

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

7th June 2022

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025
Report Author	Stuart Lackenby, Deputy Chief Executive Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS)

List of Appendices

Appendix A – West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek approval of the West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In the Corporate Plan for West Northamptonshire we committed to focus on the things that will significantly improve the quality of life and well-being for all our residents. This Strategy is a major step in ensuring that our residents are offered opportunities, support, advice and information that will address the causes of poverty.
- 2.2 'Our vision is for a fairer and more inclusive West Northamptonshire, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality'
- 2.3 Living in poverty has negative impacts in other aspects of people's lives and is not just about money – it impacts educational attainment, access to good paying work, increases the risk of developing poor health conditions and reduces life expectancy. It also means that many people are not able to take part in the normal life of a place as experienced by other residents. The pandemic has particularly exacerbated the impacts of poverty on our most vulnerable residents and communities.
- 2.4 To achieve our vision, we must work together to maximise our resources and focus on activities that are likely to have a lasting impact on reducing poverty across West Northants to improve the lives of our local communities.

- 2.5 West Northamptonshire’s Anti-Poverty Strategy provides a strategic framework for how we intend to tackle poverty. The Strategy for 2022-2025 has three key priorities: Supporting people who are struggling in poverty now; Preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place and Influencing the Government and other national organisations to get a better deal for the communities in West Northants.
- 2.6 Our priorities are supported by 8 strategic objectives and 33 commitments, high level ambition statements that collectively support the shared vision and are aligned to the 3 priorities. Our vision, priorities and shared commitment statements maps our strategic direction.
- 2.7 Through continued engagement and consultation, a detailed action plan and performance framework will be developed which will underpin the strategy, setting out how we intend to deliver our outcomes.
- 2.8 The strategy has been coproduced through the Anti-Poverty Oversight Group, a West Northants partnership of cross party elected members, service providers, public health, housing, and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCSE Assembly and the Poverty Truth Commission.
- 2.9 Its aim is to add value to work already being undertaken and seeks to add value to this through further collaborative work. The strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued alignment with other policies and strategies and reflect the voices and involvement of people with a lived experience of poverty.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To approve the West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025 for adoption and implementation.
- 3.2 To approve the continued engagement of our community, partners and community and voluntary sector organisations to develop a robust set of action plans, aligned to the objectives set out in the strategy and the performance framework which will underpin the strategy.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Approval of the strategy will lead to a fairer and more inclusive West Northamptonshire, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality.
- 4.2 The strategy will deliver the following outcomes:
 - An improvement in population health and wellbeing.
 - Fewer households (and children) living in poverty.
 - An increase in average household incomes and wages.
 - Fewer people unemployed and in receipt of out of work benefits.
 - An increase in the number of people paid at least the real Living Wage.
 - An increase in the amount of lower cost rented and social housing

- Fewer young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Fewer people with no qualifications or skills training.
- Reduce the impact of fuel poverty on families

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The vision for West Northants Council is to create a great place to live, work, visit and thrive, working with our residents, the voluntary and community sector, our communities, social enterprises, businesses and partner organisations.
- 5.2 A commitment to harness the strengths of West Northants people, businesses and places, to create an inclusive and productive area where everyone and every place can thrive, where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life.
- 5.3 Like all areas we face some uncertainty as we emerge from the recent pandemic, which has amplified many of the inequalities that existed, across our communities in West Northamptonshire. It has resulted in a further demand of increased need and support.
- 5.4 We know that there will be an increase in people who will be experiencing poverty as we emerge from the pandemic and for those in poverty prior to the pandemic, are most likely to be struggling even more.
- 5.5 Poverty has wide ranging impacts. Being in poverty can mean that basic material resources are lacking and can lead to people living in poor quality housing, or not having a home. It can also lead to missed opportunities exclusion and even stigma and discrimination. If people are prevented from accessing resources and experiences, it limits their ability to participate and feel valued and included in society. The places where people live and the circumstances into which they are born have a fundamental effect on life chances. People may be considered to be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income. One in five (22%) people nationally and 10.4% of people in Northamptonshire are living in Poverty.
- 5.6 The links between poverty and poor physical health and mental wellbeing are clear and there are significant health inequalities in West Northamptonshire in both children and adults in some communities as a result.
- 5.7 West Northamptonshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy provides a framework for how we intend to tackle poverty.
- 5.8 The Strategy for 2022-2025 has three key priorities:
- Supporting people who are struggling in poverty now
 - Preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place
 - Influencing the Government and other national organisations to get a better deal for the communities in West Northants.

