

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 th November 2003	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		Developing Southwark's Anti-Poverty agenda	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Borough-Wide	
From:		Strategic Director of Regeneration	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Executive note progress in delivering Southwark's Anti-Poverty Programme, in particular through the development of the employment and enterprise strategies and agrees to carry forward action on the following additional elements of the programme, in respect of;
 - **Breakfast Clubs** - (i) that the project is referred to the Health Improvement and Modernisation Board and also to the Neighbourhood Renewal Teams for consideration as part of their strategic plans for 2004-2006 to be submitted to the Southwark Alliance (ii) that further development work is carried out, with a view to introducing the project as a mainstream service in 2005/06.
 - **Affordable Childcare** - that the project is referred to the Southwark Alliance Employment Task Group for consideration as part of their strategic plan for 2004-2006 to be submitted to the Southwark Alliance.
 - **Income Maximisation** - that work on the project which is focused on increasing the level of take up among low income groups (i) forms a central part of the improvement plan for the Revenues and Benefits service and (ii) includes a specific work stream around under claiming of benefits by Older People in the borough in the light of the introduction of new Pensioner Tax Credits.
 - **Improving Access to Financial Support Services** – agrees to the next steps in developing the project, which includes partnership work with the Credit Union and banking sector aimed at widening access to low cost credit services [with a possible source of funding being a bid for growth under the Councils annual budget planning process].
 - **Fair Pay** – (i) acknowledge that the Council is now a fair pay employer in terms of staff directly employed by the Council [ii] that the fair pay principle applies to services contracted out under TUPE regulations [iii] but that any extension of the policy is subject to results of detailed research into the financial and legal implications for the Council.
 - **Tackling Pensioner Poverty** - that the approach with regards older people is focused towards developing an overall framework for looking at pensioner poverty in Southwark including reviewing the implications of the approach now being considered by Kent County Council on the impact of Council Tax on pensioners and that this is developed with the full involvement of organisations promoting the interests of older people in Southwark such as the Pensioners Forum.
2. That Executive agree to a joint member/officer review to identify the broader policy issues and possible corporate responses to the nature of poverty in Southwark that are outside the scope of the programme as set out in para 3.2 below.

3. That Executive notes arrangements made to set out the Council's framework for Anti-Poverty at the annual Revenues and Benefits Stakeholder Conference on the 6th November 2003 which will look specifically at how the service can deliver anti-poverty objectives more effectively.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4 Executive members agreed a framework for addressing poverty in Southwark which requires the development of a targeted Anti-Poverty programme. The main features of the programme are;
 - i. That it has been informed by experts in the anti-poverty field such as the New Policy Institute and the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion providing critical challenge to policy being developed.
 - ii. It concentrates on tangible outcomes to income poverty at key life stages [children/working age adults/older people].
 - iii. Identifies and takes account of some of the wider related policy issues within the Council.
 - iv. It is a targeted approach but one that nonetheless has been identified as measuring up favourably to what is happening in the rest of London and elsewhere.
 - v. It has been taken forward by a member/officer panel and developed in terms of member aspirations of full involvement within the policy making process and aligned to the Forward@Southwark process with the Leader of the Council acting as programme sponsor.
 - vi. It is based on complementing existing response to anti-poverty work via the Community Plan, Business Planning process and related Employment, Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies.
 - vii. It recognises that the most effective way out of poverty is via sustainable long-term employment and that this, particularly in terms of the most economically marginalised, is being addressed through the Council's employment and economic development strategies.

Factors for Consideration

5. Progress in delivering anti-poverty objectives

Southwark's approach to anti-poverty is based on (i) changes to core mainstream services which suggests further in depth work with the departments and (ii) the development of an anti-poverty programme that is focused towards the amelioration of poverty at life stages. Thus far, 6 objectives have been developed as the main elements of the programme. These cover the following life stage issues;

- i. The lack of nutritious food by many children in low-income households.
- ii. Barriers to employment, particularly for lone parents via the lack of affordable childcare.
- iii. Addressing underclaiming of benefits in light of evidence that many groups are failing to claim state benefits they are entitled to.
- iv. That barriers to financial services and poor money management can reinforce patterns of multiple debt among people on low incomes.

