

Draft Terms of Reference for the Perth and Kinross Anti-Poverty Taskforce

1. Background and Context

Perth and Kinross has a reputation as an affluent place to live, which has traditionally performed well with higher-than-average rates of employment. Closer examination paints a different picture with many children and households experiencing the damaging effects of poverty.

Approximately one in four children in Perth and Kinross are living in poverty. That is more than 5,100 children. The causes and impacts of child poverty are complex. There is no single solution to poverty as each household's circumstances will differ.

Our mix of rural and urban areas means that for many the experience of poverty may be different for people depending on where they live, with a rural poverty premium for people living outside our large settlements. Precarious employment, and costs and availability of affordable housing, transport and childcare alongside additional costs for essential goods and services mean living in one of our rural areas can be particularly difficult.

The Council has identified Poverty as one of its key strategic priorities within its corporate plan, with a range of key actions including:

- Preventing and mitigating the impacts of poverty for children living in Perth and Kinross
- Mitigate cost of living pressures for households experiencing and at risk of poverty
- Maximise income from benefit entitlement and concessions for households
- Promote and encourage local employers to follow the principles of the Scottish Government Fair Work Action Plan, including the real Living Wage and Scottish Business Pledge.

In addition, the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act) 2017 requires Perth & Kinross Council and NHS Tayside to publish a Local Child Poverty Action Plan and this plan sets out the context as well as planned actions to mitigate the impact of poverty on our children.

The Community Planning Partnership has identified poverty, including food, fuel and transport poverty as one of its key strategic priorities in the draft Perth and Kinross Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The emerging Cost of Living Crisis has driven the need for greater focus and action in the immediate and short-term to address rising costs of fuel, food and energy.

Taking the necessary comprehensive and urgent action to address the effects of these unprecedented increases in the cost of living and the impact on those already in, or on the brink of poverty, will require Perth & Kinross Council to work in partnership with our communities, businesses, and organisations. Whilst no single service or agency has the power to end poverty, by working in partnership there is much we can do to make the lives and life chances of those living in poverty better and brighter.

Together we need to provide a coordinated and cohesive response to protect the most vulnerable citizens of Perth & Kinross. Establishing an Anti-Poverty Taskforce will leverage

expertise from across Perth & Kinross (and possibly beyond) to engage and inspire collective ownership and commitment to mitigating the worst effects of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Perth and Kinross Anti-poverty Taskforce will provide independent active leadership and support for cross-sector collaboration and action to help those most affected by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. This Task-Force will draw upon expertise from across the area and seek out and adopt best practices from elsewhere to effect real change and offer meaningful support to those experiencing poverty and most at risk from rising costs. It will also provide a co-ordinating focal point for all the current activities aimed at reducing inequalities – child poverty, fuel poverty, food supply, rural poverty premium.

2. Vision

The Task-Force will support the change needed to ensure people across Perth and Kinross are supported and community resilience is developed to mitigate the impact of poverty. It will engage the private, public and third sectors as well as individual citizens.

3. Principles

The Task-Force will:

- Be independent in thought and action
- Consider the needs of all
- Embed a collaborative approach to problem-solving
- Be open to all best practice, initiatives or proposed solutions that are realistic and deliverable
- Share information and documentation openly
- Look positively at innovative and radical proposals for change in keeping with a cost-of-living emergency
- Commit to positively promote, support, and encourage action across Perth and Kinross and within their own organisations
- Be respectful and inclusive

4. Scope

The proposed remit of the Task-Force is as follows:

- Champion the reduction in poverty levels and associated stigma across Perth & Kinross
- Use its influence across public sector, private sector and in our communities to drive necessary and urgent action
- Provide a co-ordinating focal point for all the current activities aimed at reducing inequalities – child poverty, fuel poverty, food supply, rural poverty premium etc
- Shape further development of actions and activities through co-production, guidance, and feedback.
- Oversee delivery of mitigating actions and their impact through regular monitoring

5. Membership (Chair and Members)

a) Appointment of the Chair

The Role of the Chair has been defined as:

- To provide independent leadership and champion Poverty Mitigation and the views of the Task-Force to key partners, stakeholders, and the media
- To chair meetings of the Task-Force.
- To ensure development and completion of the Task-Force's deliverables once agreed
- To take decisions about the work of the Task-Force between meetings.
- To sign off all Task-Force reports and publications

The Chair can serve a two-year term that can be renewed for a maximum of a further two years. The Chair should give three months' notice before resigning the position, and support succession planning for a new Chair during the final six months in post.

At the end of the Chair's term, the Task-Force will select a new Chair through an appropriate selection process. The Leader of the Council will appoint an acting Chair for the first meeting. At this meeting, the acting Chair will invite nominations for the on-going Chair.

b) Appointment of members of the Task-Force

Membership of the Task-Force is open to individuals and the balance of membership should reflect the need for cross-council area representation, from the private, public and third sectors, community and youth groups as well as ensuring a diversity within the Task-Force. Members do not represent their organisation but are appointed as individuals. Prior to appointment, members must ensure that:

- They can demonstrate suitable expertise, knowledge, leadership, and skills to contribute meaningfully to the Task-Force objectives
- They can commit required amount of time and be able to attend necessary meetings. This is expected to be 2-3 hours quarterly.
- Commit to positively promote, support, and encourage action on reducing poverty especially within their own organisations and sector
- If relevant, their participation has been authorised at a senior level by their organisation

Members of the Task-Force will serve a three-year term with the possibility of renewing membership for a further three-year term. Membership will be reviewed periodically based on attendance and contributions and changes in circumstance.

It is desired to have a staggered replacement of Task-Force members, so that roughly 1/3 are replaced every year. As such in the first appointment of Task-Force members, equal numbers will be given 1, 2 and 3-year terms. Members that serve less than an initial 1 or 2-year term will be eligible to serve two further three-year terms.

There is an exception to the term limits for the Leader of the Council, member of an opposition group and the Council's Chief Executive, due to the necessary nature of these posts. Members will initially be selected by a panel of five experts that are appointed by the Council. Going forward, the Task-Force will be responsible for appointing its future Task-Forcers through a process to be developed.

Consideration should be given to recruitment of those with wider external views who can bring a national perspective and best practices from other areas to the Task-Force. A future enhancement would be to recruit members with lived experience of poverty or from marginalised groups to ensure these viewpoints are represented, this may take longer to achieve and should not delay the establishing of the Task-Force.

6. Governance

The Perth and Kinross Anti-Poverty Taskforce will operate as an independent advisory body. Perth and Kinross Council will provide secretariat support, including liaising with committee members, setting the agenda for each meeting, providing content and input, administration support for minute taking and communications. To ensure accountability and scrutiny of the work of the Task-Force and an opportunity to report the progress that is being made by all sectors and partners towards poverty mitigation, the Perth and Kinross Anti-Poverty Taskforce will report progress on an annual basis to Perth and Kinross Council.

7. Remuneration

Membership of the Task Force is on a voluntary basis and there will be no remuneration for Members. Reasonable travel and other expenses associated with fulfilling Task-Force duties will be reimbursed.