

Report of Director of Communities and Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 19 December 2018

Subject: Tackling Poverty and Inequality

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Tackling poverty and inequality has been a constant theme in council and city objectives for some time, but has come into sharper focus over recent years as evidence has increasingly confirmed the stubborn nature of inequality across the city. National policy including on issues such as austerity and Brexit has created a more difficult environment in which to reduce poverty and inequalities, but nevertheless a significant amount of high quality work is ongoing in Leeds to both reduce poverty and mitigate its impacts on people's lives.
2. The Best Council Plan and wider strategic framework within which the council works is well established to drive forward work to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities and this framework has continued to develop as refreshed priorities have been set, most notably around work in the city's priority neighbourhoods and on child poverty which remains a particular focus for the council as we seek to instigate a generational shift away from deprivation.
3. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to further strengthen the council's cross-cutting approach to this agenda by continually improving areas such as locality working, a focus on key areas and our governance structures. Furthermore, additional value could be realised by re-emphasising the importance of ensuring work is joined up across the council and partners and by providing greater opportunities for elected members to set policy direction and specific priorities – for example by establishing a strengthened role for the Health and Wellbeing Board and the proposed Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership on this agenda.

4. The report considers the role of Executive Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the proposed Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership in achieving these aims. It proposes a range of further work to be undertaken and brought back to Executive Board over the next twelve months.

Recommendations

Executive Board are requested to:

- Note the strategic framework in place to tackle poverty and inequality across the city and the work being undertaken by the council and its partners in the key areas of activity.
- Agree suggested areas for further work noted in 3.4.9 and ask the relevant Director to bring forward reports to Executive Board in the next twelve months.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the council's strategic approach to tackling poverty in Leeds, which forms a key part of achieving the council's vision and aligned priorities for a strong economy and compassionate city, as set out in the Best Council Plan. It builds upon the launch of the Inclusive Growth Strategy earlier this year and reflects the approach being taken towards priority neighbourhoods in the city. The report has clear links throughout to other related reports also on the December Executive Board agenda, particularly the *Best Council Plan Refresh 2019/20* paper and the *Inclusive Growth Strategy: Delivery* paper. It also has clear links to the Health and Wellbeing strategy and the most recent annual report.
- 1.2 The report asks Executive Board to endorse an approach to tackling poverty which places inclusive growth and the health and wellbeing of citizens at its centre. It also proposes that a series of further reports are brought forward to provide a more detailed analysis, on an issue-by-issue basis, of the state of play in Leeds and the success of the council's work to reduce poverty and mitigate its impacts.
- 1.3 Within this, the report outlines a number of areas in which the council's cross-cutting approach to tackling poverty could be further strengthened to maximise the positive impact that can be delivered with the resources available.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The causes of poverty are complex and stem from a range of issues on both an individual and a societal level. Childhood circumstances continue to have a major impact on the likelihood of deprivation in adulthood, which can be further complicated by factors including health, wellbeing, housing and skill levels, amongst others. At a macro level, policy decisions at both a national and local level are a significant driver in the growth or reduction in the rate of poverty and in recent years these factors have been exacerbated even further.
- 2.2 The onset of austerity over the last decade has seen an increase in in-work poverty, and in the level of poverty experienced by particular groups within society. Most notably the disproportionate impact of austerity on women has been widely acknowledged. In the UK there are around 5.1million women in poverty (20%), compared to 4.4million men (18%)¹. When it comes to public spending cuts, women are disproportionately affected as on average they use more public services and are the majority of welfare benefit recipients, they make up the majority of the public-sector labour force, and they are more likely to have to make up for services which are no longer provided by, for example, increasing the amount of unpaid care work they undertake². Additionally, women are also the part of the labour force most often on low pay.
- 2.3 When looking at the cumulative impact on UK households by 2022 of all tax, social security and public spending policies carried out since 2010, the Equality and Human Right Commission (EHRC) found that women will lose on average £940 from the reforms, compared with a loss on £460 on average for men. Women lose more than men at every income level³.

