

## **Child Poverty - Motion as adjusted approved, after division.**

**9** Councillor Aitken, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved that:-

“Council welcomes the renewed commitment of Scotland's new First Minister to eradicate child poverty and commits to continuing to prioritise work to achieve the same outcome in Glasgow, noting that all partners in the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership have agreed to unite activity around the single shared priority of "Family Poverty: Reducing Poverty and Inequalities in Glasgow's Communities".

Council acknowledges however that the eradication of child poverty is not a commitment that can be achieved by the Scottish Government or by Glasgow City Council alone, and notes that the choices of governments of all levels are material to our child poverty outcomes.

Council notes that during a cost of living and inflation crisis, children and families are often the most vulnerable: a fact that makes Glasgow - a city with a younger and poorer population than the national average - especially at risk from the issues that arise from the experience of child poverty.

Council regrets the historical legacy, and political and economic choices that have resulted in 45.4% of Glasgow's neighbourhoods being in the most deprived quintile of Scottish localities, with 51% of our children living in these areas. Council further notes that these local poverty rates impact on the budgets of Glasgow City Council, passing the cost on to taxpayers in the city. Council is encouraged by Glasgow's comparatively strong performance on child poverty reduction in comparison to cities like Manchester, Birmingham or London, and attributes this progress to Scottish Government interventions such as the Scottish Child Payment and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, as well as child poverty alleviation mechanisms funded and delivered by Glasgow City Council and our partners, such as: the Holiday Programme; Child Poverty Pathfinder; Glasgow Helps; Healthier, Wealthier Children; and Supporting Families Projects.

Council is deeply concerned however that, despite the significant investments made by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, it remains the case that around one third of children in wards such as Calton and Southside Central are living in poverty. Council believes that this is a consequence of exclusionary social and fiscal policies pursued by UK governments and notes, for example, the 'very strong' correlation between the percentage of families affected by the two-child cap and local child poverty rates across these islands, as per research from Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy.

Council believes that it is entirely unnecessary for child poverty to exist in a modern advanced industrial economy such as the UK and that, regardless of who is in power, the UK government has the power to eradicate child poverty within a parliamentary term by prioritising the policy and spending choices that will achieve this outcome.

Council therefore asks the Council Leader to write to the new Prime Minister, setting out the child poverty challenges that remain in Glasgow; seeking the

immediate removal of the two-child cap as well as policies currently mitigated by the Scottish Government such as the benefit cap and bedroom tax; inviting them to examine and replicate the success of the Scottish Child Payment as a model for funding child poverty alleviation; and seeking their acknowledgement that adequate funding for local services for families experiencing poverty such as those delivered in Glasgow as just as vital for delivering transformation as Scottish and UK-wide interventions.”

Bailie Siddique, seconded by Councillor O’Lone, moved as an amendment to delete all and replace with the following:-

“Council agrees that child poverty should be a national mission for the Scottish Government, but deeply regrets that the most recent child poverty single-year statistics estimate that the number of Scottish children living in poverty has now increased in 2022-23 to 260,000. This is an estimated 24% of all children in Scotland, with 70% of those in poverty living in working families.

Council acknowledges the Poverty and Inequality Commission’s Scrutiny Report, which provided a critical assessment of the Scottish Government’s progress on tackling child poverty. During a cost-of-living crisis, the latest Scottish Government budget made cuts to the affordable housing budget. Glasgow City Council had expected to receive £104m of funding in this financial year; however, due to a 26% cut in the housing budget, funding would now only amount to £78.678m. Additionally, during this period, the latest Scottish Government budget froze the Scottish Welfare Fund, eliminated parental employability schemes, and decimated the Fuel Insecurity Fund. All these measures would have helped reduce the number of children living in poverty.

Council also recognises that the Scottish Government is at risk of missing targets set by The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, which requires reducing the percentage of children living in poverty to less than 18% by 2023/24 and to less than 10% by 2030. Given the current statistics and egregious cuts mentioned, these targets seem unlikely to be achieved.

Furthermore, council notes that the current figures suggest that nearly 34% of children living in Glasgow are living in poverty, with Govanhill West now having 88% of children aged 0-15 years growing up in poverty, shockingly the highest rate in Britain. According to the Glasgow Poverty Pathfinders, this means children in Govanhill West are living £205 per week below the poverty line.

Council urges colleagues to turn their rhetoric into action and take decisive steps to reduce poverty in the city. Council notes that education is a key factor in social mobility and poverty reduction, yet recent cuts by this City Administration have slashed teacher numbers and reduced support to MCR Pathways, denying many Glaswegian children the opportunity to improve their circumstances. Furthermore, the failure of the Scottish Government to end the cuts to colleges and universities only further reduces the opportunities for young people to improve their future prospects and move out of poverty.

Far too many of Glasgow's children are living in a poverty crisis, with some of the highest rates in Britain. The previous failures of both the UK Government and the Scottish Government to take meaningful action to overcome this crisis are a national disgrace. Therefore, council welcomes plans to introduce a new deal for working people to deliver a Real Living Wage, plans to review Universal Credit and build a fairer social security system.

Council asks that the Chief Executive write to the Scottish Government to insist that they stop these horrific cuts to colleges, universities, and local governments. In addition, council also asks that the Chief Executive writes to the Scottish Government, asking them to reverse the egregious cuts to housing, as approved by the December 2023 budget.”

Bailie Hoy, seconded by Councillor Molyneux, moved as an amendment that:-

(1) at the end of paragraph 6, insert the following:

“Council notes the recent assent of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act](#), and its associated duties which will fully commence on 16th July 2024. Council welcomes this Act and its associated Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment which will ensure that policies and legislation protect and promote the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. Council acknowledges that this strengthens opportunities to address child poverty and to empower children and families in Glasgow to reach their potential. Council acknowledges the central importance of ensuring that children and young people are at the centre of decisions which affect them.

