

## Anti-Poverty and Social Mobility

To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 2 December 2021

From: Head of Think Communities, Matt Oliver

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: That the work to address social immobility and tackle poverty is reviewed and scrutinised, and that it delivers sustainably improved outcomes for our residents.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note and comment on the key themes discussed in the report; and
- b) Endorse the approaches being taken, and the specific actions proposed, against each of the main themes described in section 2 of the report.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 The September report of the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships to the Committee set out the fundamental role of the Committee in delivering to many of the priorities set out in the Joint Administration Agreement, most notably to improve social mobility, to eradicate poverty, and to ensure equality and inclusion are at the heart of our service and organisation.
- 1.2 It is important to remember that the causes and consequences of social immobility, inequality and poverty are complex and inter-related. Approaches to tackling these priorities therefore cut across traditional boundaries of both service delivery and committee responsibility and our approach to both action and decision-making must reflect that.
- 1.3 The September Service Director's report to the Committee set out ten practical actions that were being considered or delivered as part of our developing approach to addressing social immobility, inequality and the consequences of poverty. These actions, which drive forward the strategic framework for tackling social immobility, were agreed by the Committee. The actions have been presented to the Countywide Community Resilience Group, which has a membership of approximately 50 organisations.
- 1.4 The ten actions in the order described in the September report were:
  - (i) Overlay the strategies from across the Council to allow us to understand how we might best coordinate all related work to tackle poverty and social immobility
  - (ii) Engage directly with those with lived experience of poverty to ensure our approaches are relevant and impactful
  - (iii) Developing shared awareness and actions through the Community Resilience Group
  - (iv) Development of a countywide Food Poverty alliance
  - (v) Exploration/developmental work on Community Wealth Building approaches
  - (vi) Enhanced and personalised support to Food Bank users (piloted in Wisbech)
  - (vii) Continuation of practical support through the Direct Awards Scheme
  - (viii) Target our adult skills offer to support the poverty and social mobility priorities
  - (ix) Repurposing our Covid assistance schemes to support those in the community with ongoing needs
  - (x) Research to help us to develop our approach to social mobility

## 2. Main Issues

2.1 As the work on these initiatives has progressed during the last weeks and months, several of the individual actions have come together as being mutually supportive. This has also been the case with other aspects of strategy development being taken forward elsewhere in the Council. These positive developments reflect the principles of coordination of action and strategy underpinning our Framework for Action for Social Mobility. This update therefore reflects those developments rather than reporting on the list of individual actions as set out in the order they appeared in the September Director's report to the Committee. However, to provide continuity with that report, the numbering system used in paragraph 1.4 will be used to reference each section of the update below.

### 2.2 Providing Direct and Practical Support to those in Need (vi, vii, ix)

2.2.1 The Direct Awards scheme was conceived to distribute funding through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme (winter 2020/21), and the Covid Local Support Grant Scheme (which ran until 30 September 2021). This scheme enables trusted partner organisations to allocate funding to in-need families. As set out to the Committee in July, the ongoing delivery and expansion of the Direct Award scheme was already planned to continue beyond the lifespan of the Covid Local Support Grant to enhance our anti-poverty activity and further decentralise our decision-making. The demand for the scheme picked up significantly between September and October driven by increases in utility bills and the cessation of the temporary uplift in Universal Credit payments.

2.2.2 Since the July Committee meeting, the Government has announced the creation of the Household Support Fund (HSF). The HSF will provide support to those most in need over the winter months and will run until 31 March 2022. The indicative funding allocation for Cambridgeshire is £3,581,424

2.2.3 The Children and Young People Committee meeting on 19 October 2021 approved the operation of a Direct Voucher Scheme for eligible families over the October half-term, Christmas school holiday, and February half-term periods. The funding allocation for the Direct Voucher Scheme approved by Committee was £1,124,266

2.2.4 The Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee on 11 November 2021 approved detailed proposals for the design and implementation of the wider scheme to be funded by the £2,457,158 remaining Fund balance.

