

RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 5 th August, 2021
Report Subject	Poverty and Vulnerability Recovery
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Recovery Group has two work-streams which are each led by a Tactical Group.

These are:

1. Economic Recovery
2. Poverty and Vulnerability

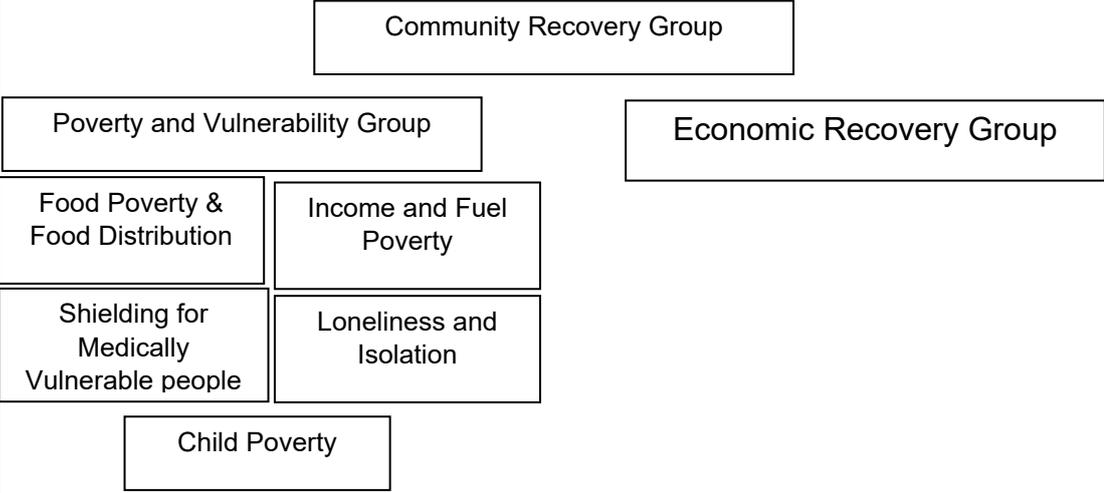
This report provides an overview of the poverty and vulnerability work-stream.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members support the current work programmes established to support and protect residents who are vulnerable or experiencing poverty as part of community recovery.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY RECOVERY
1.01	As part of the pandemic response work a tactical group was developed to consider the impacts of poverty and vulnerability on the residents of Flintshire.
1.02	The work of the tactical group was based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying areas at risk of increased pressure• Identifying types of poverty likely to be impacted, i.e. food; fuel; income and map the likely changes required to respond• Identity data sets available to best coordinate the response• Identify resources required and where these may be available from within the organisation and through partnership working or collaboration• Develop a comprehensive delivery plan to meet the identified need
1.03	Some of the successful outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided financial support for residents via discretionary housing payment; speedy claims processing; suspension of debt recovery; budgeting and financial advice• Successful use and links into active volunteering for a range of support services including; grounds maintenance; food deliveries; shopping; prescription collection; delivering PPE• Extensive data matching programme in relation to shielding to ensure links made with existing services• Well-being of sheltered residents protected with significant programme of outbound welfare checks completed each week• Collaborative and true cross sector partnerships developed strengthened to deliver joined up and effective response to residents• Comprehensive and large scale food delivery programme developed and delivered to support shielded; vulnerable and isolated residents
1.04	This programme of work made a significant difference and provided support to many residents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over 6,000 records received from Public Health in relation to individuals who were shielded• Over 700 residents received support in relation to financial difficulties (i.e. DHP; debt recovery suspension; budgeting/claiming advice• 46,800 meals delivered to shielded or vulnerable households• 9,000 food parcels delivered by volunteer and deployed drivers from a range of organisations – (FCC housing and enforcement; Clwyd Alyn Housing; Travis Perkins; 4x4 volunteers)• Over 400 residents contacted to see support whilst shielding for a range of reasons including prescription and shopping collections; food support; general welfare support• 1346 sheltered tenants received weekly phone calls to check on welfare and for a friendly chat