¹ Households below average income, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

² The impact of austerity on women in the UK, Women's Budget Group

³ Impact of tax and welfare reforms between 2010 and 2017, Equality and Human Rights Commission, November 2017

- 2.4 The EHRC also found that other minority groups will also be affected more severely. Ethnic minority households will lose more than white households – the average loss for black families is 5% of income, more than double than for white families. Single parents will lose around 15% of their net income, and families with disabled children will lose an average of £3,300 per year.
- 2.5 The Best Council Plan (BCP) 2018-21 sets out our ambition for Leeds to be the best city in the UK, a city that is “...compassionate and caring with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities...” The BCP ambition and priorities reflect our desire to enable all our residents to realise their full potential and maximise their contribution to their communities. The Best Council Plan Refresh for 2019/20 appears later on the Executive Board agenda.
- 2.6 Tackling poverty and inequality has been a constant theme in council (and city) objectives, it has come into sharper focus over the last few years as evidence increasingly confirms the stubborn nature of inequality across the city and the knock-on impact on the life chances of our most disadvantaged residents. This comes despite a relatively strong city economy over the last two decades. Brexit has perhaps raised the profile of this challenge even further with the prevailing common view that the referendum vote exposed for all to see the widening gap between those who have benefited from economic growth, driven by globalisation and advances in technology, and those who have been left behind. As a city in which almost fifty per cent of people voted both ‘remain’ and ‘leave’, few places will display this economic divide as clearly as Leeds.
- 2.7 Whilst the council’s desire to drive improvement in the lives of those not benefitting from the city’s economic success is clear, it is important to recognise the scope of what is possible and the two differing but complementary and interlinked approaches that this reality suggests are needed. Broadly, when considering how to tackle poverty strategically there are two possible approaches. First, reducing the number of people who live in poverty, and second, mitigating the negative impacts that living in poverty is having on people’s lives. While the first approach is clearly the most desirable, it presents a number of very significant obstacles for the council given the causes of poverty experienced by citizens in Leeds.
- 2.8 The increasing inequality in the city over recent years has been driven largely by changes that have taken place at an international and national level. Prolonged austerity has heightened the challenge, particularly with the significant cuts to local government budgets, which in turn often have had the greatest impact on those localities, communities and individuals facing the greatest challenges. In addition welfare reform which has seen working-age benefits frozen, child benefit curtailed and financial penalties for additional bedrooms has again affected those in the greatest need the most. These changes have caused a fundamental downward shift in the incomes of those in the most deprived communities while simultaneously inhibiting the council and wider public sector’s ability to fill the void with proactive, high quality public services and support. It is in this context that the way in which the council meets its headline ambition to tackle poverty and reduce inequality must be considered.
- 2.9 *Economic context and headline ambitions for Leeds***
- 2.10 In headline economic terms, Leeds has relatively strong GVA per head and higher rates of working age people in employment than nationally. However, despite this

strong performance there is increasing evidence that the benefits of economic growth are unequally distributed. This manifests itself in a number of ways⁴:

- Over 170,000 people in Leeds are estimated to be in relative poverty after housing costs, the wider Leeds city-region is the fourth largest concentration of poverty in England. In 2015, 19.6 per cent of children under-16 in Leeds were estimated to live in poverty (c28,000 children)⁵;
- A changing labour market, where a ‘hollowing-out’ of skilled and semi-skilled occupations, traditionally in the manufacturing sector but increasingly across a wider range of sectors, has been accompanied with growth in both high skilled/high valued jobs and lower skilled/lower income, ‘flexible’ jobs;
- Linked to the growth in low skilled jobs, but also welfare reforms, is a rise in labour market participation which, rather than a route out of poverty, has resulted in a growth of in-work poverty – 70 per cent of families claiming tax credits are in work in Leeds;
- Certain ‘communities of interest’ are particularly disadvantaged, for example only 60 per cent of disabled people are in employment compared to almost 80 per cent of non-disabled people;
- In many cases the trend is a negative one. Data from the Leeds Food Aid Network suggests that almost 27,000 people accessed a foodbank during the 2016/17 period, an increase of almost 7 per cent on the previous year.

