

TACKLING POVERTY AND IMPROVING SOCIAL MOBILITY

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 30th May 2019

From: Sarah Ferguson, Assistant Director: Housing,
Communities and Youth

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To share the approach taken and outcome of a cross party member working group leading on the development of a poverty and social mobility action plan for Cambridgeshire.

Recommendation: Committee is asked to:

- a) Approve the Statement of Commitment and Actions for 2019-20 (Appendix 1) to fulfil statutory duty; and
- b) Approve the recommendation to work alongside partners in all sectors to develop a shared approach to tackling poverty and improving social mobility from 2020 and beyond, across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contacts:</i>	
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government is committed to ending child poverty. The Child Poverty Act 2010 places a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a local child poverty strategy, thereby establishing a framework for local partners to cooperate to tackle child poverty. The Welfare Reform and Work Act was passed in 2016 to help achieve this. The Act focuses on social mobility and on developing life chances as the primary focus for tackling poverty in the United Kingdom (UK).
- 1.2 The Council, with our partners in the district councils, developed a strategy for tackling child and family poverty and economic disadvantage in Cambridgeshire in 2014 – the ‘Breaking the Cycle 2’ Strategy.
- 1.3 On 5th July 2018 the Communities and Partnership Committee, which has deprivation as one of its four overarching strategic priorities, received an update on that strategy and agreed to a number of actions including “to immediately form a cross-party working group to lead the development of a social mobility strategy and action plan”.
- 1.4 The cross-party working group with officer support has addressed the actions agreed by Committee on 5th July 2018 which include:
- engaging with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council’s other Service Committees and appropriate District representatives, assessing current activity for impact and relevance
 - identifying new actions
 - aligning the Think Communities shared approach and engaging with key partners
- Relevant commissioned services which are already making an impact in this policy area, including the Time Credits programme, have been extended in advance of the review being concluded in order to not lose momentum on valuable work. Updates on progress of the working group were received by Communities and Partnership Committee workshops on 20 December 2018 and 25 April 2019.
- 1.5 The working group has been actively engaged in considering the scope, reviewing data and existing complementary work streams, and work already taking place. A framework for tackling poverty and improving social mobility has been agreed and shared with the Committee in its workshop on 20th December, and a stated commitment to tackling poverty and improving social mobility and action plan for 2019-20 (therein referred to as “the Commitment”) has been developed by the Member working group and key members of staff from across the Council (**Appendix 1**).

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Understanding the different levels of poverty in Cambridgeshire has involved a number of different measures, including people’s material circumstances (the extent to which someone is living in poverty) and looking at the various aspects pertaining to their personal lives or wider neighbourhood that leads to the persistent state of being in poverty, often referred to as multiple deprivation.

- 2.2 Further details of the data and intelligence used can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the Commitment (**Appendix 1**). A summary of the findings is as follows:
- a. Whilst the percentage of pensioner households living in poverty has dropped slightly in the last 15 years in the UK, households with children has not.
 - b. The percentage of people whose household income is less than the poverty threshold of 60 per cent of the median national household income (approximately £28,400) ranged from over 18% for parts of Wisbech, Huntingdon and Cambridge to under 9% for parts of Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. This means approximately 71,000 people in Cambridgeshire are living in poverty, just over one in ten of the County's population. It is estimated that approximately 14,500 children are living in poverty in Cambridgeshire.
 - c. The number of working age people on out of work benefits in Cambridgeshire was just over 30,000 people, including high numbers appearing within areas of social housing including new developments.
 - d. Indices of Multiple (IMD 2015) detailed maps show that over 20% of Lower Super Output Areas (around 250 households) within Fenland are within the most deprived areas for the County as a whole.
- 2.3 The Social Mobility Index shows a significant gap in skills and income between different parts of Cambridge which has led to it being labelled as the UK's most unequal City. Relatively low attainment in our schools for children on a low income (claiming free school meals) features in parts of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.
- 2.4 This data has shaped (and will continue to do so) the focus of service delivery for 2019-20 and beyond, whilst recognising that there are also people who will be affected by poverty within our more affluent areas.
- 2.5 The Think Communities partnership approach, agreed by Communities and Partnership Committee on 27 Sept 2018, will be critical to supporting our ambitions to improve outcomes and opportunities for citizens of Cambridgeshire which will make a difference in tackling deprivation. The commitment identifies four themes which will help to shape the work for 2019-20 and beyond:
- 2.5.1 ***Awareness and capacity***
Poverty and social mobility cuts across so much of our work. One of our aims for this year is to raise awareness of the work that is already being done, join up what we do in a way that makes sense to people, and therefore make better use of our resources.
 - 2.5.2 ***Using every conversation***
We will develop how we can use every conversation that we have with people to consider whether poverty is adversely affecting them and to ensure that they are able to access the support that they are entitled to.
 - 2.5.3 ***Broader approaches instead of services alone***