Council therefore asks the Council Leader to write to the new Prime Minister, setting out the child poverty challenges that remain in Glasgow; seeking the immediate removal of the two-child cap as well as policies currently mitigated by the Scottish Government such as the benefit cap and bedroom tax; inviting them to examine and replicate the success of the Scottish Child Payment as a model for funding child poverty alleviation; and seeking their acknowledgement that adequate funding for local services for families experiencing poverty such as those delivered in Glasgow as just as vital for delivering transformation as Scottish and UK-wide interventions.”; and

(2) after the last paragraph, insert the following:

“Council also notes the growing issue of in-work poverty. Just over 10% of workers in Scotland are locked in persistent low pay (i.e. below the real Living Wage) and 72% of them are women. Similarly, single parents, larger families, families from a minority ethnic background, disabled people and careers are also disproportionately trapped in low pay - highlighting the structural and intersectional discrimination impacts on in-work poverty. Council therefore asks the Council Leader’s letter to the new Prime Minister to also seek the devolution of employment law to the Scottish Parliament so that these issues can be addressed as a priority in Scotland.

Council further recognises the significance of housing costs to poverty. Around 110,000 people in Scotland experience in-work poverty due to their housing costs alone, with the growth of the private rented sector a key factor in that. Council therefore considers that increasing the supply of affordable housing alongside a strong and progressive system of national rent controls both have key roles to play in reducing poverty in Glasgow. Council therefore asks the Council Leader to write to the Scottish Government asking them to consider what more can be done to finance the building of affordable homes and ensuring that housing costs are made affordable across all tenures.”

During the debate Councillor Aitken and Bailie Hoy, with the agreement of their seconders, agreed to combine their motion and amendment resulting in the following adjusted motion:

“Council welcomes the renewed commitment of Scotland's new First Minister to eradicate child poverty and commits to continuing to prioritise work to achieve the same outcome in Glasgow, noting that all partners in the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership have agreed to unite activity around the single shared priority of "Family Poverty: Reducing Poverty and Inequalities in Glasgow's Communities".

Council acknowledges however that the eradication of child poverty is not a commitment that can be achieved by the Scottish Government or by Glasgow City Council alone, and notes that the choices of governments of all levels are material to our child poverty outcomes.

Council notes that during a cost of living and inflation crisis, children and families are often the most vulnerable: a fact that makes Glasgow - a city with a younger and poorer population than the national average - especially at risk from the issues that arise from the experience of child poverty.

Council regrets the historical legacy, and political and economic choices that have resulted in 45.4% of Glasgow's neighbourhoods being in the most deprived quintile of Scottish localities, with 51% of our children living in these areas. Council further notes that these local poverty rates impact on the budgets of Glasgow City Council, passing the cost on to taxpayers in the city. Council is encouraged by Glasgow's comparatively strong performance on child poverty reduction in comparison to cities like Manchester, Birmingham or London, and attributes this progress to Scottish Government interventions such as the Scottish Child Payment and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, as well as child poverty alleviation mechanisms funded and delivered by Glasgow City Council and our partners, such as: the Holiday Programme; Child Poverty Pathfinder; Glasgow Helps; Healthier, Wealthier Children; and Supporting Families Projects.

Council is deeply concerned however that, despite the significant investments made by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, it remains the case that around one third of children in wards such as Calton and Southside Central are living in poverty. Council believes that this is a consequence of exclusionary social and fiscal policies pursued by UK governments and notes, for example, the 'very strong' correlation between the percentage of families affected by the two-child cap

and local child poverty rates across these islands, as per research from Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy.

Council believes that it is entirely unnecessary for child poverty to exist in a modern advanced industrial economy such as the UK and that, regardless of who is in power, the UK government has the power to eradicate child poverty within a parliamentary term by prioritising the policy and spending choices that will achieve this outcome.

Council notes the recent assent of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act](#), and its associated duties which will fully commence on 16th July 2024. Council welcomes this Act and its associated Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment which will ensure that policies and legislation protect and promote the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. Council acknowledges that this strengthens opportunities to address child poverty and to empower children and families in Glasgow to reach their potential. Council acknowledges the central importance of ensuring that children and young people are at the centre of decisions which affect them.

Council therefore asks the Council Leader to write to the new Prime Minister, setting out the child poverty challenges that remain in Glasgow; seeking the immediate removal of the two-child cap as well as policies currently mitigated by the Scottish Government such as the benefit cap and bedroom tax; inviting them to examine and replicate the success of the Scottish Child Payment as a model for funding child poverty alleviation; and seeking their acknowledgement that adequate funding for local services for families experiencing poverty such as those delivered in Glasgow as just as vital for delivering transformation as Scottish and UK-wide interventions.

Council also notes the growing issue of in-work poverty. Just over 10% of workers in Scotland are locked in persistent low pay (i.e. below the real Living Wage) and 72% of them are women. Similarly, single parents, larger families, families from a minority ethnic background, disabled people and careers are also disproportionately trapped in low pay - highlighting the structural and intersectional discrimination impacts on in-work poverty. Council therefore asks the Council Leader's letter to the new Prime Minister to also seek the devolution of employment law to the Scottish Parliament so that these issues can be addressed as a priority in Scotland.

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On a vote being taken electronically and by roll call, 25 members voted for the amendment by Bailie Siddique and 48 for the motion as adjusted with 1 abstention.

The motion as adjusted was accordingly declared to be carried.