- 2.11 The issues above, alongside the fact that recent analysis undertaken as part of the 2018 Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) – presented in the Best Council Plan (BCP) report also on December’s Executive Board agenda - indicates there has been some intensification of the concentration of our most deprived and least deprived neighbourhoods, mean it is timely to review and re-articulate the detail of the council’s ambition for poverty improvement.
- 2.12 Where possible the council should seek to reduce the number of people living in poverty, and this remains the overall ambition for the local authority. Consistent with this ambition, this measure will likely be assessed in terms of delivering relative improvement. For example through using Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data – a UK Government qualitative study of deprived areas in England - ensuring that communities in the 3% most deprived according to the data are not allowed to slip backwards into the 1% most deprived, and instead looking to move communities upwards on the IMD scales to reduce the level of deprivation those people and families are living in. Within this the council should be seeking to achieve greater reductions in poverty than comparable cities.
- 2.13 When significantly reducing the number of people living in poverty is realistically not possible as a result of the weight of influence that national policy interventions are having, the council should seek to mitigate the impacts of living in poverty to ensure the best outcomes possible in the circumstances for individuals, families and communities.
- 2.14 Detailed work is already ongoing to influence improvements of this nature through the priority neighbourhoods programme with a focus on the six most deprived communities in Leeds. While this intense focus on those most in need is intended to relieve stubborn deprivation, it is important to recognise that there are growing instances of poverty and inequality in every ward and so the principles and

⁴ Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) 2018, Leeds City Council

⁵ HMRC Children in low-income families, March 2018

ambitions set out above should apply to all communities and people of all ages right across the city.

3. Main issues

3.1 *Current strategic framework*

- 3.1.1 Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities have been important strategic themes for the council over a number of years, set out annually in the Best Council Plan. Throughout this time a well-developed strategic framework has been established to ensure the council's headline ambitions are captured within the breadth of the local authority's work. This framework continues to be enhanced through new and refreshed initiatives such as neighbourhood priority areas, the child poverty impact board and the proposal to disband the Sustainable Economy and Culture Board to create a new Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership (detailed in the 'Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy – Delivery' paper also on December Executive Board agenda).
- 3.1.2 At the core of the strategic framework is the most recent Best Council Plan (BCP) which is based on seven city priorities all of which have a clear link to this shared vision on tackling poverty: inclusive growth; health and wellbeing; child-friendly city, safe and strong communities; housing; 21st century infrastructure; and culture.
- 3.1.3 **Inclusive growth** – the new strategy aims to promote a productive and resilient economy, in which all people and places contribute to and benefit from economic growth, by realising their full potential. The strategy sets out 12 ideas not only to address labour market inequalities by tackling low pay, in-work progression, improving skills and widening employment opportunities, but also looks to support people to live healthy and active lives, through good housing, social values, green and inclusive transport infrastructure and regenerated neighbourhoods. It recognises, as cited in the delivery model also being discussed at December Executive Board, that almost 40% of the productivity gap across Core Cities like Leeds is due to high levels of deprivation, and because too many people are not properly engaged in the labour market.
- 3.1.4 **Health and wellbeing** - the strategy provides a vision for Leeds as a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest. The strategy makes explicit links to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing – a healthy environment with affordable, high quality housing, accessible green space and opportunities for active lifestyles; a strong local economy driving sustainable economic growth for all people; strong, engaged and well-connected communities; and a well-educated and skilled workforce.
- 3.1.5 **Child-friendly city** –The Children and Young People's Plan aims to improve outcomes for all our children whilst recognising the need for outcomes to improve faster for children and young people from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds. Leeds has an ambition to become a child friendly city, as we believe that every child and young person deserves equitable opportunities, a happy childhood and an optimistic future. We want all of our teachers, social workers and staff to have high expectations for all of our children. We want our children and young people supported and encouraged to achieve educational outcomes that exceed their expectations. We want all children and young people to be in environments both inside and outside the home that are safe, happy and child friendly. Thriving is Leeds' new approach to mitigating the impact of poverty, as experiencing child poverty can have a catastrophic impact on a wide range of outcomes. Through our intention to poverty proof our practice, we are reframing the rhetoric around poverty

to see how we can make difference to the lives of people who live in precarious circumstances. Our approach aims to achieve this through working with children, young people, parents, communities, council directorates, education, universities, private, third and public sector organisations and other partners to break down barriers and provide the opportunities, activities and pathways that empower our young people to thrive.

3.1.6 **Safe and strong communities** – the approach to tackling poverty has been built around four key propositions:

- *helping people out of financial hardship* - reducing dependency on benefits, improving access to affordable credit, reducing debt and increasing financial resilience;
- *providing integrated and accessible services and pathways* - developing integrated pathways of support and local partnerships between council-led services and other relevant organisations;
- *helping people into work* – especially those who are furthest away from employment;
- *being responsive to the needs of local communities* - establishing a voice for local communities within the democratic process.