- v. That efforts to address poverty within local government in London can be undermined by the employment practices of contracted out services whose rates of pay can fall below a level necessary to sustain a reasonable standard of living.
- vi. The weak evidence bases of issues of poverty among older people.

Appendix 1 sets out progress in addressing the above objectives listed above. Lead officers have submitted project plans that provide a clear process for taking objectives forward. Two bids for growth have been submitted through the revenue budget process to support the implementation of the programme. However the reality is that each project will represent a significant shift in Council policy and may carry significant resources implications. These implications, along with how they will be resolved are in the process of being worked through in detail but broad estimates are set out.

6. Interface between the Anti-Poverty Programme and developing a response to wider policy issues in Southwark

A consistent theme raised [by members] during the process of developing the programme, is a concern that while the programme should be focused on improving the delivery of core services, the Council should not lose sight of some of the wider issues regarding poverty in the borough. These concerns are supported by feedback with senior management teams within the Council as well as with structures such as the Inter Agency Strategic Managers Group of the Southwark Alliance as part of internal consultation. This identifies a desire to work with members to do this. The range of issues for further work is very wide but includes;

- i. Defining the nature and possible response to demographic changes within the borough on future patterns of poverty.
- ii. Looking again at the more challenging policy issues surrounding the impact of core services/policy areas on delivering anti-poverty objectives over time [Housing, Education, Regeneration, Environment and Leisure, Social Services].
- iii. The Scope for developing sharper corporate responsibilities around life stage client groups such as children and older people [e.g implications of the Children's Green Paper].
- iv. The role and contribution of the Southwark Alliance in developing a collaborative approach to anti-poverty in the borough.

In order to address these issues, it is proposed that the Council's response to issues of Poverty in Southwark is subject to a further Member/Officer strategic review in the early part of next year and forms part of the annual review of Southwark's Community Plan. Given the scope of the issues identified above and their general relevance to the work of local government in London, it is further proposed that this review is carried out in collaboration with leading agencies within the anti-poverty field.

7. Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Conference

Tackling poverty is the key theme for the Revenues and Benefits Stakeholder Conference scheduled for the 6th November, which brings together the Council with key agencies such Job Centre Plus and the Pensions Service. The Chief Executive is scheduled to open the conference with the Leader and Director for Regeneration providing an overview of Southwark's Anti-Poverty Framework. The keynote speaker for the conference is David Magor OBE who is director of the professional institute for the Revenues and Benefits profession. It will provide the opportunity for others to learn and help contribute to the Councils approach to tackling poverty. The significance of the conference is that it will actively demonstrate how anti-poverty objectives are being taken forward in defining the future planning of the Revenues and Benefits function. This is particularly relevant given the explicit recommendations within the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council that this happens.

8. Tackling Poverty in Southwark Publication

Regeneration’s Communication Manager is in the process of preparing a publication that sets out the main approach by the Council with regards Anti-Poverty work in Southwark. It is important to stress that the publication is not a formal policy document but a ‘work in progress’ briefing that sets out Council aspirations and establishes the scene for wider discussion and work with others in Southwark and beyond. The briefing will be used to inform the annual review of Southwark’s Community Plan.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor & Secretary

