



Leicester  
City Council

**Wards affected: All wards**

**CABINET  
OVERSEAS LINKS WORKING PARTY**

**16 May 2005  
July 2005**

---

## **MAKE POVERTY HISTORY**

---

### **Report of the Assistant Chief Executive**

#### **1. Purpose of Report/Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Make Poverty History campaign and sets out possible ways in which the Council could facilitate their work in Leicester to increase awareness of international development issues.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to consider whether it wishes to:
- (a) express its support for the aims of the Make Poverty History campaign;
  - (b) support the Council's facilitation of the work of the campaign in Leicester, as far as is practicable, on the basis that it considers the campaign to be non-political;
  - (c) ask the Overseas Links Working Party to consider whether the Council should encourage Strasbourg and Krefeld to write to their national governments urging them to place international development higher up the agenda.

#### **3. Report**

- 3.1 Make Poverty History is the British component of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. It is an alliance of nearly 400 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities who are mobilising around key opportunities in 2005 to campaign against global poverty and injustice.
- 3.2 Political parties and political organisations are not part of Make Poverty History. The aims of the coalition are to encourage political parties, national governments and international bodies to adopt the policies that it advocates, and build up the broad movement committed to tackling world poverty.
- 3.3 Make Poverty History is campaigning on the issues of trade justice, debt abolition and more and better aid. It believes that the gap between the world's rich and poor has never been wider, noting that malnutrition, AIDS, conflict and illiteracy are a daily reality for millions. It considers that the governments of the world's richest nations will fail to reach internationally agreed targets to halve global poverty by 2015. Further details of the Campaign's views are attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.4 The campaign also calls for all governments to be given the ability to choose the best solutions to end poverty and protect the environment. These are issues that, because of their global dimension, impact upon Leicester. They also connect with the Council's work over many years to promote environmental sustainability, which has included initiatives such as the Ethical Purchasing Guidelines. The Campaign has also indicated that it will be undertaking work in the autumn highlighting issues around poverty in Great Britain. This is likely to promote issues of direct relevance to Leicester, given that 12 of the City's former 28 wards were among the worst 10% nationally for child poverty (the City as a whole is in the worst 10% for local authority areas on this measure). In addition, 13 of the former 28 wards were in the worst 10% for lowest income.
- 3.5 The Campaign believes that 2005 offers an exceptional series of opportunities for the United Kingdom to take a lead internationally in tackling world poverty. The UK will host and chair the annual G8 gathering in Gleneagles, Scotland, as well as G7 meetings. In addition, it will assume the presidency of the European Union during the second half of the year. The UN General Assembly Special Summit on the Millennium Development Goals takes place from 1-5 September. 2005 has already seen the issuing of the Africa Commission report, while the twentieth anniversary of Live Aid occurs on 13 July.
- 3.6 Ruth Stockdale of Oxfam and Celia Fisher of LASS, who are playing leading roles in the local Make Poverty History campaign, have suggested that the Council could facilitate their activities in the following ways:
- Allow white band banners to be displayed on Council buildings or across a street;
  - Allow them to hold an event in the environs of the Town Hall, possibly in mid-June;
  - Allow white band banners and other publicity to be displayed at Council-run and Council-funded events and festivals;
  - Help the campaign to work with schools;
  - List Make Poverty History events through articles in Link, Face etc;
  - Write to our twin cities of Strasbourg and Krefeld to encourage them to write to their national governments urging them to place international development higher up the agenda.
- 3.7 The Education and Lifelong Learning Department have stated that the work of the campaign is helping schools deliver the citizenship curriculum, as it neatly encapsulates a range of international development issues. They are happy to continue to liaise with the campaign to build on this work.
- 3.8 In terms of the other actions suggested, and in view of the legal implications set out below, members need to decide whether or not the Council deems the campaign to be political. As Make Poverty History would meet all attributable costs, the Council will not incur any expenditure through facilitating their requests.
- 3.9 In terms of the display of banners, the Resources, Access and Diversity Department have advised that it would be most appropriate for Make Poverty History to display one or more banners across a street, rather than on a building, although this matter will continue to be investigated. Banners with a message deemed political by the Council are not accepted. Any costs will need to be met by the Make Poverty History campaign.

- 3.10 Resources, Access and Diversity are liaising with Make Poverty History to discuss the feasibility of holding an event around the Town Hall. The Regeneration and Culture Department Festivals and Events Unit has indicated that that it could facilitate the request from Make Poverty History, and would be happy to meet with the local campaign organisers to identify appropriate events and discuss practicalities. Again, any costs would be met by the campaign.
- 3.11 It is suggested that the Cabinet forward the suggestion on writing to Strasbourg and Krefeld to the Overseas Links Working Party for their consideration.
- 3.12 In addition, the Council may wish to facilitate contacts between Make Poverty History and appropriate local partnerships and partner organisations.

#### **4. Financial and Legal Implications**

- 4.1 As Make Poverty History would meet all attributable costs, there are no cost implications arising from this report. Contacts: Alan Tomlins and Andy Morley.
- 4.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 (as amended by the Local Government Act 1988, Section 27(1) and the Communications Act 2003, Section 349(3)) expressly prohibits the publication by a Local Authority of "any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party".
- 4.3 In determining whether material is prohibited, regard is to be had to the content and the style of the material, the time and other circumstances of publication and the likely effect on those to who it is directed, and in particular, to whether it refers to a political party or persons identifying with a political party, or promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable as a view of one party and not another. Where the material is part of a campaign, regard is to be had to the effect which the campaign appears to be designed to achieve.
- 4.4 Whether the proposed support for the Make Poverty History campaign is lawful or not depends to some extent on perceptions. A practical way forward would be for the Cabinet to consult with a view to establishing whether other political groups consider this to be a political campaign.
- 4.5 Legal powers have to be found to support any expenditure so Cabinet must identify the well being for the City.
- 4.6 Display of the banners must be in accordance with planning control and other current policies relating to the use of Council buildings.
- 4.7 The Council has limited legal powers to support overseas links including limited powers to provide advice and assistance to bodies outside the UK in the carrying out of local government activities under the Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993.

Contact: Peter Nicholls

## 5. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References within Supporting Information
Equal Opportunities	Y	Throughout the report
Policy	N	
Sustainable and Environmental	Y	Throughout the report
Crime and Disorder	N	
Human Rights Act	Y	Throughout the report
Elderly/People on Low Income	Y	Throughout the report

## 6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

6.1 None

## 7. Consultations

7.1 Charles Poole, Service Director for Democratic Services  
Mike Richardson, Head of Development Control, Regeneration and Culture  
Anthony Carter, Property Services, Resources, Access and Diversity  
Maggie Shutt, Festivals and Events Manager, Regeneration and Culture  
Sandra Rieger, International Development Officer, Regeneration and Culture

## 8. Report Author

8.1 Peter Cozens, Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Office, extension 6789

## DECISION STATUS

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	No
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Executive (Cabinet)