3.1.7 **Housing** – tackling inequality is implicit, rather than explicit in the current Housing Strategy, with affordable housing growth, improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes (particularly in the private-rented sector), minimising homelessness, tackling fuel poverty, all relevant.

3.1.8 **21st century infrastructure** – again tackling inequalities is implicit in our infrastructure priorities, rather than explicit. An element of our transport strategy is ensuring connected neighbourhoods, ensuring sustainable travel choices to all residents, including the third of Leeds households who have no car. Our digital inclusion programme is a vital element of our 100% Digital vision, improving digital skills and access to technology can assist positive health and wellbeing outcomes, improve financial capability and employment prospects and reduce social isolation.

3.1.9 **Culture** – the Leeds Culture Strategy confirms the role culture can play in promoting confidence, respect and cohesion in our most deprived communities. It highlights the role of culture in encouraging creativity in school, informal learning, volunteering and employment.

3.1.10 Alongside these guiding priorities for the city, how the council conducts its day-to-day business also presents significant opportunities to promote inclusive growth and tackle inequalities. The council has sought to add value and pursue equitable goals, not only down individual policy routes, but also on a broader front in terms of partnership and delivery models. There are a number of shared themes which underpin these approaches:

- **Social value** – we have adopted a Social Value Charter which sets out guiding principles that seek to maximise the positive impact of the full range of our activities. In simple term, ensuring our relationships, influence and resources seek where possible to support local, small businesses, promote local employment opportunities and encourage representative and equitable employment practices.
- **Anchor Institutions** – the concept of anchor institutions further embeds social value, based on the pivotal role large organisations play in any given

locality and the vested interest they have in the success of their places. We are aiming to further embed our role as an anchor, but also to work closely with our other anchor institutions across the city.

- **Place Leadership** – advocating, demonstrating and evidencing inclusive growth is a key role. How we work with our neighbours and partners, our input into the work of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and the Core Cities network, and our relationships with government all provide opportunities to influence policy and resource allocation.
- **Locality Working** - finally, perhaps the most notable recent initiative aimed at improving outcomes across the city, particularly for our most deprived and challenging communities is locality working. This approach seeks to adopt new flexible, collaborative working, focused on our most deprived communities. At its heart is more joined up, effective service provision, with key services - housing, communities, children's, adult social care - adopting a new working model with a very clear locality focus.

3.2 Existing arrangements and governance

- 3.2.1 Within the cross-council strategic framework, some services have developed their own structures through which work is co-ordinated. The most notable examples of this focus around the council's priority neighbourhoods and on child poverty. Both of these issues merit the specific, targeted initiatives that are in place for clear reasons, as outlined below.
- 3.2.2 The priority neighbourhoods approach has the council's locality working vision at its heart. It is predicated on the view that working within a smaller spatial geography creates better opportunities to develop more robust processes for understanding the needs and challenges of communities in Leeds which are disproportionately affected by poverty. Working at this level, it is believed, will lead to improved problem solving, better integration and will support wider changes across service delivery models in the city to maximise the impact of both the council's and relevant partners' resources.
- 3.2.3 Six neighbourhoods were initially identified based on their performance in the most recent IMD index, and each of them is at a different stage of development. To support the work a set of governance and operational arrangements have been introduced which bring together elected members, council service, local partners and communities. Community Committees are overseeing the local work programme and ensuring it is integrated into wider community activity; the Neighbourhood Improvement Board holds strategic oversight and responsibility for ensuring measurable improvement; and a Core Team based in each neighbourhood brings together those mentioned above to deliver the activity and develop neighbourhood improvement plans.
- 3.2.4 Similarly the Children and Families directorate have recently established a new strategy and mechanisms, linking in with the priority neighbourhoods work outlined above, to measure and improve the impact of work to address child poverty in the city, about which Executive Board received a report in November 2018. The rationale for establishing specific and targeted initiatives around child poverty are clear – and were strongly influenced by the recent scrutiny enquiry into this issue. In order to deliver real and lasting reductions in the rate of poverty in Leeds it is crucial that a generational shift is achieved. So many of the factors which affect economic circumstances later in life have their roots in childhood and in education. For Leeds ensuring that children and young people are given the best possible start is crucial to delivering longer term improvements in the rate of poverty in the city. It is for that

reason that the council has embraced a particular priority around tackling child poverty which includes actions such as the prioritisation of clusters, with an expectation that wider work on this agenda will always take particular account of the impact on children and young people.