2.2.5 Although there are many similarities between the HSF and the schemes that preceded it, the new fund provides greater flexibility to support more households without children and broadens out the scope of the type of support that can be offered. Our pre-existing intention to continue and broaden the Direct Award scheme through the expansion of our 'trusted partner' network has allowed us to respond at pace to design and mobilise the Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund. The Direct Award element of the HSF has been enhanced by the creation of the establishment of a 'direct application' route for individuals and families. This is administered by the County Hub which is being expanded to deliver this function. We are seeking to maximise the reach of the scheme by adopting a 'case finding' approach with partners and by publicising the scheme as widely as possible.

- 2.2.6 The delivery of the funds from the HSF to households most in need over winter is the immediate priority for providing support to those in need. However, government funding for HSF is a short-term boost to provide support until the end of March 2022. We will therefore continue to develop our approach to provide a support offer to those in need after this date.
- 2.2.7 As well as the Direct Award scheme (which was proposed to continue independent of the HSF), we are developing new approaches to provide a support offer in the community that builds on the strengths and reach of existing voluntary, community and statutory services. To help advance this approach we are working closely with Wisbech Food Bank and Fenland District Council to provide enhanced support for users of the Food Bank. A key principle of this approach is that while provision of emergency food is a vital emergency intervention, it often does not lead to a more holistic, personalised support offer that helps support people to move on from food bank use. To this end we have introduced an approach where food bank clients are supported by a 'systems buddy/navigator' provided by the County Hub. This 'professional friend' will help the service user to navigate the support services that are available, but are often difficult to navigate and access, especially for those in crisis. An overview of this approach is set out at Appendix 1. The ongoing evaluation and assessment of this model will influence the future development of the hub as we repurpose our COVID assistance schemes to support those in the community with ongoing needs.

## 2.3 Development of a Countywide Food Poverty Alliance (iv)

- 2.3.1 The Council is providing grant support to Cambridge Sustainable Food to develop a countywide Food Poverty Alliance. It's overarching aim will be to ensure a healthy and sustainable diet is available to all, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- 2.3.2 The work to set up the Alliance is being undertaken with regard to the principles of decentralisation. The Alliance will be County Council supported rather than Council-run. The direction of the Alliance will be driven and overseen by an independent steering group that is representative of voluntary and community sector organisations active in this field across the County. This will be supplemented by representatives from the District Councils and the County Council. Underpinning the development of the Alliance is a belief that a shared vision and working together brings results that can't be achieved by acting individually.
- 2.3.3 It is important to note it is envisaged that the work of the Alliance will not be restricted to emergency food provision but will work to strengthen the ability of local communities and organisations to tackle the root causes of food poverty. As such, it is likely that the Alliance will follow the model of similar alliances in adopting a 'money-first' approach, prioritising interventions, projects and programmes which seek to maximise the amount of money in the pockets of those experiencing or at risk of food poverty. Furthermore, work on Food Poverty and justice by alliances typically follow the framework set out by SUSTAIN and the Sustainable Food Places programme. This approach goes beyond the issues most intuitively linked with food poverty (e.g., emergency food provision) and reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of the food system. The six key issues of the framework are:
- Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

- Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement
- Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
- Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local supply chains
- Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.

2.3.4 By adopting this framework, it is envisaged that in addition to its network and support functions the Alliance will be able to provide more interface with the Council and its District and VCS partners on issues such as sustainability, healthy weight and food waste.

2.3.5 The Alliance is in a developmental phase and the Steering Group first met on Thursday 25 November 2021.

## 2.4 Community Wealth Building and Strategy Coordination (v and i)

2.4.1 Community Wealth Building (CWB) encompasses a breadth of approaches that aim to make the wealth of a local area 'stick' in a local area. More formally it has been defined as 'a people-centred approach to local economic development, which looks to increase the flow of wealth back into local economies and places, by given more control to local people and business' (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, 2020).

2.4.2 Many governmental organisations across the world are adopting CWB approaches with particularly high-profile examples in the UK in Scotland and Wales as part of national policy. In England the approach has been more locally driven. While developments in Preston and Wigan are often quoted and attract wide interest, the website of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies [www.cles.org.uk](http://www.cles.org.uk) details examples from around the country.