9. Previously the Council has been prohibited from interfering in issues relating to a contractor's workforce by virtue of Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988. This requirement has now been relaxed by virtue of the Local Government Act 1999, so the Council is now permitted to consider the terms and conditions of employment by contractors of their workers, but only to the extent that they are relevant to the achievement of best value, or for the purposes relevant to a TUPE transfer (if applicable). Similarly when the EC public procurement rules are applicable, they do not exclude workforce issues being considered and included as part of the contract, provided that they do not discriminate under the ordinary principles of EC law.
10. In circumstances where TUPE applies, staff will transfer to a new provider on their existing terms and conditions (including pay), and new joiners to that provider are now to be offered pay and conditions no less favourable than transferred staff (ODPM guidance 03/03). Whilst it is also lawful to include fair employment provisions in other contracts to which TUPE does not apply, the Council will need to consider its fiduciary duty to ratepayers, Best Value duties to secure continuous improvements in the functions it provides and the ODPM guidance. It is clear from the ODPM guidance that Best Value acknowledges the importance of treating employees fairly and promoting equality of opportunity, and clearly good quality services depend to a large extent on the appropriate skilled/motivated workforce. However, in extending the fair employment provisions to other employees (in non-TUPE situations) the Council will need to consider the additional costs, and evaluate these against the benefits to the service and its Best Value requirements. Also to merely specify a minimum wage would not necessarily achieve the benefits required. Therefore decision makers will need to take into account a tenderer’s entire attitude to how they employ their staff - wages being one factor.

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>

Lead Officer	<i>Paul Evans Director of Regeneration</i>	
Report Author	<i>Donald Forde/Russell Profitt</i>	
Version	<i>Final</i>	
Dated	<i>27th October 2003</i>	
Key Decision?	<i>Yes</i>	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	Yes
Chief Finance Officer	Yes	In body of report

<i>Sarah Naylor – Assistant Chief Executive</i>	Yes	In body of report
<i>Bill Murphy – Assistant Chief Executive</i>	Yes	In body of report
Executive Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		27 th October

APPENDIX 1. ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMME PROGRESS		
Project Theme	Scope/Status	Lead
i) Establishment of borough wide breakfast clubs in Southwark primary schools	<p>Focuses on the availability of affordable and nutritious breakfast at all primary schools as mainstream service delivery. Developed in response to research, which identifies contribution of breakfast to early childhood development outcomes, particularly via improved concentration, school attendance and improved intellectual functions. Further research work being carried out on the effectiveness of nutritious food in schools. Project being developed as extension of existing HAZ funded schemes in 6 schools. Fee structure based on breakfast on basis of 50p for non-working parents and funding being developed which aims to bring together mainstream/private sector/external funding such as New Opportunities funding. Project will be taken forward in light of and identification of evidence based research and possible funding options. Estimated potential cost of £ 443,821 per annum based on shortfall of fees and Sure Start Out of School Grant for service to be provided. Proposed that the project is referred to Health Improvement and Modernisation Board and also to the Neighbourhood Teams for consideration as part of their strategic plans for 2004-2006 to be submitted to Southwark Alliance (ii) that further development work is carried out, with a view to introducing the project as mainstream service in 2005/06</p>	Southwark Education/
ii) Childcare Bursary	<p>Based on providing childcare support for low-income parents, lone parents and teenage parents at a borough-wide level, to enable them to access education and employment. The support will vary from advisory support, making parents aware of support services and programmes available to them, such as the <i>Parent's Learning Allowance</i>, <i>Care to Learn</i>, and the <i>Childcare Grant</i> for full time students, and advising parents as to how they would go about accessing that support. Additional support will involve targeted financial support in the form of a bursary, to help with or cover the costs of registered childcare to enable the target group to access education, training or employment. Project being developed as partnership scheme/funding via key childcare/employment agencies [Job-Centre Plus, Revenues and Benefits service] and employment related funding streams. The estimated cost of this project is £100k per annum. This is made up of staff cost to enable the effective coordination of existing multi-agency mainstream funding as well as to administer a £50k bursary. Based on Job-Centre + as delivery agent. Proposed that the project is referred to the Southwark Alliance Employment Task Group for consideration as part of their strategic plan for 2004-2006 to be submitted to the Southwark Alliance.</p>	Southwark Education
iii) <i>Income Maximisation</i>	<p>Aims to address the issue of under claiming of benefits. Based on research has shown that there are groups in the community who for a variety of reasons fail to claim the benefits to which they are entitled, and as a result which experience hardship. Key objectives are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ adoption of a proactive stance to benefit take-up initiatives ▪ better co-ordination with other existing benefits services in Southwark ▪ take on board lessons learnt from good practice examples ▪ mainstream benefits take-up activities with health, employment/training initiatives in the borough <p>Adopts a cross cutting approach to income maximization, working with support agencies providing holistic services to a particular client group, as well as frontline benefits advice providers. Reflected in the NRF funded Tax Credit & Benefits Take-Up Project [£85,000 already secured from 2003/04 budget]. Also reflected in efforts to deliver anti-poverty through the Revenues and Benefits Service in light of Southwark's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. In this respect, the aspiration of income maximisation project is squarely based on the more effective delivery of mainstream inter agency revenues and benefits funding which is estimated at £300 million per annum. £50,000 growth bid submitted as part of Southwark Council's annual budget planning process.</p>	Social Inclusion Division