3.2.5 Through 'Thriving', the child poverty strategy brought to Executive Board in November 2018, the intention is to create a partnership approach to find and implement research-led interventions, integrating the voice of the child with the voices of parents and professionals. The approach will link in with multiple areas of existing work across the council which are demonstrating real impact, such as the Holiday Hunger campaign led by Communities and Environment, with a view to more accurately monitoring the effectiveness of interventions in mitigating the negative outcomes of living in poverty on children in Leeds – the duty for which the Director of Children and Families has constitutional responsibility as established by a recent scrutiny enquiry.

3.2.6 This refreshed approach will be overseen by the Child Poverty Impact Board. The board will comprise a membership from across the city region and will assess and oversee the interventions carried out by the impact workstreams, creating policy and strategic direction accordingly. The six impact workstreams will involve a wide range of partners coming together to develop, create and evaluate low-cost, high-impact projects that improve the lives and experiences of children and young people who live in poverty. The six areas of focus included are:

- Best start for health and wellbeing
- Employment and pathways
- Readiness for learning and school age education
- Housing and provision
- Empowering families and safeguarding
- Financial health and inclusion

3.3 Ongoing work to tackle poverty in Leeds

3.3.1 There is a broad range of work being undertaken by the council and its partners in the city to mitigate the impacts of poverty and inequalities, aligned to the priorities set out above. Some of the best examples occur where we have a more detailed understanding of the level and nature of need and where the citizen is actively engaged in interventions, working with the council and other agencies to improve outcomes.

3.3.2 These examples of best practice, some of which are outlined below, provide the council with a valuable insight into the sort of activity which is making a real difference in communities. Through further analysis and investigation there is an opportunity to focus even more strongly on activity which is making the most difference, taking the lessons learned and applying them to other areas of service provision in the city.

3.3.3 **Quality advice services** (Safe and strong communities)

3.3.4 Our research on the economic impact of financial inclusion initiatives showed that amongst Leeds residents who have received advice and support from Leeds Credit Union or debt and welfare advice agencies, 67% said they had reduced stress and worry as a result and 41% said their health had improved. The council has recognised the importance of providing quality, accessible advice to residents who

may have concerns about their personal finances and has since 2014 commissioned Citizens Advice Leeds to deliver an advice contract within the city⁶.

3.3.5 Over the first three years of the contract the target client base increased by 61% but despite funding reductions the number of unique clients assisted rose by 72%, far exceeding the contract's targets. The changes made in this model of delivery are clearly meeting a need within the Leeds population and more residents are now receiving the advice and support they need⁷.

3.3.6 **Targeted early intervention for families** (Child Friendly City)

3.3.7 The council has been able to consistently deliver improved outcomes over recent years and targeted and early help services have continued to grow over the last 12 months, in particular with the development of Restorative Early Support (RES) Teams and the introduction of the Leeds Practice Model. This work is a key element of the £9.6m Innovations and Partners in Practice funding received from government – the largest award in the country and a strong sign of support for our work. RES teams have been rolled out into the highest needs clusters in the city and are helping to increase the speed and access to advice and support for families.

3.3.8 Alongside this, the council continues to have significant success with the Families First approach which remains an important part of whole system reform of child welfare in Leeds. The approach continues to improve outcomes for children and families whilst reducing demand for specialist services. Whilst demand for social work services nationally has been rising sharply since 2011, social work referrals in Leeds have reduced by 5%, the proportion of children in need has reduced by 9%, the number of children with child protection plans has reduced by nearly 50%, and the proportion of children looked after has reduced by 20%.

3.3.9 **Preventing homelessness** (Housing)

3.3.10 Leeds City Council has a strong track record on preventing homelessness. An early and proactive commitment was made in the city to a 'Housing First' approach which sees accommodation provided as a right, rather than as a reward for someone in need overcoming other challenges they may be facing. The approach avoids the need for those experiencing homelessness to go into temporary supported accommodation before they are permanently rehoused, and they get support from the council through the bidding process. Leeds Housing Options helps 15,000 people per year and in part as a result of this approach, the current homeless prevention rate for the service is 93%.

