Policy to address poverty through the tax system is complemented by a broad range of initiatives such as the introduction of national minimum wage, The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, New Deal for Communities, New Deal for the Unemployed, Sure Start and Connexions.
- 2.3 Executive Members agreed to a framework for addressing poverty in December 2002. This concentrated on developing a sharper approach to existing anti-poverty work, via the Council's Community Plan and related Employment, Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies. Key aims identified were to enhance the people oriented approach to tackling poverty with a focus on distinct life stages [children, young people, working age adults and older people]. It was agreed to launch the programme by a facilitated seminar for Executive Members and Senior Officers.

- 2.4 The seminar took place in January 2003. It was supported by contributions from Guy Palmer, Director of the New Policy Institute and Ruth Lupton from the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion. The seminar was extremely successful, particularly in terms of defining where a more targeted programme was going to make the most difference within the context of wider government intervention. In this sense it has become clear that much of the existing work in the borough represents national good practice and that the Council is well placed to take the anti-poverty debate forward within local government and beyond.
- 2.5 A small member/officer steering group has been meeting to refine proposals and it is now being developed as part of the [Forward@Southwark](#) Improvement programme. This is to ensure that the programme is based on the delivery of tangible outcomes. In this respect while Southwark's emerging programme is clearly among the more ambitious responses within local government, the breadth/complexity of the poverty brief means there are ample opportunities for drift.

2. Factors for Consideration

3.1. Southwark's Anti Poverty Statement

Southwark Anti Poverty Statement set out in Appendix 1 has been developed in order to reiterate the Council's broad approach to delivering anti-poverty objectives. It is based on tackling poverty through;

- Tackling poverty as part of the Community Planning process
- Adoption of a targeted anti-poverty programme
- Embedding anti-poverty objectives through the Business Planning Process
- Developing a robust response to identifying the equalities dimension of poverty through the Corporate Equalities Plan

3.2 Adoption of a targeted anti-poverty programme

Southwark's proposed anti-poverty programme aims to provide a credible response to poverty issues for each lifestage group. The programme is based on adopting as mainstream services, examples of good practice developed in other parts of the borough. Although primarily about local delivery, the programme is also concerned with influencing wider policy at both a national and local level. It therefore also includes a significant emphasis on raising the Council's 'profile' on anti-poverty through communications and by working with other organisations active in the anti-poverty field.

3.3 The main objectives of Southwark's Anti-Poverty Programme

Set out below are the main objectives developed by the member/officer group. These are being taken forward via the forward@southwark project framework and are subject to further development work.

1. Enabling parents to enter paid employment by developing a childcare co-ordination function via the Neighbourhood Renewal fund to raise awareness of the childcare dimension of the Working Tax Credit and by ensuring that affordable, high quality places are accessible to all children in the borough.
2. Ensuring that nutritious food is accessible to pre-school children in the borough by mainstreaming best practice around healthy food such as breakfast clubs.
3. Developing a refugee and asylum seeker component to the work of Southwark Childcare first to ensure that child development and support services are fully accessible and appropriate to the needs of children of refugees and asylum seekers.
4. Work with the banking sector to introduce a Financial Literacy Programme to support existing school based/youth service programmes
5. Providing an integrated approach to the provision of advice/support to address financial exclusion covering all benefits, tax credits and why people should enter the financial system.
6. Delivering a fair pay agreement based on a minimum hourly rate of £6.30 for all staff, and includes the introduction of fair pay clauses within external contracts.
7. Delivering an integrated programme for addressing poverty among older people who fall outside the criteria for statutory social care provision.
8. Taking the anti-poverty debate outside Southwark by implementing a Communications Plan to maximise the opportunities for working with and learning from others concerned with addressing poverty.
9. Identifying future anti-poverty priorities through a research programme which draws from experts in the anti-poverty field.

3.4 Progress in the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Programme

Set out in table 1 is a project plan for the delivery of programme objectives. Progress to date includes the following;

- Social Inclusion Division has successfully submitted a bid to carry out work around the new Tax Credits and Benefits take up as part of the Community Legal Services Partnership. The activity has two elements – Training to raise the capacity of community agencies in the borough and longer term work to establish an effective joined up service among key agencies [Job Centre Plus, Connexions, Department of Work and pensions] to look at mainstreaming workers based in JCP offices.
- Regeneration Department working with Human Resources has developed a first draft of a Fair Pay Agreement based on a minimum hourly rate of £6.30 for Council and contracted out staff. This will form the basis of further work identifying the detailed implications and feasibility of implementing the agreement.

