

Dear Councillor/Alderman,

On behalf of the Equality Coalition, I would like to encourage you and your party to put forward a motion calling on council to acknowledge the need and urgency of an NI anti-poverty strategy. Whilst this is the remit of the Stormont Assembly, we believe it is crucial for council members to be part of this conversation.

We are asking councillors to become more familiar with the key recommendations that have been made to the Department for Communities and to back the call that an anti-poverty strategy must be an immediate priority for an incoming Executive.

Whilst Stormont has not been sitting, we know that local councils have been engaging in extensive anti-poverty work, and we believe it would benefit the local councils to hear more from anti-poverty experts on how we think poverty can be eradicated.

I have attached three documents that will be useful:

1. The expert panel recommendations for an anti-poverty strategy (commissioned by DfC)
2. The recommendations for an anti-poverty strategy published by some members of the anti-poverty co-design group
3. The report from "Progressing an Anti-Poverty Strategy" seminar held June 2023 in Stormont.

Additionally, a member of the Equality Coalition or the Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network would be happy to meet with your council team to discuss issues of poverty, or your council's Anti-Poverty/Hardship Stakeholder group.

**Council Motion Text:**

Council recognises that poverty is a massive issue across Northern Ireland. The Department for Communities reported in October 2023 that 60,000 children were living in absolute poverty – and 1 in 4 children are living in relative poverty.

Council acknowledges the high cost of living – particularly fuel, housing, essential goods, childcare and transport, combined with a low wage economy have created particularly dire economic conditions for many. This combined with the austerity budget of 23/24 has had devastating consequences for the most vulnerable in society.

Council recognizes that the Assembly still does not have an Anti-Poverty Strategy “**based on objective need**” – almost 20 years after the St. Andrew’s agreement placed a legal requirement on the Executive to enact a strategy.

Council commits to supporting the call by the Equality Coalition, NI Anti-Poverty Network (NIAPN), Barnardo’s and others for the creation and implementation of an Anti-Poverty Strategy based on objective need to be a day one priority for any incoming Executive.

Council will:

1. Invite a representative from NIAPN or the Equality Coalition to present to the council about the key asks for an anti-poverty strategy
2. Endorse the recommended vision for the anti-poverty strategy:

*“Northern Ireland is an equal society where poverty and its impacts are eradicated, and that respects, protects, promotes and fulfils the rights of those at risk of poverty to ensure they achieve their aspirations.”*

3. Increase the visibility of the council’s anti-poverty action plans, including the resources available to those within the council area experiencing poverty.