3.3.11 This activity builds upon the council's already strong record, which has seen nobody placed into bed and breakfast accommodation for a number of years. Leeds is also the highest performing Core City in terms of the level of use of temporary accommodation. A recent report from the charity Shelter noted that in Leeds just 1 in every 8,794 people is in temporary accommodation or rough sleeping. Among comparative cities, the rate is 1 in every 73 people in Birmingham and 1 in every 135 people in Manchester. In Yorkshire and the Humber, only Hambleton has a lower rate than Leeds and nationally 301 authorities have a worst record than Leeds.⁸

⁶ Economic impact and regeneration in city economies – The case for Leeds (Dayson et al, University of Salford, 2009)

⁷ Leeds Advice Contract, Services Report 2016/17, Leeds City Council

⁸ Homelessness in Great Britain – The numbers behind the story (Shelter, November 2018)

3.3.12 **Tackling low pay** (Inclusive growth)

3.3.13 Despite our economic success low pay is an increasing problem which is entrenching poverty and deprivation in the city, seeing people caught in a trap of low pay and low skills with limited opportunities for career progression.

3.3.14 The Council has played a leading role in the campaign to improve rates of pay in Leeds. As an employer, we pay all of our staff a minimum of £8.75/hour – a real living wage. As an influencer in the city we have championed the importance of good pay and encouraged our partners in the public and private sectors to take action themselves through signing up to and promoting the West Yorkshire Living Wage Charter and Unison's Ethical Care Charter. In our most recent work developing our network of anchor institutions, providing constructive challenge on pay and conditions, including wages, pensions and poverty-proofed HR policies is central to the ambition that we share.

3.3.15 **Promoting digital inclusion** (21st century infrastructure)

3.3.16 The relationship between poverty and digital inclusion is double-edged. Poverty remains a significant barrier to internet connectivity at a time when many vital public services, especially in areas such as welfare, are moving to 'digital by default'. At the same time those who are digitally engaged have more and greater chances to reduce poverty through awareness and access to employment opportunities, knowledge and other financial benefits. The council has recognised the imperative that residents are supported to develop the skills needed to enable them to effectively participate in a digital economy and society.

3.3.17 There are currently about 90,000 adults in Leeds who are offline and/or lack basic digital skills and these people are also more likely to be disabled, unemployed, on a low income or have low literacy and numeracy levels. The council is currently leading a diverse programme of activity which will engage 10,000 people in digital inclusion and provide digital skills training to 3,000 people by the end of March 2019. As part of this the council is enhancing the city's digital inclusion network by recruiting community venues to the UK Online Centres network and recruiting and training digital champions to support and advocate for the work. Leeds Libraries have also rolled out a tablet lending scheme which lends to organisations as well as individuals, allowing smaller organisations and charities to see the benefits for themselves and their clients before investing in their own technology.

3.3.18 **Social prescribing** (Health and wellbeing)

3.3.19 The ability of traditional services to be more adaptable is an important element of the city developing the tools it needs to mitigate the impacts of poverty and inequality. In line with this the city's previous three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) did each run social prescribing pilot schemes and this work has continued within the current Leeds CCG. Social prescribing has been shown through numerous studies to realise improvements for patients in emotional and mental wellbeing, general wellbeing and levels of depression and anxiety, and is a useful alternative to traditional care pathways.

3.3.20 Each of the pilot schemes proved a success and has embedded social prescribing as a valuable method for mitigating some of the most common issues which can be both causes and effects of poverty or deprivation. For example, the scheme in Leeds South and East CCG resulted in:

- 77.5% of participants improving their overall wellbeing score from baseline to post stage.

- 59.7% of participants improving their health rating score from baseline to post stage.
- 50.7% of participants improving their 'social networks' score from baseline to post stage.
- The rate of participants describing their mental state as severely or extremely anxious or depressed decreased from 40% to 22.7%.
- The percentage of participants unable to do their usual activities, or having severe problems doing so decreased from 23.2% to 13.9%.