- 5.9 A series of objectives and commitments sit underneath these priorities. The Strategy is aimed at reducing poverty for people of all ages and personal circumstances, but there are certain groups that face a much higher risk of living in poverty than others. The Strategy seeks to reflect the needs of these vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities most at risk of poverty and identifies a range of factors that continue to contribute to people's risk of experiencing poverty.
- 5.10 A performance framework has been developed which will help to measure our success against the delivery of the outcomes. The strategy and its performance will be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Board agrees to adopt the Strategy, priorities and commitments.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are several funding sources that are already contributing to the priorities identified in the Strategy, including the Household Support Fund and the STAR Fund, West Northants also provide direct grants to several community and voluntary organisations who are delivering against some of the outcomes identified in the Strategy.
- 7.1.2 There is an opportunity to utilise part of the Public Health Reserve to support the delivery of the strategy in particular to focus on initiatives to support improved health and wellbeing in communities. Therefore, creating a 'Community Health and Wellbeing Innovation Fund' to harness the capacity of local organisations. The criteria for the fund will be developed further by the Interim Director of Public Health in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Portfolio holder.
- 7.1.3 In addition to this there is a commitment to identify additional funding and opportunities are currently being sought. Should any additional funding be identified as part of the implementation of the Strategy, this would be subject to approval at a future Cabinet meeting once quantified.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.3 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.3 The Strategy focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need, those most at risk and in need of accessing our services.

7.4 Consultation

- 7.4.3 In addition to the data, it is important that we listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty that we engage with those with first-hand knowledge. To inform the development of the strategy we have sought evidence from local voluntary and community organisations, along with key front-line services who are directly supporting West Northants most vulnerable people.
- 7.4.4 The Strategy has been coproduced in consultation and discussion with partners, cross party elected members, service providers, public health, housing and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCSE Assembly. An Oversight Board was established comprising of these partners to develop the framework and shape the strategy.
- 7.4.5 The strategy will be kept under regular review as new evidence and learning emerges from the impact of the pandemic and we continue to be informed by the findings of the West Northants Poverty Truth Commission.
- 7.4.6 The Poverty Truth Commission has provided the opportunity to listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty. A website has been set up for the Poverty Truth Commission in West Northants poverty-truth.org.uk which is encouraging real life stories, from those with lived experienced of poverty. These case studies are coming from seldom heard groups within our communities, those that are vulnerable and those most in need.
- 7.4.7 The Hope Centre, working with other organisations and community groups conducted research with specific groups affected by poverty, capturing lived experience, providing the opportunity to feed into the strategy.
- 7.4.8 The engagement and activity that is driven through the Poverty Truth Commission and the work of Hope and partners has helped to define what poverty means in West Northamptonshire, develop the strategic objectives and commitments, and will continue to influence the actions that will underpin the strategy
- 7.4.9 The close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all the communities of West Northamptonshire to ensure those who experience poverty first-hand remain at the heart of what we do.

7.5 Climate Impact

- 7.5.1 There is no specific climate and environmental impact that may arise from implementing the strategy. However, there is potential for positive impact in developing initiatives to reduce fuel poverty.

7.6 Community Impact

- 7.6.1 The Strategy provides a framework to prevent people from falling into poverty as well as supporting those who are already struggling. Therefore, this Strategy will have an overall positive effect across all equality strands.

7.6.2 Delivery of the ambitions of the Strategy will make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of our local communities and tackle health inequalities. Equality and diversity considerations are an integral part of our approach to addressing poverty in West Northants. The 'effects' and 'causes' sections of the strategy provide a useful summary of the inequalities that we are tackling.

7.6.3 An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed.

8 Background Papers

None