2.4.3 While the underpinning principles of CWB are common, local approaches to CWB are dependent on context and must be developed locally. However, there are a number of pillars under which most CWB may be characterised. These are:

- Progressive Procurement
- Socially Productive Use of Land & Property
- Fair Employment and Just Labour Markets
- New Forms of Financial Power
- Plural and Democratic Ownership of the Economy

2.4.4 It is clear from this list that the actions that underpin the development of a CWB approach cut across committee and departmental structures alike. Indeed, our research has indicated that in order to be successful, CWB approaches need to be whole-organisation strategic approaches with drive and 'buy-in' from the top of the organisations, supported by an approach to culture change. One organisation undertaking CWB approaches characterised this as 'a mindset, not just a toolset'.

- 2.4.5 In order to progress this work, we are now looking at a range of current and developmental Council strategies to see how this work might be further enhanced by a Community Wealth Building approach should it be adopted by the Council.
- 2.4.6 An example of this might lie with respect to progressive procurement (the first of the pillars listed above). The Council is already undertaking work to enhance its mechanisms to using social value in procurement. In this way the Council will seek to ensure its procurement and commissioning of goods and services will enhance the social, environmental, economic and well-being of both place and population. However, a community wealth building approach might seek to enhance that further through actions such as 'local first' procurement policies, breaking large contracts into smaller lots, increasing the weight given to social value in assessment of tenders, support for small and medium enterprises, development of co-operatives and community interest companies and breaking other barriers to VCS participation in the supply chain.
- 2.4.7 In order to help the Council decide whether to adopt a community wealth building approach, but also to decide how one might be adopted in Cambridgeshire, we have begun the mapping process. This is looking at series of existing and developing policies and strategies, particularly those which further the aims of the Joint Administration Agreement to check the potential for them to become an enhanced CWB approach.
- 2.5 Target our skills offer to support the poverty and social mobility priorities (viii)
- 2.5.1 Since the Committee meeting in July 2021, Cambridgeshire Skills has embarked on its planning journey for January 2022 to the end of the academic year. In doing so, and to support poverty and social mobility outcomes, it is providing place-based and online learning and skills programmes. The purpose of all curriculum intent is to progress our residents societally or economically, examples of this include health and wellbeing, family learning, functional skills classes, digital IT programmes, vocational pathways, etc. The full Adult Skills Programme for January to April 2022 can be found at <https://www.cambsals.co.uk/courses>
- 2.5.2 In addition to the traditional courses in the prospectus, a sample of the current community projects we are currently working on can be found below:
- (i) Food Banks: We are working with local foodbanks to provide a holistic wrap around service to support residents onto skills courses.
  - (ii) Addenbrookes Hospital: Supporting Addenbrookes in the recruitment of nursing apprentices through the provision of functional Skills classes.
  - (iii) Camsight: Supporting 'digital buddies volunteers' to enable a community skills offer focussed on befriending and IT support in areas such as online shopping, paying bills etc.
  - (iv) Secret Garden Wisbech: Monthly peer support groups which we are looking to develop further with bite size tailored courses in areas such as gardening, personal development, mindfulness, wellbeing and meditation. This seeks to address a lack of educational opportunity in this client group.

- (v) Age UK: A proposal has been put together to train Age UK's volunteers to deliver a 'Digital Buddy' model to provide assistance to vulnerable elderly adults recently discharged from hospital. The project will seek to address digital exclusion in this group by assisting in accessing online shopping, communicating with friends and family online and staying safe online.
- (vi) Groundwork East: This Community food growing project is securing locations in Fenland, Kings Hedges and Huntingdon. These hubs will support residents to learn how to grow, harvest and cook with fresh produce. Additionally, as part of our commissioning process, we are supporting Groundwork to offer a variety of activities including low-cost nutritious meal planning and cooking on a budget, to help residents improve their diets and nutrition. Fresh produce grown in the hubs is redistributed within the local community and used to enrich local food bank, crisis services and local holiday hunger services, where children from low-income families will have the opportunity to grow, cook and eat fresh food as a part of structured programmes.
- (vii) Gypsy and Roma Traveller communities: Literacy support for Gypsy and Roma Traveller communities supporting progression into employment and further learning. Learning takes place on Traveller sites across Cambridgeshire.
- (viii) Romsey Mill: Confidence and healthy eating courses for disadvantaged young parents in Cambridge – supporting progression into further learning.
- (ix) Switch Now: Employability, Enterprise, and vocational introductory courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities - supporting progression into employment and volunteering. Based in St Neots, offering placements at Hinchingbrooke Hospital, Little Paxton allotments, Rectory Farm in Southoe and the miniature railway in St Neots
- (x) CELS (Cambridge English Language Society): Introductory ESOL course 'Speak in the Community' offered in the Arbury – developing English speaking skills embedding employability skills/Peer support network.
- (xi) Social Care level 1 + 2 Apprenticeships: Recent work to ensure Health and Social Care level 1 + 2 apprenticeships are communicated to seldom heard groups through our NEET partnership forum.