3.3.21 **Valuing diversity and culture** (Culture)

3.3.22 Leeds is a diverse city with more than 170 different languages being spoken in communities. Culture has a central role to play in building respect, cohesion and coexistence between and within communities and individuals. Culture can improve the quality of life for people within the city and as such we have a vision that everyone, whatever their background, should be supported to be creative through school, informal learning, training, volunteering and employment.

3.3.23 There are a range of initiatives run by the council and those grant funded by the authority to improve access to culture for disadvantaged or marginalised communities. One example is Studio 12 based at Leeds Central Library. This is an exemplary digital media initiative that invests in the creative talents of disadvantaged young people living in the city. They strive to provide young people with a creative process to educate, engage and include them in the development of new work, providing free access to a production studio, training and an industry panel of creative professionals.

3.4 ***Strengthening our cross-cutting approach to tackling poverty***

3.4.1 As demonstrated above, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities is well embedded in the strategic framework under which the council operates, and there is a broad range of high quality activity being undertaken to mitigate its impacts on Leeds people and communities. Nevertheless, it is clear that we still face a number of key challenges going forward. With the potential for austerity to continue, even after the upcoming comprehensive spending review, and in anticipation of some potential economic uncertainty as a result of the UK leaving the European Union in March 2019, it seems timely to re-examine the way in which the council is working to tackle poverty in Leeds.

3.4.2 While many drivers of poverty are outside of the council's control and need national government intervention, the ingenuity of the council and the city should not be underestimated. Taking maximum advantage of the levers at our disposal requires us to further strengthen our approach around governance structures and distribution of resources, as well as pushing our locality working model to the next level.

3.4.3 **Distribution of resources** – The council has agreed that a more intense focus on the city's most deprived communities is needed in order to reverse the negative trend we see in terms of poverty and inequality. Work on this has already begun and has been ongoing for the last couple of years, most notably through the locality review led by the Communities team. As part of this, resources have been realigned to targeted wards and priority neighbourhoods. This was done following consideration of a new way of working, which prioritised an understanding of which services would work best together, and then brought them together under the same management structures within the council. As a consequence of these changes there are now programme managers in place with a specific responsibility to

develop projects which will effect change and drive work to make a positive difference in the city's poorest neighbourhoods.

- 3.4.4 The benefits of work undertaken through the locality review have been enhanced as a result of the natural gravitational pull they have caused, drawing in both capital and revenue funding from the council as well as partner agencies to these neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that this pattern will continue and accelerate over the coming year as services collectively recognise the challenges they have in common and how working more closely together can lead to better outcomes.
- 3.4.5 **Locality working** – The original vision for locality working adopted by the council was to have a deep impact on our mode of operation, particularly in terms of management structures. It is vital that momentum is maintained on this direction and that the council continues to evaluate the impact of changes, including whether better collaboration between services is enabled to establish good practice across the city. As part of this, there is potential to look again at the different operational geographies in place across the city which can act as a barrier to better collaboration across services. A renewed push on driving forward the locality working model should involve most parts of the council, and provide a vehicle for further engagement with partner organisations to better align their service delivery with ours around shared priorities in our most deprived communities.
- 3.4.6 **Governance structures** – Linked to both the breadth of the council's responsibilities and the number of overlapping priorities which have been adopted by different parts of the organisation, there may be an opportunity to review and consolidate partner structures that have a poverty/inequality focus. This would allow all stakeholders to ensure that our governance arrangements are effective, aligned and fit for purpose.
- 3.4.7 Looking at the council's strategic framework, it is clear that as high profile city-wide strategies the Inclusive Growth Strategy (<http://www.leedsgrowthstrategy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Leeds-Inclusive-Growth-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>) and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%202016-2021.pdf>) remain the two anchors of activity being undertaken in the council and the city. Each of them recognises both the city's achievements and its remaining challenges around poverty and inequalities, looking at the full breadth of issues including employment, housing, digital inclusion, development, health including its wider determinants, and lower profile but highly important issues such as those around gambling and energy costs. On this basis it is sensible for activity to be co-ordinated in line with the direction set out in each of these strategies, with both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the proposed Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership taking enhanced ownership for consideration of the impact and overall development of work to reduce poverty and inequality, and mitigate their impacts in Leeds. As part of this approach, other relevant local boards such as the Neighbourhood Improvement Board and the Child Poverty Impact Board would feed in crucial insights to influence priorities, based upon their day-to-day activities.
- 3.4.8 The Health and Wellbeing Board and the Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership would each provide a clear governance structure through which all cross-council and city-based poverty improvement activity can be considered, and it is likely that all component parts of the poverty agenda would fall within the existing remit of one or both of these boards. The membership of these boards, including a number of key elected members and Chief Officers from the council along with key partners

