

Item	Date
33.6	06.03.2023
Title	For
Ceredigion PSB Poverty sub-group report	<i>Information and Decision</i>
Summary of Issues	
<p>The sub-group continues to meet quarterly and last met in January 2023.</p> <p>High Level Data</p> <p>The group discussed Audit Wales recent report – Time for Change – Poverty in Wales. Audit Wales believe that their analysis shows that poverty is the single major challenge facing all tiers of government. Eight recommendations are set out in the report, the first is that Welsh Government should refresh the current Child Poverty strategy.</p> <p>The group agreed that, while there is a statutory duty on Welsh authorities to deliver a child poverty strategy - and this is important - a through age approach is beneficial because poverty impacts on every age and service. The fact that our Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 has adopted a through age approach is welcomed by the Poverty sub-group.</p> <p>The Council's Performance and Research team presented the Poverty data dashboards. The year ahead is looking bleak, unemployment is predicted to rise, and the cost of living is higher here than in much of the rest of Wales and the UK. 21,000 'cost of living' payments have been made by the Council and Citizens Advice are struggling to meet the demands on their service for support with debt. There are significant threats because of debts from areas such as repossession, food poverty etc.</p> <p>We have seen a narrowing of the average earnings gap between Ceredigion and the rest of Wales. This will be explored further at the next meeting.</p> <p>Juliet Morris shared a link to county level data created by Citizens Advice that shows how different areas have been affected over time How does the cost of living crisis differ between local areas? Flourish</p> <p>Ceredigion Warm Welcome Spaces</p> <p>There are 42 Warm Welcome Spaces on the Ceredigion map, showing a good geographical spread. At January 2023 there were 1,941 unique IP address visitors to the site and 7,565 clicks on the map. There was a large spike in visits to the map on Christmas Eve. We will have statistics on use of the Warm Welcome Spaces by end of March but it appears that the majority of those using the spaces do so for companionship rather than to</p>	

keep warm. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to continue with 'Welcome Spaces', removing the word 'Warm' and focussing on loneliness and isolation. It was also agreed that it would be beneficial to expand the map to include food banks and other resources. However, this may not be possible due to funding and current workloads.

Information sharing session

Members of the Poverty sub-group shared updates about the Winter Fuel Scheme, Cost of Living scheme (discretionary element), Alternative Fuel Payments, roll out of Free Childcare, Ceredigion Carers Fund 2022 and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Future governance arrangements

The current membership and Terms of Reference for this group relate to the delivery of the Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020-23. These need to be reviewed because the sub-group will be supporting the delivery of the Local Well-being Plan from April 2023.

It has been agreed that the sub-group will collate and disseminate poverty related information to inform high level decisions and to support delivery of front-line services. The group felt however that this is not enough and that the terms of reference should reflect dynamic, action-based responsibilities as well as the role of sharing information sharing.

The current membership of the group does not reflect the PSB membership. It is felt that to deliver the systemic change required to tackle and alleviate poverty in Ceredigion, the Poverty sub-group needs to broaden to include an officer who works on poverty and/or equality from each of the PSB partner organisations.

A workshop has been arranged for mid-March to further discuss the terms of reference and membership of the Poverty sub-group. The workshop will focus on the ambitions of the Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 and ways that the poverty sub-group can support its delivery with a refreshed membership.

Financial Implications

None

Recommendations

That the Public Services Board notes the huge challenges that we face in terms of tackling and alleviating poverty in Ceredigion.

That the Public Services Board supports the future work of the Poverty sub-group by nominating suitably experienced officers to contribute to the work of the group.

Attachments

Swyddog Adrodd / Reporting Officer

Cathryn Morgan