- Regeneration Department has developed a communications plan as means for taking the poverty debate outside of Southwark.
- Corporate Strategy Division has produced research based on bringing together economic forecasts to help predict future priorities in key service areas.

The backdrop to progress with these issues is the successful development of the Council's Employment and Enterprise Strategies, which are central to the meeting anti-poverty objectives. In this respect the Executive has formally agreed the Employment Strategy while objectives identified within the Enterprise Strategy are being translated into detailed plans of action.

Table 1. Indicative Programme for Delivery

<i>Key deliverables</i>	<i>Key Milestones</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Childcare coordination function	proposal developed detailed action plan programme in place	July 03 Sept 03 Jan 03 Social Services Department
Borough wide Health food programme	proposal developed detailed action plan programme in place	July 03 Sept 03 Jan 03 Social Services Department
Refugee and Asylum seeker component to the work of Southwark Childcare first.	proposal developed detailed action plan programme in place	July 03 Sept 03 Jan 03 Social Services Department
Multi-agency service financial exclusion/benefits service	bid submitted detailed programme programme in place	April 03 Jun 03 Sept 03 Social Inclusion Division
Fair pay concordat	draft developed union consultation Southwark Alliance adoption	April 03 Jun 03 Sept 03 Regeneration Department
Older person programme	proposal developed detailed action plan programme in place	June 03 Sept 03 Jan 04 Social Inclusion Division
Communications plan	Plan developed LG press launch AP conference	April 03 June 03 Dec 03 Regeneration Department
Anti-poverty research programme	futuring report proposal developed detailed action plan programme in place	April 03 June 03 Sept 03 Jan 03 Corporate Strategy Division

3.5 Feedback from external validators

The New Policy Institute and the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion have been approached to provide an external challenge on work developed by the member/officer panel, specifically with regards the [draft] Fair Pay Agreement and [draft] Anti-Poverty Statement. Feedback has been generally very positive. Suggestions for strengthening the impact of the fair pay agreement have been incorporated and will lead to more detailed work to investigate the precise implications and feasibility for its introduction. However, it is clear that further work needs to be undertaken to address suggestions for strengthening Southwark’s wider approach to anti-poverty set out in the statement.

Table 2 summary of feedback from external validators

Document	Comments received
Fair Pay agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broad support to concept of a fair pay agreement as an important initiative [proposals for strengthening implementation incorporated in draft]
Anti-Poverty Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledgement that the statement is focused on a range of priorities that make sense but there is scope to review broad aims and objectives of Southwark’s anti-poverty policy, particularly in context of impact on social inclusion/cohesion ▪ The need for much greater and more explicit consideration of the link between low educational attainment and poverty and the role of education in tackling poverty [particularly educational inequalities between schools] ▪ Issues around equalities as one of Southwark’s biggest poverty issues which needs to be developed further and made more specific [particular issues identified around current crisis in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities] ▪ Scope for adopting political stance that values parenthood and time spent with children as an important social activity in its own right ▪ There is a need to further develop and articulate how anti-poverty is going to be picked up in the main corporate planning processes of the Council [including the need to make reference to Central Government’s ‘Local Public Service Agreement’]

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 The development costs for developing Southwark’s Anti-Poverty agenda can be met through existing resources. However the specific resource implications have not yet been quantified.

5. **Consultation**

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<i>Forward@Southwark Project Initiation Document Anti-Poverty section of the Community Strategy</i>	<i>Town Hall Peckham Road</i>	<i>Donald Forde 0207 525 1016 Stephen Gaskell 0207 525 7616</i>

APPENDIX A

32. *This section must be included in all reports.*

Lead Officer	<i>Paul Evans Director of Regeneration</i>	
Report Author	<i>Donald Forde</i>	
Version	<i>Draft</i>	
Dated	<i>9th June 2003</i>	
Key Decision?	<i>Yes</i>	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	No	No
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
<i>List other Officers here</i>		
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		

Note: Consultation with other officers

If you have not consulted, or sought comments from the Borough Solicitor & Secretary or the Chief Finance Officer, you must state this in the Audit Trail.