

Appendices

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CABINET
REPORT**

Report Title	Cabinet's Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Food Poverty
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AGENDA STATUS:

PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	20 January 2020
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Customer and Communities
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Anna King
Ward(s)	Borough Wide

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To provide a response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-decision scrutiny report on Food Poverty

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet gives careful consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations detailed below:-

- 2.1.1 That a Working Group, owned by the Community and Engagement Team, is set up and tasked with analysing the gaps in foodbanks within Northampton and the Working Group works with Partners to seek solutions to increasing food provision within these areas.
- 2.1.2 That child poverty needs are included in any Strategy in relation to poverty, note that the process of developing an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy can of itself have wider impacts such as:

- Raising the profile of food poverty, especially with local decision-makers
- Developing a shared positive vision
- Creating a sense of empowerment for experts by experience
- Empowering diverse groups to raise their voices to call for food justice
- Ensuring the local council and other partners take ownership of agreed actions
- Sharing of good practice across local authority boundaries to support specific projects
- Raising the profile of food poverty, especially with local decision-makers
- Developing a shared positive vision
- Creating a sense of empowerment for experts by experience
- Empowering diverse groups to raise their voices to call for food justice
- Ensuring the local council and other partners take ownership of agreed actions
- Sharing of good practice across local authority boundaries to support specific projects

2.1.3 That Food Poverty Champions, who can identify the partners, who have the motivation and drive to bring all together lead on the production of an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy, which must include all demographics, ensuring that it is an all-inclusive Policy is investigated.

2.1.4 That with the move to the West Northamptonshire Authority, the way forward in relation to the production of an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy including the following adopted actions for local authorities as recommended by Sustain:

NB: The Scrutiny Panel updated some the actions recommended by Sustain so that they are more Northampton based

- Developing a food action plan to tackle food poverty
- Improving the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers
- Promoting breastfeeding via the Baby Friendly Initiative
- Promoting the need for children's centres
- Ensuring low-income families have adequate access to childcare
- Investing and developing children's access to food 365 days a year
- Becoming an accredited Living Wage employer and promoting the Living Wage
- Ensuring all residents have physical access to good food
- Supporting and enhancing meals reasonably priced and the provision of meals to vulnerable people
- Supporting financial advice services and providing crisis support

2.1.5 That a Working Group, led by the Community and Engagement Team, is set up and tasked with identifying areas where holiday hunger is a concern and to seek solutions to increasing food provision for children 365 days a year. In addition, the outcomes that have come out following the Marcus Ashford Scheme within Northampton are continued and built upon to ensure food provision is developed for all children 365 days a year.

- 2.1.6 That the Manager, HM Revenues and Customs is formally invited to visit food banks in Northampton, to work with customers and aid regarding budgeting and where further help can be obtained.
- 2.1.7 That the Universal Credit app. Is widely promoted.
- 2.1.8 That Officers are instructed to work with partners in generating more events such as summer festival where assistance in relation to food poverty can be highlighted.
- 2.1.9 That the Health Start Voucher Scheme is promoted.
- 2.1.10 That the promotion of food poverty is highlighted to allotment holders and shops regarding giving away excess produce as emergency food aid.
- 2.1.11 That it is recommended to Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) that it considers reviewing Tenancy Agreements to ensure that support is provided to older people to ensure that they are in receipt of the correct pension credits.
- 2.1.12 That the Northampton Community Forums are asked that a presentation is given to each Forum, in particular the Older People's Forum, that promotes the provision of pension credits and how this can be applied for.
- 2.1.13 That it is recommended to the West Northamptonshire Authority that a Grants Officer is engaged with the main role of investigating funding for crisis support and the Grants Officer works closely with all organisations in this respect.
- 2.1.14 That it is recommended to the West Northamptonshire Authority that West Northamptonshire becomes a living wage Authority and a sustainable food Authority.
- 2.1.15 That the West Northamptonshire Authority is asked to lobby for national campaigns and challenge national Policy on food poverty.
- 2.1.16 That a copy of this report is provided to the MPs within West Northamptonshire and the MPs are asked to respond to the recommendations, in particular, recommendation 2.1.14 & 2.1.15.
- 2.1.17 That Cabinet thanks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its detailed and robust report.

3. Issues and Choices

Report Background

3.1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to:

- Examine the extent to which individuals and families are experiencing food poverty, the range of contributing factors and

the changes that have been made to the way the Council and partners support residents during hardship.

- To review the impact and concentration of food poverty across the Borough of Northampton

3.1.2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 17 December 2020 to notify it of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel.

3.1.3 The scrutiny Panel decided that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities.

Background data, including:

- Presentation to set the scene: To identify the prevalence of the problem locally
- Relevant national and local background research papers
- Definitions – Food Poverty
- Causes of food poverty
- Best practice and successful initiatives in Northampton and comparable Local Authorities
- Relevant Council Policies and Strategies
- Relevant Statistics and relevant reports, including:
 - Poverty indicators
 - Demographics (national and Local)
 - UN report on food poverty
 - Institute of Fiscal Studies report on food poverty
 - Relevant Legislation, including:
 - Child Poverty Act 2010
 - Changes to Universal Credit
 - Introduction to benefits and the impact
 - Best practice external to Northampton
- Internal Expert advisors:
 - Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
 - Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
 - Head of Revenues and Benefits, LGSS
 - Cabinet Member of Community Safety, NBC
 - Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team
 - Cabinet Member for Finance, NBC
 - Section 151 Officer, NBC

3.2 Choices (Options)

- 3.2.1 Cabinet may choose to agree to any or all of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in full or part.
- 3.2.2 Overview and Scrutiny committee have provided Cabinet with a robust and detailed report to support its recommendations.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- There are no policy implications directly arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- Whilst there is no cost involved, the work will require officer's time to be taken into consideration.
- If recommendation 2.1.13 is agreed, budget would need to be found by West Northamptonshire Authority to fund this post.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 Equality and health implications will be taken full account of in the development of the proposed recommendation.
- 4.4.2 There will be an equalities impact assessment undertaken as an integral part of the process.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 A range of stakeholders were consulted with as part of the overview and scrutiny review.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 This will deliver against our objective within the Corporate plan:
- Support Vulnerable people to achieve their full potential.

5. Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Report – Food Poverty September 2020.

Marion Goodman
Director of Customers and Communities