	<p>Proposed that income maximisation takes on board issues relating to pensioner poverty [see below]. In this respect. In this respect, there are a range of benefits available to older people, however, historically there has always been huge under claiming of benefits. Estimated that nationally 2m pensioners are living in low-income households; between a quarter and a third of entitled pensioners do not claim benefits. Will include development work in partnership with the newly established Pension Service which is seen as a major opportunity to rationalise the system of benefits and entitlements for older people.</p>	
iv) Improving Access to Financial Support Services	<p>Aims to increase access to financial support services so that people are better able to manage their finances, develop the habit of saving and when needed the opportunity to access low cost credit services. Evidence shows that where this is lacking people only have to face one major life change – eg redundancy, which can result in a spiral of multiple debt that is hard to turn around. Key objectives include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work with credit union to expand and develop services to meet community need ▪ take on board lessons learnt from good practice examples ▪ link debt/financial management initiatives to debt recovery/rent arrears work assess the feasibility of setting up a 'Community Bank' for Southwark <p>Estimated projects costs for the developmental aspects of the project are £50,000. These are reflected in the growth bids as part of Southwark Council's annual budget planning process that have been submitted under the anti-poverty banner</p>	Social Inclusion Division
v) Implementation of a Fair Pay Policy	<p>Report to Executive on 17th June 2003 included proposal for possible introduction of fair pay policy based on a minimum hourly rate of £6.30. Explicitly set out that formal adoption was subject to further work on the detailed financial and legal feasibility. Work has been commissioned to identify the scope/limits of the Council's powers in relation to fair pay policy, which includes financial and legal implications. Key elements of the developing policy around fair pay is that it is primarily concerned with low pay workers residing in Southwark/inner London [#] and that it is part of the broader culture shift of service improvement via quality staff/opportunities for career development/work life balance etc. Proposed that the position with the fair pay at this stage is based on [i] an acknowledgement that the Council is now a fair pay employer in terms of staff directly employed by the Council [ii] that the fair pay principle applies to services contracted out under the TUPE regulations but [iii] that any extension of the policy is subject to results of research in to the financial and legal implications for the Council.</p> <p><i># for example as opposed to contracted out staff employed in children's homes outside London</i></p>	Strategic Services Division
iv) Tackling Pensioner Poverty	<p>Examples of best practice within Southwark to address aspects of poverty among older people such as addressing fuel poverty. However little work done in the past to assess the need of older people in terms of financial exclusion and benefits in Southwark [local government generally]. Pensioners in Southwark (aged 60+) make up almost 14% (33,697) of the borough's population. Policy concerns with regards older people extends to the contribution of core mainstream services to broader quality of life issues such as Education and Leisure. The financial implications of this project at this stage are in the form of staff costs £50k to begin developing the anti-poverty element of a wider strategy for older people. Proposed that the approach with regards older people is focused towards developing a overall framework for looking at pensioner poverty in Southwark and is developed with the full involvement of organisations promoting the interests of older people such as the Pensioners Forum.</p>	Social Inclusion Division