

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Turning the Tide on Poverty

No.	Recommendation:	Cabinet Response:
1.	That priority be given to identify and implement the actions which can be taken immediately to address the cost of living crisis with a specific emphasis on housing.	<p>Several Council departments directly, or in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, support people who are at greatest risk from the cost of living crisis. This includes crisis support, discretionary housing payment and financial hardships payments. Systems that were put in place to support the most vulnerable during the pandemic and there will continue to respond with focus in particular on helping people to maintain their accommodation. The approach is to ensure that people are supported to identify and claim any benefits for which they are eligible and to continue to work with partners in the Torbay Food Alliance to support those with food insecurity. The current crisis may put additional strains on people and families that have not previously needed support and the relevant teams in the Council as well as wider partners have been asked to share information about emerging needs so a co-ordinated response can be made. In addition, improving access to debt advice and to mental health support are key parts of the offer and will build on learning from response to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Council is funding the Community Builders, who have a key</p>

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		<p>role to develop communities to be resilient and to focus on the issues of primary importance to them. This role ensures that individuals are aware of any services in place designed to help them overcome disadvantage</p>
2.	<p>To ensure that the 13 priority actions set out in the submitted report are addressed within the following strategies and/or their associated actions plans and that a joined-up approach is taken where actions cross different key Council Strategies and Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Strategy; • Destination Management Plan; • Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy; • Children and Young People’s Plan; • Corporate Parenting Strategy; • Children’s Improvement Plan; • Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Written Statement of Action; and • Housing Strategy. 	<p>The summary report of the Turning the Tide on poverty workshop has been shared with lead offers responsible for developing and delivering the listed strategies and plans. Specifically, the findings were fed into the consultation on the Economic Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy as well as to the development of the SEND Written Statement of Action and the updated Children’s Improvement Plan in response our recent Ofsted inspection of Children’s Services.</p> <p>Both the Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 –2025 are currently in the process of being reviewed and rewritten based on the new circumstances and challenges that present Torbay and the County post the pandemic. It is considered that they no longer represent the complexity of the changing housing market and cost of living crisis that will additional impact on homelessness and our communities as a whole. As such a new Housing Strategy is in the process of being drafted with the first draft expected early-July. This will very closely be followed by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy ensuring that the need related to this particular area of housing is fed into the Housing Strategy. This will then act as a strong supplemental document.</p>

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		<p>The Turning the Tide on Poverty approach will continue to bring officers and partners across all the thematic area together to monitor that actions are joined-up and co-ordinated across key strategies and plans. This includes consideration of performance indicators that will allow a collective understanding and tracking of issues.</p>
3.	<p>To identify any additional resources required to take forward the 13 priority actions and to prioritise the actions and resources to implement the changes which can be made quickly and have positive outcomes for the benefit of those who need support the most.</p>	<p>The details of the resourcing plan will be developed as the priority actions are costed. Some actions do not require new funding but are dependent on existing staff responding in new and more co-ordinated ways. The Council redesign process has developed an improved front door for financial hardship and work is ongoing to review how mechanisms can be embedded to ensure holistic assessment to also understand why people need assistance and preventative activity to manage these needs.</p>
4.	<p>To agree a timeline for delivery of all the actions.</p>	<p>Priority actions are being taken over the next six months to manage the acute needs and to ensure resilience as people enter the winter months when the impact of fuel poverty will be most critical. Other actions will be delivered over the medium term (up to 18 months). The full impact of new strategies will be delivered into 2024 and 2025.</p>