



## **Anti-Poverty Strategy**

### **Briefing note for the Equalities Panel, 17 November 2014**

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#### **1.0 Background**

1.1 Cambridge City Council has developed a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy, which is attached for at Appendix B information and comment by Panel members. The aim of the strategy is to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in Cambridge who are currently experiencing poverty, but also to alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures. The strategy will bring greater focus and coordination to the Council's existing efforts to address poverty, while identifying areas where the Council can have even greater impact.

1.2 The strategy identifies the key issues relating to poverty in Cambridge, based on a review of available empirical evidence, and initial consultation with stakeholders. It also identifies 7 objectives for City Council activity to address poverty, and some detailed actions that City Council services will undertake during 2014/15 and 2015/16 to address the key issues. These include:

- Securing accreditation for the City Council as a Living Wage employer from the Living Wage Foundation.
- Appointing a Living Wage Campaign Officer to promote Living Wage accreditation among businesses and other organisations in Cambridge, such as Colleges and Universities.
- Exploring how the Council can further support and promote the services offered by credit unions in Cambridge
- A Water and Energy Costs Anti-Poverty Scheme, which will assist low income households in Cambridge to review their water costs and take up the opportunities, where available, from water companies to reduce bills.
- Additional promotion of energy efficiency measures to residents in low income areas of the City, and extra promotion in Cambridge of the County-wide collective energy-switching scheme, which aims to secure cheaper energy deals for local residents.
- An apprenticeship programme, which will increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities for young people in City Council services.

1.3 While the City Council can have a direct impact on poverty through the type of initiatives identified in the draft Strategy, we recognise that much more can be achieved through working in partnership with other organisations. Examples of the Council's current engagement in partnerships and joint-working arrangements which have an impact on poverty include:

- Working with a wide range of partners to address financial inclusion issues and respond to the effects of national welfare reforms through groups such as Cambridge and Peterborough Financial Capabilities Forum, the DWP Benefit Forum, and the Cambridgeshire Welfare Reform Strategy Group.
- Working with partners on the delivery of the Cambridgeshire Child Poverty Strategy.
- Working with providers of services to young people through the Children and Young People's Area Partnership.
- Providing support for older people in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and local housing associations.
- Providing move-on accommodation for adults recovering from mental ill health in conjunction with the County Council and Metropolitan Housing Group.
- Working with GPs and other partners through the Cambridge Local Health Partnership and influencing the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

1.4 The draft strategy includes further actions which will be delivered through joint-working, but over the course of the development of the anti-poverty strategy, we will identify more opportunities to work in partnership with external organisations from the public, voluntary and private sectors.

## **2.0 Consultation on the Anti-Poverty Strategy**

2.1 During July and August 2014, 15 face-to-face meetings were held with representatives of local organisations that are working to address different aspects of poverty in the city. A stakeholder workshop was also held on 5 September 2014, which brought together key stakeholders to consider the key issues in Cambridge, and identify interventions which have been successful, both in Cambridge and in other towns and cities. A list of organisations engaged as part of this initial consultation process is provided at Appendix A.

2.2 City Council officers will carry out full public consultation on the draft strategy from 27 October 2014 to 16 January 2015. A final draft of the strategy will then be brought to the City Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on 23 March 2015 for approval by the Executive Councillor. During the public consultation period the Council will consult with a wider range of partner organisations and will actively seek the views of local residents.

2.3 The draft strategy and a questionnaire survey were published on the City Council's website. The survey was publicised via the Council's Twitter account, a media release and other corporate communications channels, and will be sent directly to relevant partner organisations. In addition to this, officers will also engage in the following face-to-face consultation activities:

- Workshops with voluntary and community organisations, local businesses, Cambridge University and Anglia Ruskin University, and faith groups.
- Engagement with vulnerable residents via local organisations and agencies that they trust.

### **3.0 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached for information at Appendix C. This EqIA is very much a live document, and will be updated at each key stage of the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- 3.2 Although we have carried out initial consultation with stakeholders to inform the development of the draft strategy, time constraints have prevented us from consulting all relevant voluntary and community groups to date. The EqIA highlights particular equality groups (e.g. women, older people, young people, disabled people) where there is a need to engage with voluntary and community groups to build the evidence base and further understand how they are affected by poverty. As part of the current public consultation, officers will be engaging with groups such as Cambridge Women's Aid, Women's Resource Centre, Disability Cambridgeshire, mental health charities (e.g. Lifecraft, the Richmond Fellowship, Mind), Age UK, Centre 33, and Romsey Mill.

### **4.0 Questions for the Equalities Panel**

- 4.1 Members of the Panel are asked to consider the following questions:
- Has the City Council understood the nature and impact of poverty in the city correctly?
  - Does the Anti-Poverty Strategy identify objectives and actions that will help alleviate poverty in the city?
  - Can the Panel advise on how poverty impacts on particular equality groups e.g. women, older people, young people, disabled people, BAME residents? Is there any additional research or evidence that the Strategy could draw on to demonstrate this?
  - Is the consultation approach outlined at 2.0 inclusive? Does the Panel have any recommendations about how officers should engage with particular equality groups?
  - Do members of the Panel have any comments on the EqIA and the issues raised in it?

## Appendix A - Organisations consulted to date

|                                                                          |
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| Abbey People Neighbourhood Action Group                                  |
| Barnwell Baptist Church                                                  |
| Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA)                         |
| Cambridge City Foodbank                                                  |
| Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service                                  |
| Cambridge Credit Union                                                   |
| Cambridge Cyrenians                                                      |
| Cambridgeshire County Council                                            |
| Cambridgeshire Ethnic Community Forum                                    |
| Cambridgeshire Police                                                    |
| CamHealth – GPs from East Barnwell Health Centre and Arbury Road Surgery |
| CHS Group                                                                |
| Citizen Advice Bureau                                                    |
| Future Business                                                          |
| Guidance Employment and Training (GET) Group                             |
| Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership                                   |
| Rainbow Savers Credit Union                                              |
| University of Cambridge                                                  |
| Winter Comfort                                                           |