and the twelve new Inclusive Growth Ambassadors, will provide experienced and capable leadership to ensure activities are joined up and the resources available are being put to best possible use. While providing this strategic oversight and leadership to ensure a joined up approach, this arrangement would still allow the space for local reporting and governance structures to remain in place day-to-day, providing maximum flexibility to enable activity on the ground.

- 3.4.9 Whilst shaping a refreshed strategic role on poverty and inequalities for the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership will strengthen the linkages between areas of activity and ensure a joined-up approach is taken, reassessing the way in which we work might also extend to the way in which different areas of work to mitigate poverty and inequality are prioritised. This may be best achieved through a wider programme of reporting to Executive Board on the poverty agenda, giving elected members the opportunity examine and direct ongoing work and ensure their priorities for the city are being acted upon.
- 3.4.10 Currently Executive Board is provided with an annual report giving an overview of work to tackle poverty and in addition to this issues are reported through the BCP and equality impact reports. Moving forward it might be beneficial to supplement this with more regular feedback to Executive Board on a limited number of priorities, identified by elected members and aligning with Best Council Plan priorities, which cut across services. This could mirror the approach seen in November 2018 when a detailed child poverty report was brought forward. While not exhaustive the list below may provide some options for future, more detailed, reports which give a detailed analysis of the challenge the city faces and an overview and assessment of the work ongoing to overcome this to be brought forward over the next twelve months:
- Financial hardship and access to advice;
 - Digital exclusion;
 - Food / Fuel poverty;
 - Worklessness;
 - Social isolation;
 - Education and skills;
 - Health inequalities;
 - Housing;
 - Drug, alcohol and other related services;
 - Review of resource distribution as outlined at 3.4.6;
 - Policy responses including social value, anchor institutions and inclusive growth.
- 3.4.11 These reports, while providing a general analysis of ongoing work, should take a key line of inquiry around both priority neighbourhoods and child poverty in particular for the reasons outlined earlier in this report. By doing this an opportunity would be created for Executive Board, through its decisions, to directly influence the work programmes of both the priority neighbourhoods programme and the Child Poverty Impact Board, ensuring council and city priorities are being fully considered.
- 3.4.12 Working more visibly through both Executive Board, the Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board as suggested in this report would bring about a number of benefits including improved governance, better co-ordinated and joined up activity, connecting work across council departments, and providing greater opportunities to use the council's convening powers to maximum effect.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 There is no consultation being carried out in direct relation to this report. However, any of the further work and schemes discussed within it will carry out consultation and engagement activity as needed on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The report focuses on actions that are being undertaken with the intention of reducing and mitigating the impacts of poverty and inequality, which will in turn through engagement with communities strengthen cohesion and integration in Leeds. As above, any specific work undertaken following this report will consider all of these issues in full as needed.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan as discussed in section 3.1.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The report does not require any direct resource allocation.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 While there are no specific risks directly associated with any proposals in this report, it is important to note the ongoing risk of failure to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities and the impact that would have on a significant number of people and families in Leeds.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The report presents an evidence base to explain the current landscape in Leeds in terms of poverty and inequality. It confirms that despite much of the good work taking place in the city, there is evidence that some inequalities are widening. The report discusses the key areas of work being undertaken in Leeds to improve this, with particular reference to priority neighbourhoods and child poverty, outlining the rationale for these two areas to be a particular focus for the local authority.

5.2 The report argues that the resources available can be maximised, work can be better joined-up and elected members can provide a stronger lead on key priorities by establishing a refreshed governance and reporting structure around the poverty

agenda. The report also highlights a number of areas where a review of activity may create opportunities to further improve outcomes.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board are requested to:

- Note the strategic framework in place to tackle poverty and inequality across the city and the work being undertaken by the council and its partners in the key areas of activity.
- Agree suggested areas for further work noted in 3.4.9 and ask the relevant Director to bring forward reports to Executive Board in the next twelve months.

7. Background documents⁹

7.1 None.

⁹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.