1.05	This response activity continued to varying degrees throughout the response phase and then, in October 2020, this work was moved into recovery.
1.06	In order to transition smoothly from response to recovery, a set of principles was adopted to ensure continued partnership engagement with voluntary sector to monitor demands and create new opportunities.
1.07	<p>Within Flintshire, a governance structure has been established to lead the approach to supporting those who are vulnerable or experiencing poverty in relation to recovery. The structure of this is set out below:-</p>  <pre> graph TD CRG[Community Recovery Group] PVG[Poverty and Vulnerability Group] ERG[Economic Recovery Group] CRG --- PVG CRG --- ERG PVG --- FP[Food Poverty & Food Distribution] PVG --- IFP[Income and Fuel Poverty] PVG --- SMV[Shielding for Medically Vulnerable people] PVG --- LI[Loneliness and Isolation] PVG --- CP[Child Poverty] </pre>
1.08	The Poverty and Vulnerability Tactical group was formed to create a strategic response to tackling poverty and isolation in Flintshire during the recovery phase.
1.09	<p>The group takes a lead on addressing the impacts of poverty and vulnerability and identifying appropriate initiatives, support programmes and interventions for the short and medium term.</p> <p>To provide an understanding of the challenges poverty and vulnerability are having/will continue to impact in our communities.</p>
1.10	This has led to opportunities for current activities or service provision could be re-defined and adapted to meet the needs or where additional interventions may be required to cover any emerging gaps by generating solutions to meet short and medium term need.
	COVID Support Hub
1.11	The Health Board has been working with each local authority to support the delivery of Covid Support Hubs.

1.12	<p>The basic concept of the support hub includes six core themes:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="303 190 1385 1265"> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 190 375 235"></td> <td data-bbox="375 190 1385 235">PROTECT</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 235 375 465">1.</td> <td data-bbox="375 235 1385 465"> Lateral Flow Testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LFD availability linked to the extended family of school-age children. - To working individuals who require assurance as part of a “stay safe” initiative. - To key workers who use public transport or have concerns about their Covid status. </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 465 375 638">2.</td> <td data-bbox="375 465 1385 638"> Extended food offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency need: To provide an initial food offer to maintain self-isolation - Poverty need: to provide access to food to address food poverty as result of impact of COVID. </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 638 375 810">3.</td> <td data-bbox="375 638 1385 810"> Fuel poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To work with and refer to the Energy Warden Scheme for advice and assistance around energy and fuel poverty. - To work with Warm Wales to support their local programme. - Emergency top up </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 810 375 958">4.</td> <td data-bbox="375 810 1385 958"> Financial Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To work with and refer to Citizen’s Advice - Additional capacity to support with benefits uptake, benefits check, debt management (Income Maximisation Plan) </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 958 375 1093">5.</td> <td data-bbox="375 958 1385 1093"> Mental health support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on mental health awareness - Commissioned counselling service </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 1093 375 1265">6</td> <td data-bbox="375 1093 1385 1265"> Digital connectivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of Chromebooks or tablet. - Connection to the internet / PAYG data package - One to One digital assistance (doorstep) </td> </tr> </table>		PROTECT	1.	Lateral Flow Testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LFD availability linked to the extended family of school-age children. - To working individuals who require assurance as part of a “stay safe” initiative. - To key workers who use public transport or have concerns about their Covid status. 	2.	Extended food offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency need: To provide an initial food offer to maintain self-isolation - Poverty need: to provide access to food to address food poverty as result of impact of COVID. 	3.	Fuel poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To work with and refer to the Energy Warden Scheme for advice and assistance around energy and fuel poverty. - To work with Warm Wales to support their local programme. - Emergency top up 	4.	Financial Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To work with and refer to Citizen’s Advice - Additional capacity to support with benefits uptake, benefits check, debt management (Income Maximisation Plan) 	5.	Mental health support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on mental health awareness - Commissioned counselling service 	6	Digital connectivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of Chromebooks or tablet. - Connection to the internet / PAYG data package - One to One digital assistance (doorstep)
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1.13	<p>The support hub in Flintshire opened in Shotton in mid-July and is currently delivering five of these services.</p> <p>The area that is still in development is digital connectivity this service will be available from the Autumn.</p>														
1.14	<p>This is a multi-agency hub which includes the following services:</p> <p>Citizens Advice Flintshire – advice services Warm Wales – fuel poverty and energy efficiency advice MIND – Mental Health support Flintshire Welfare Reform Team – Money and budgeting advice Well-Fed – Food Service Lateral Flow Tests</p> <p>The hub is located at Rivertown Church in Shotton and is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9.00 and 12.30.</p>														

