Introduction

1.1 Dundee City Council is delighted to have been invited to participate in an evidence panel before the Scottish Parliament’s Social Security Committee on 20 April 2016. As background for the Committee, the following information reflects the action being taken in Dundee in response to anti-poverty in general, much of which relates directly to levels of child poverty in the city.

Dundee Fairness Strategy and Commission

2.1 Dundee City Council and the Dundee Partnership first adopted their Fairness Strategy in June 2012. This set out a range of outcomes together with a detailed action plan. To add greater momentum and scrutiny to anti-poverty efforts, the Dundee Fairness Commission was established in April 2015 and its 56 recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the Council in June 2016. The Chief Executive was instructed to produce an Action Plan within six months and this was agreed in November 2016.

2.2 In the interim, the Scottish Government published its new Fairer Scotland Action Plan. This was informed by various forms of public engagement including a public session with the then Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice held in the Council Chambers hosted by the Dundee Fairness Commission. The Fairer Scotland Action Plan proposed fifty actions, all of which complemented the recommendations of the Dundee Fairness Commission. Indeed, a specific pledge was included in the plan itself on behalf of the Dundee Partnership.

2.3 Faith in Community Dundee, along with Craigowl Communities and Shelter Dundee, led the community engagement in the original Fairness Commission and produced a powerful and fascinating insight into people’s experiences in the city.
http://www.dundeepartnership.co.uk/sites/default/files/FICD%20povertyreport.pdf

2.4 Strategic outcomes for tackling poverty and promoting fairness have been reflected in a variety of ways from the national Fairer Scotland Action Plan and Child Poverty Strategy through to the specific themes identified by the Dundee Fairness Commission.

Tackling Poverty in Dundee

3.1 Reducing inequalities is an explicit priority for the Dundee Partnership as a whole and is captured in the strategic and operational planning and ongoing work of all members including individual statutory partners and supporting bodies such as the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. It will feature prominently in the forthcoming Local Outcome Improvement Plan for Dundee that will set out the whole Dundee Partnership’s ambition for improving the quality of life in the city over the next decade.

3.2 This commitment also permeates throughout the Council’s corporate vision and plan and can be seen in social and regeneration dimensions of the recent Growth Accelerator Model funding application for the Dundee Waterfront and the evolving proposals for the Tay Cities Deal; investment in local facilities which co-locate services and provide community assets; targeted school-based initiatives to improve confidence and learning through the Attainment Challenge and the Aspire approach; and limiting rent rises for Council tenants to below wage inflation.

3.3 Indeed, since the Fairness Commission reported in May 2016, the Partnership and the Council has already made noticeable progress by increasing school uniform grants, securing living wage accreditation, reducing school exclusions and co-locating advice services in job centres and GP practices.
3.4 While many aspects of poverty can be seen across the city, these can have the biggest impact when they combine in particular localities as evidenced by the results of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Given the existing commitment to the local employability pilots in the North East and East End wards, members of these Local Community Planning Partnerships will be invited to consider how agencies and communities themselves can contribute to a greater focus on dealing with the causes and consequences of poverty as part of a concerted, joined up approach to increasing fairness in their localities.

3.5 Dundee’s third sector was and continues to be a vital partner in the development and delivery of the action plan. Maximising the contributions and commitment of this sector will key as we move forward.

3.6. It is expected that further targeted and costed actions will be added in subsequent reports to committee. There will also be the opportunity for all partners, including those in the private sectors, to fully reflect their contributions to a city-wide programmed tackling these long-term and complex issues. The action plan contains, necessarily, a wealth of commitments and the following are examples where significant impacts are anticipated:-

**Stigma and Social Inclusion**
- Creating a Dundee body based on the Poverty Truth Commission
- Expanding the Stick Your Labels campaign
- Expanding Poverty Sensitivity Training for front-line staff

**Work and Wages**
- Expanding Scottish Living Wage commitment
- Securing community benefits through Central Waterfront developments
- Delivering integrated locality employability pilot

**Benefit, Advice and Support**
- Securing Big Lottery and ESF funding to test a new model of service delivery for Budget and Money Advice
- Opening new advice facility in Ninewells Hospital concourse
- Implementing a new Advice Strategy for Dundee

**Closing the Education Gap**
- Demonstrating progress through the Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Introducing the Big Noise/Sistema project
- Undertaking a Cost of the School Day project across 20 schools

**Housing and Communities**
- Increasing houses receiving Warm Home Discounts
- Increasing enforcement of standards in the private rented sector
- Piloting fuel vouchers in Dundee Food Banks

**Improving Health**
- Expanding social prescribing delivery
- Expanding provision of benefits advice in GP practices
- Increasing network of recovery cafes across city

4 A New Fairness Conversation in Dundee

4.1 The Dundee Partnership and Scottish Government are jointly funding a new project to follow on from the Fairness Commission. The group will involve an equal number of people who
have personal experience working alongside senior civic, political and business leaders in Dundee. Over the next 18 months they will develop a shared understanding between the two groups of commissioners and make proposals around key areas of anti-poverty work identified through the experience and knowledge of the commissioners.

4.2 This signals the start of a new stage in the fairness conversation, one that will involve people from local communities influencing change through their experiences and ideas. According to one Community Commissioner: “People who are struggling against poverty in our daily lives are the real experts. We want to share our stories and help to change things for the better.”

4.3 The process will, again, be facilitated by Faith in Community Dundee, in partnership with Dundee City Council and is funded by the Dundee Partnership and the Social Justice and Regeneration Division of the Scottish Government.

23 March 2016