

	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny 1 December 2020
	Report from the Assistant Chief Executive
A Fairer Future Ending Poverty in Brent - Delivery Plans	

Wards Affected:	All
Open or Partly Exempt	Open
No of Appendices	4 Appendices 1. Delivery Plan Workstream One – Housing 2. Delivery Plan Workstream Two – Economy and Jobs 3. Delivery Plan Workstream Three – Financial Inclusion and Welfare 4. Delivery Plan Workstream Four – Overview Recommendations
Background Papers	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 Brent's Poverty Commission's final report was presented to Cabinet on 7 September. This report presents to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny the delivery plans to take forward implementation of the Poverty Commission recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the delivery plans attached as Appendices 1-4.
- 2.2 To consider the delivery plans and make recommendations for consideration at Cabinet, as appropriate.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Brent's Poverty Commission was established in January 2020. The Poverty Commission was commissioned by the Council's Cabinet member for Housing and Welfare Reform, Cllr Eleanor Southwood. It was independently chaired by Lord Best OBE.
- 3.2 The Commission included local, regional and national stakeholders and experts in their fields. Although established by the Council, the Commission itself was fully independent and non-party political. The work of the Chair and Commissioners focused on four work streams, tackling financial exclusion, housing, economy and jobs and local welfare. The Commission found that these issues are frequently inter-related and that those in poverty often face challenges across these areas.
- 3.3 The report and recommendations were presented to Cabinet on 7 September where all of the recommendations were accepted. Cabinet also agreed the development of delivery plans for implementation of the recommendations.
- 3.4 The delivery plans are set out under four workstreams:
 - **Workstream One** – Housing (9 Recommendations)
 - **Workstream Two** - Economy and Jobs (15 Recommendations)
 - **Workstream Three** - Financial Inclusion and Local Welfare (12 Recommendations)
 - **Workstream Four** - Overview Recommendations (6 Recommendations)

Each delivery plan details the financial implications, update and key milestones as well as lead directorate/s responsible for implementation of the

recommendations. These have been developed with colleagues across the council. The update/key milestones section outlines progress to date on each recommendation as well as future plans for delivery including timescales.

3.5 The pandemic has highlighted the impacts poverty has on people's lives. It has also shown how easy it is for events to put people into poverty. The immediate and longer-term impacts of the pandemic and future challenges to the national and local economies reinforce the importance of the council prioritising actions and resources on those areas that are most important for the people of Brent. Both in meeting the current situation and ensuring the recovery does not leave anyone behind, tackling poverty is a key priority for the council. Actions within the delivery plans focus on recovery.

3.6 As part of the delivery plan process and in response to recommendation F of workstream four (overview recommendations) a consultative group has been brought together with representation from elected members, local, regional and community organisations. The composition of the group is:

- Cllr Kabir
- Chris Murray – Young Brent Foundation
- Jacqueline Carr – Citizens Advice Brent
- Atara Fridler – Crisis
- Theresa McGrady – Step Up Hub
- Claudia Sumner – Child Poverty Action Group
- Paul Hunter – Smith Institute
- Greg Beales - Shelter

The consultative group members represent housing, economy and jobs, financial inclusion and welfare – the workstreams of the Commission.

3.7 If the issues of key importance to addressing poverty in Brent, its neighbourhoods and communities are to be tackled, it will be vital to draw on the knowledge, perspectives, resources and experience of the range of individuals and organisations active in the field to:

- Provide advice in ways that can make a real contribution to addressing poverty.
- Help ensure the voices of those experiencing poverty are heard – in particular, helping the Council use its engagement channels to gain the perspectives of those in poverty or using relevant council services.
- Advise on areas related to the Commission’s findings which are not a specific recommendation such as period poverty.
- Ensure the Council is informed of the latest research and thinking in the field at local, regional and national levels, sharing best practice and commissioning research into issues relevant to poverty in Brent.
- Provide a forum to discuss issues of common concern and a means of raising these with decision-makers in the council and beyond.
- Advise on delivery and progress in delivering the Poverty Commission’s recommendations
- Support the Council’s longer-term commitment to tackling poverty by keeping the Commission’s recommendations under review and adapting or supplementing them in the light of experience.

It will be essential to confirm the baseline for the key activities and what success looks like. The consultative group will play a key role in advising on outcome measures in conjunction with the specific service areas.

3.8 The Consultative group seeks to address all of the above (identified in para 3.6) and will meet three times a year, advising on progress, promoting collaboration and supporting the council in the successful delivery of the recommendations. It will oversee all of the workstreams and will provide an update from its meetings to the Chief Executive and Lead Member on a regular basis.

3.9 **Working principles for the Group**

It will:

- Encourage joint working across sectoral, organisational and service boundaries to tackle the complex, multi-faceted and inter-related issues in tackling poverty.
- Draw on group members' engagement channels to supplement the Council's own outreach by sharing feedback on the "lived experience" of poverty, identify approaches that users find particularly effective (and the opposite) and to identify and illustrate positive changes have been made based on the delivery plan.
- Enable mutual learning, based on effective evaluation.
- Emphasise practical steps that should be taken to address poverty in Brent.

3.10 It is proposed that Cabinet will monitor the implementation of the delivery plans by receiving regular updates. The Council's Scrutiny Committees will also receive an update on progress. The delivery plans underpin the vision and priorities of the Borough Plan.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The financial implications for each of the recommendations is contained within the delivery plan. The majority of actions are able to be contained within current resources. Where additional financial implications are identified, further work will need to be done to consider how to fund these activities.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report at this stage, however, legal advice will be sought in respect of each recommendation contained within the delivery plans.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 Brent is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion; the council is determined to be an exemplar of good practice in equality, diversity and human rights and

it is our policy to treat everyone fairly and with respect. We aim to ensure that all our current and future residents, staff and stakeholders are treated fairly and receive appropriate, accessible services, and fair and equal opportunities.

- 6.2 This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision-making processes and that our policies are fully compliant with the duties placed on us as a public sector body by the Equality Act 2010. Our Equality Analyses (EAs) ensure that we follow through on our commitment to equality and they provide a method for clearly demonstrating the necessary legal compliance.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 replaced the pre-existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The legislation covers the exercise of public functions, employment and work, goods and services, premises, associations, transport and education. The act prohibits victimisation and harassment, and all of the following forms of discrimination: direct; indirect; by association; by perception; or discrimination arising from disability. When considering the Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
- 6.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

6.5 The report and delivery plans will support Brent Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties. Equality Impact Assessments will be completed as projects are progressed. Those already completed will be reviewed as projects move through the implementation stage.

7.0 Any Other Implications (HR, Property etc. - if necessary)

7.1 There are no other implications.

8.0 Proposed Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

8.1 The Lead Member commissioned the work of the Poverty Commission and has been consulted throughout the process including in the development of the delivery plan. Ward Members were part of the Commission and feedback from stakeholders form part of the Commission's findings. Ward Members are represented on the consultative group (recommendation F – workstream four overview recommendations).

Report sign off:

Shazia Hussain

Assistant Chief Executive