	Isolation Payments
1.15	<p>If you have been contacted by NHS Wales Test, Trace, protect service (TTP) and been told to self-isolate, you may be entitled to Financial Support.</p> <p>You may also be entitled to a payment if you are instructed to self-isolate for a period starting on or after 1 February 2021 by the NHS Wales COVID-19 app.</p>
1.16	<p>The Self Isolation Support Scheme introduced in Wales in November 2020 provided a £500 payment for those who cannot work from home and must self-isolate, and for parents and carers on low incomes with children who are self-isolating.</p> <p>In order to receive the payment, residents are required to meet all four of the following criteria:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-based Employment and Support allowance, Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit; 2. Are employed or self-employed; 3. Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result ; 4. Have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either for 10 or 14 days.
1.17	<p>The Welfare Team administer the payments which provides opportunities to identify any wider support that may be required and join up with services at the earliest opportunity.</p>
	Tenancy Hardship Grant
1.18	<p>This is a new scheme from Welsh Government designed to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people who live in privately rented accommodation; • have experienced financial difficulty as a result of the pandemic; and • have accrued rent arrears as a result of not being able to pay all or part of their rent.
1.19	<p>The eligibility criteria in more detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 weeks or more of rent arrears between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2021 • have struggled to pay rent or rent arrears due to Covid-19 • live in and hold a tenancy for a private sector property in Wales • not have been getting housing benefit or housing cost payments through Universal Credit when you built up your rent arrears • have not been able to fully pay your rent during the period when you went into arrears because of Covid-19. <p>The scheme is now live and we are starting to receive applications.</p>

1.20	As with isolation payments, this scheme will also be delivered by the Welfare Team to make the wider links to support that may be required.
	Next Steps
1.21	The poverty and vulnerability work stream is still evolving and the importance of this programme of work to address poverty and vulnerability has been recognised in the Council plan for 2021/22.
1.22	<p>The overall objective of the poverty priority is described as:</p> <p>“Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs”</p> <p>Within the poverty priority there are 5 key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Poverty • Child Poverty • Food Poverty • Fuel Poverty • Digital Poverty
1.23	Progress on delivering the priorities in the Council Plan and the associated work streams will be reported to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis, and discussion with members in these committees will allow the programmes to adapt to any emerging changes that may be necessary.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None arising directly from this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT												
3.01	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td rowspan="5">Throughout all of the Council plan priorities there are demonstrable actions and activities which relate to all of the Sustainable Development Principles.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td rowspan="5">Throughout the overall monitoring report process there is evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Throughout all of the Council plan priorities there are demonstrable actions and activities which relate to all of the Sustainable Development Principles.	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	Prosperous Wales	Throughout the overall monitoring report process there is evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Cohesive Wales
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<p>Council's Well-being Objectives</p> <p>We have reviewed and updated our Well-being Objectives throughout the development of the Council Plan 2021/22.</p>					

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	None.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	None
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths (Benefits Manager) Telephone: 01352 702929 E-mail: jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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8.01	None.
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