Our work indicates that rather than just providing people with services, taking a broader approach works more effectively. We will therefore continue to invest in strength-based approaches to working with people that do not focus purely on their needs and the services we have traditionally provided.

2.5.4 ***Inequality within communities as well as specific areas***

Whilst there is a spatial element to poverty and social mobility as demonstrated by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, there are also people who will be affected by poverty within our more affluent areas. As well as focussing on those areas of higher need, our work will look to understand and address these inequalities.

2.6 The working group agreed to focus development of the 2019-20 action plan using the five point plan to solve poverty mentioned in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report 'We Can Solve Poverty in the UK':

- i. Boosting incomes and reducing costs
- ii. Improving early literacy, education standards and raising skills
- iii. Strengthening families and communities
- iv. Delivering an effective benefit system
- v. Promoting long-term economic growth benefiting everyone

2.7 Officers from Council services identified a significant number of actions already in place to support those priorities and which will continue throughout 2019-20, as well as additional actions to be undertaken during that period (pages 5-9 of **Appendix 1**).

2.8 In addition to delivering the action plan for 2019-20, it is recommended that officers work alongside partners in all sectors to develop a shared approach to tackling poverty and improving social mobility for 2020 and beyond across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

3. **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

3.1 **A good quality of life for everyone**

This report recognises there are people who will be affected by poverty within our more affluent areas as well as those within recognised areas of deprivation. It sets out how we will focus on identified areas of higher need as well as seek to understand and address these inequalities. People with a good quality of life are more likely to be able to pursue opportunities to enhance their social mobility, as well as support those in greater need.

3.2 **Thriving places for people to live**

Promoting long term economic growth benefiting everyone is a fundamental ingredient to tackling poverty and enhancing social mobility. Addressing worklessness by giving people opportunities to take a route into work, address low aspirations and help people with health problems to stay in work, are all key actions to enhance economic opportunity for our population.

3.3 **The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children**

A focus on improving early literacy and education along with strengthening families and communities will result in giving our children the best start in life and in particular those children who are affected by poverty. The actions in the commitment and action plan include the new programme – Best Start in Life – which will boost social mobility.

4. **SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Resource Implications**

The actions for 2019-20 set out within this report and the document shown in **Appendix 1** will be carried out within existing resources. For the second stage development work the focus is on ensuring this, and the work delivered by our partners, is better co-ordinated and is achieving the best outcomes possible for our residents.

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

There are no significant implications within this category

4.3 **Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

The report above sets out details of significant implications in 1.1

4.4 **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Data and intelligence to better understand the levels of poverty in Cambridgeshire and the key areas of deprivation is mentioned on pages 2 and 3 of the Commitment paper. This has been instrumental in shaping the focus of the resulting commitment and actions. Recognising that there are also people affected by poverty within our more affluent areas, this work will ensure all of society is able to achieve social mobility and other opportunities.

4.5 **Engagement and Communications Implications**

Members and key service lead officers were closely involved in the development of the commitment and action plan.

4.6 **Localism and Local Member Involvement**

The cross party Member working group and involvement of the Member community champions as mentioned in 1.4-1.5 above has been fundamental to the development of this work.

4.7 **Public Health Implications**

There is a close relationship between social mobility and worklessness as key determinants of health outcomes.

Public Health services and current activities have a key role to play in addressing the challenges associated with reduced social mobility and worklessness, and the continuing input of Public Health colleagues will be fundamental to the effective delivery of the recommendations contained in this report.

Implications	Officer Clearance
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 LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus De Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by 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: Adrian Chapman
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
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	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

Source Documents	Location
Child Poverty Act 2010	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents
Welfare Reform and Work Act (passed in 2016)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/contents/enacted
Think Communities: a shared approach to community resilience for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-&-localism/community-resilience/
Joseph Rowntree Foundation report 'We Can Solve Poverty in the UK'	https://www.irf.org.uk/report/we-can-solve-poverty-uk