

STRATEGIC DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD OF 22ND AUGUST 2024



FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND GROWTH SDP

Date of last meetings: 14th May 2024 and 13th June 2024

CURRENT ISSUES OF CONCERN/CHALLENGES REQUIRING SUPPORT FROM THE SDP CHAIRS EXECUTIVE:

N/A

Follow up action agreed by the SDP CHAIRS EXECUTIVE:

N/A

MAIN CURRENT FOCUS OF THE SDP

Main areas of focus are financial hardship and raising awareness of entitlements/grants available, opportunities through the Ayrshire Growth deal, employability and lifelong learning, and implementation of the Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report.

PROGRESS UPDATE (INCLUDING AREAS OF SUCCESS):

Since the last CP Board, the SDP met on the 14th May 2024 and held a workshop session on the 13th June 2024 for partners in The Grain Exchange. The workshop had presentations from a range of local organisations to share what work is happening locally to support Financial Inclusion.

Key areas of progress arising includes:

There has been positive partnership working from this group, over a million pounds of SAC funding has been committed to projects supported by this group including third sector. In South Ayrshire any Financial Inclusion work will be driven through this SDP. An update on the projects that were funded will be shared in December 2024.

A new charity called A.Y.E Girvan www.ayrgirvan.org whose mission is to reduce the impact of poverty in Girvan the surrounding villages through evidence based initiatives and community-driven projects was highlighted. JT has met this group and they held a workshop in Girvan. Aye Girvan also presented at the workshop in Grain Exchange on 14th June 2024.

Concerns had been raised by a member of the group with regards to the build-up of school meal debt and the implications this was having on parents and young people resulting in children having a less balanced diet. Coincidentally a letter was received from ScotGov just after advising that a bidding process could be applied to the Scottish Government's Free School Meal Team, after which work will continue in supporting schools to manage their school meal debt better. Following the meeting contact was made with Education who provided a detailed update on school meal debt and the support that SAC has provided. Information was shared with the group.

Employability and Lifelong Learning Partnership Update

Thriving Communities continue to offer an all-age, all-stage employability pipeline service on a locality bases to residents of South Ayrshire, however due to a delay in receiving the full NOLB/Child Poverty Grant Offer Letter this has impacted on what services can be commissioned to complement the employability pipeline and

meet local labour markets demands. The delay in receiving the full Grant has impacted all local authorities and continue to be raised via SLAED with Scottish Government and with COSLA.

The LEP presentation at the workshop provided an overview of the LEP priorities including the ongoing work to support parents into employment.

FUEL POVERTY UPDATE REPORT FOR SDP MEETING: (Information and Advice Hub, and Energy Agency Updates)

Our reporting has changed since 1st April 2024 within the Information and Advice hub so data provided is from 01.04.24 – 12.05.24.

- 154 enquiries were made for fuel poverty or energy advice.
- 96 grants were paid totalling £3636.
- 56 others claimed but were not successful. Reasons for failure, already received 3 grants within the last 6 months, lost contact or only seeking advice and an onward referral has been made to Home Energy Scotland.

Working with the Fuel Bank Foundation to provide a solution for oil prior to next winter. This will consist of a one of payment to purchase oil then ongoing budgeting work with clients to ensure they are able to make advance payments to afford their ongoing supply.

Energy Agency

	Full Year 01-04-23 to 31-03-24
Unique Customers Advised	4,360
Advice Interactions	19,781
WHS Referrals	322
Loan Referrals – HES Loan	270
Fuelbank Fuel Voucher Referrals	1,291
Other Loan Referrals (HEEPS ABS, PSL)	330
Energycarer Households Supported	199
Energycarer Visits/Remote Support	334
Financial Savings from behavioural advice	£233,022

- Compared to 2023/24 we have helped more new customers than before.
- This is mainly down to increasing partnership work with SAC, third sector and community groups. We continue to increase this activity as it's a successful way of reaching customers and engaging with groups of people who may not normally come to us for help.
- Despite the pause, Warmer Home Scotland referrals were higher than ever. This means more customers will feel warmer in their homes this winter. We are always on the lookout for more funding and other options for customers who don't quite meet the criteria.
- At the start of financial year 2024/25, the volume of inbound calls has gone down compared to last year, this most likely indicates that we are back to dealing with the most vulnerable customers compared to the height of the cost of living crisis. This doesn't mean it has gone away but fuel costs are starting to go down and media coverage virtually stopped which has changed the demographic of our customer base. We will monitor this and review it for future meetings.

Financial Inclusion Workshop session was held in the Grain Exchange, Ayr, the presentations included:

- Overview of Community Planning Partnership
- Thriving Communities – The Local Employability Partnership
- Thriving Communities – Improving Outcomes In Glendoune

- SAC – Information and Advice Hub
- SAC Housing
- Seascope
- South Ayrshire Community Food Forum
- AYE Girvan

Feedback from the session was very positive. Partners commented that it showcased the amount of work that is going on and demonstrated partnership working across the CPP.

KEY ISSUES

- The availability of flexible, affordable childcare in South Ayrshire continues to be an issue, which has prevented parents returning/into work. This is a national issue which continues to be raised at relevant forums.
- Demand remains for assistance with home energy, voucher amounts have reduced from £85 to £33 due to seasonality.
- Support the action planning process and development of performance framework for LOIP priority areas and Child Poverty Strategy.
- Continued implementation of the delivery plan for Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021.
- Continue to make connections within the SDP and members on support available to our local communities because of the cost-of-living.

UPDATE ON ACTION TO SUPPORT THE LOIP/PLACE PLANS

The SDP supports the strategic theme of 'Closing the Poverty Related Outcomes Gap' through the child poverty action plan and Employability and Lifelong Learning Partnership of the current LOIP.

LOIP PRIORITIES

Following engagement with SDP members as highlighted previously, the LOIP priorities, along with supporting narrative, which have been put forward for the new LOIP are as follows:

Financial Inclusion

We will work in partnership to help individuals and families access financial support services that will assist with fuel poverty, income maximisation and food insecurity. Partners will ensure local support is available that assists with the cost of living by ensuring advice, guidance and support services are accessible and available across South Ayrshire.

Economic, Employability and Lifelong Learning Opportunities

We will work in partnership to prepare and assist people for employment, training, education, and volunteering opportunities. We will create opportunities that will assist our communities to thrive through economic development and local wealth building activity. We will ensure provision in South Ayrshire is aligned with local, regional, and national priorities by developing personal centred approaches for individuals accessing our services.

Report Completed by:

Officer: Jamie Tait (supported by Elizabeth Dougall)

Date: August 2024