## 2.6 Research to help us to develop our approach to social mobility (x)

2.6.1 The CUSPE (Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange) programme has brought together a team from a range of diverse backgrounds to look at the issue of social mobility to help us develop policy in this area. The question "How can we best align partners and community assets to ensure whole communities can access opportunities to enhance social mobility?" has been further refined by undertaking desktop research and literature reviews. The work is being progressed through face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders from across the VCS and statutory sector. The team will continue to review and refine their response as their research progresses and the report will be presented to the Committee formally in due course.

## 2.7 Engage directly with those with lived experience of poverty to ensure our approaches are relevant and impactful (ii)

2.7.1 We will continue to design and evaluate our approaches and services based on the input of those communities and groups we seek to serve and assist. Recent examples of this include:

- (i) Household Support Fund: Paragraph 2.2 of this report updates the committee regarding the development of the Household Support Fund. The design of this fund has been influenced by our learning from the Winter Support Grant and COVID support grant schemes. This was, in part, provided via an evaluation process which included surveys and interviews with users of these schemes.
- (ii) St Neots Job Club: This initiative is being developed in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire Skills, the libraries service and community organisations. Our Think Communities placed-based teams have been talking to residents in the community to help develop this offer.
- (iii) Wisbech Food Bank/County Hub Support: Paragraph 2.2.7 outlines our approach to developing a personalised support offer to the users of Wisbech Food Bank. Feedback from service users will inform the development of the 'navigator' aspects of this service as we seek to extend this offer to other users of other services.
- (iv) NEET: (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Strategy group has been formed and is led by Think Communities with the objective of developing cross system working which harnesses every opportunity to drive down the number of NEET 16-25 yr. old Young People in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The group has developed its focus around vulnerable young people with pre-determined characteristics which make them more likely to become NEET such as experience of care or the criminal justice system, those with SEND, teenage parents and those without appropriate school places.

2.7.2 As a result, we have seen cross system improvements in areas such as data reporting, which helps understand where to focus our energy as well as more joined up support processes in place for those who are electively home educated, in alternative provision in year 11 where young people are at risk of not making a smooth transition to further education.

2.7.3 As part of this work five Community Youth Worker Forums have been developed as a platform to support training and development of grass roots Youth Workers to be able to identify, have conversations with and signpost NEET young people. As well as this NEET has been adopted as a topic within our Youth Engagement Partnership which hosts a network of young people's groups which can support coproduction of service design and delivery.

2.7.4 A good practical example of how the team are taking this forward is the engagement of NEET young people at the Staithe young peoples supported housing project, through detached youth work aimed at understanding the barriers to vaccination in supported housing, young people told us that a key motivating factor would be to access employment. Using this information our team are now coproducing a bespoke project which looks to help



young people in supported accommodation both with building the skills that they need to access employment as well as tackling the barriers to vaccination.

2.7.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: As part of the County Council's Single Equality Strategy Action Plan, The Think Communities Service is tasked with ensuring that all members of our communities have equal opportunity to influence the design, review, and delivery of services. Using the teams community engagement and stakeholder mapping, a matrix of groups set against protected characteristics has been created which includes rural isolation and poverty. We are presently contacting those groups to invite them to be part of a new Community Diversity Network. The matrix and the CDN group will form the basis of a framework which will enable the Council departments to develop meaningful two-way communication with grass roots organisations around policy and service design.

## 2.8 Developing shared awareness and actions through the Community Resilience Group (iii)

2.8.1 The Community Resilience Group, which was formed as part of the County's response to Covid19, remains an important shared space for collaboration and communication. The invitation list of approximately 50 organisations includes District Councils, Public Services and the VCS. The meetings continue to regularly attract attendances of over 40, indicating this is a valued space for our partners.

2.8.2 The CRG has been regularly updated on key pieces of work in relation to the poverty and social mobility agendas including the Household Support Fund, food poverty in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (University College London) report, digital inequality, the DWP kickstart programme, the work of the financial vulnerability working group and the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

2.8.3 The CRG is overseen by the "Place Leads Group", a smaller executive of the CRG which includes representation from all Districts, Integrated Care Partnerships, VCS, Police, Combined Authority and Public Health. This has enabled our partnership to remain closely aligned in developing our system response to key issues.

2.8.4 The CRG has helped develop the delivery framework for programmes such as the Countywide Food Poverty Alliance. They will continue to be integral to the development of placed-based working to address the root causes of poor social mobility and poverty.

## 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

### 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

This report describes progress and plans to ensure the needs and aspirations of our communities are at the core of the Committee's work.

### 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The Committee's areas of responsibility offer opportunity for all, and ensures no community is excluded or disadvantaged. By focussing on these objectives, which the various

workstreams set out in this report seek to do, we can ensure that the quality-of-life outcomes for everyone are improved.

### 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

All of the workstreams set out in this report directly or indirectly affect all residents, regardless of age. Moreover, building communities that are vibrant and have opportunity, and enhancing the social mobility of families, will directly and positively create the best possible start for our children.

### 3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

Fundamental to our work to support communities to thrive, and alongside working closely with our local partners to decentralise our approaches, is the need to ensure the environment within which they live and work is safe and clean with opportunities to connect to one another.

### 3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

For citizens to be confident, healthy, safe, and secure, they need to live in communities that mirror those attributes, and where there is a strong sense of local identity and cohesion. The workstreams set out in this report seek to support the development of a strong local identity, helping to create thriving places for people to live in.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Any purchases to support the service directorate's work will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

Ensuring and achieving equality of opportunity to all of our residents is central to the work of the Committee and its service directorate.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are a number of communications and engagement aspects to the work of this Committee that our Communications team are aware of, and they are working closely and proactively with relevant officers where appropriate.

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members remain at the heart of our work and are vital in their role as community leaders in helping make sure we identify challenges, risks, and opportunities early and that we deliver a real and lasting change for our residents.

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

This paper sets out a range of work which will aim to positively impact on the wider determinants of health. The development of the Food Poverty Alliance will require close working with public health to maximise impact and avoid potential areas of duplication.

#### 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

##### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral, potential for positive

Explanation: There is potential in this area as several approaches to community wealth building seek to develop and support projects and (social) businesses in this field.

##### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

##### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

##### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive.

Explanation: Item on Food Poverty Alliance sets out a framework that includes 'Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste'.

##### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

##### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral, potential for positive.

Explanation: Community Wealth building approaches often include actions to localise provision of goods and services throughout the supply chain.

##### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Henry Swann

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Matt Oliver

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Amanda Rose/Helen Wainwright

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

No

Name of Officer:

## 5. Source Documents

5.1 None

## Appendix 1 - Personalised Support Pilot Roles and Responsibilities

### TEAM OFFERS

#### Transformation Team

- To provide overarching pilot support
- Assist in the strategic & operational design of the pilot
- Support the development of an evaluation/impact measurement framework

#### Fenland Hub

- Signposting to relevant organisations currently 90+ organisations during the pandemic.
- Using local knowledge and skills advisers are also able to provide support with various issues e.g. homelessness, council tax reductions, discretionary housing payments etc.
- Access to future foodbank vouchers however we would look to refer resident to CAB via our agreement (currently until end of October 2021). This would ensure ongoing support/ holistic approach.

#### Think Communities

- Take a holistic approach to understand the person's whole self, taking time to understand what a resident needs to enable them to achieve and to overcome the challenges they face.
- Link users into individual/personalized support to help navigate and access universal services. This could include: Income maximization, Debt advice, Budgeting, Fuel Poverty, Homelessness, Language difficulties
- Avoid duplication of services and work with individuals to help them access support as well as help join up services.
- Track where service users are within the system to ensure they are receiving the help / support required

#### County Hub Navigator

- Professional friend
- Someone to stand with/come alongside resident
- Guide through services
- Relationship based bespoke service
- Someone to check in with
- Time to understand the needs more fully
- Signposting
- 'Central' case management
- Emergency vouchers