



TITLE OF REPORT - Hackney's Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework Key Decision No - CEDSO63	
CABINET MEETING DATE (2021/22) 14 March 2022	CLASSIFICATION: Open
WARD(S) AFFECTED All Wards	
CABINET MEMBERS Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources	
KEY DECISION Yes	
REASON Affects two or more wards	
GROUP DIRECTOR Mark Carroll, Chief Executive	

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Life in Hackney can be a very different experience, depending on who you are and what resources you have. Despite visible affluence, there remains a high proportion of residents who live on lower incomes, and at the time of finalising this framework, even more people are falling into this group.
- 1.2. Poverty can have a very damaging effect on individuals and families. Poverty can cause poor physical and mental health, affect a child's development and educational attainment and lead to a person feeling excluded from society. Poverty affects everyone, leading to higher public spending on the benefits system and health service. Poverty limits economic performance because of lower productivity and reduced demand for goods and services. It can also contribute to wider social problems such as crime and reduced social cohesion.
- 1.3. This strategic framework sets out the Council's approach to poverty reduction and how we aim to do this. The framework is the first time Hackney Council has developed a poverty reduction strategic framework for residents of all ages in recent years and builds upon previous work focussed on child poverty¹. The Council is ambitious about poverty reduction and doing what we can to improve people's lives, however, we recognise there are limits to what we can do alone. As well as working with partners we will be clear about what we need from others, including central government, to make progress and hold others to account for the impact of their decisions. The benefit cap, two-child limit for tax credits and adequate funding to provide free childcare entitlement at the local level are all examples of this. We will also measure our actions to understand their impact on poverty reduction and learn from what we do. We will make sure that the actions we take are based on the best available evidence² and contribute to wider learning about what works for residents.
- 1.4. Before the pandemic, the Council was concerned about the ways that the benefits system, housing costs and low wages had driven up levels of poverty and specifically in-work poverty. In 2018, tackling poverty was adopted as a priority for the new administration, alongside shaping a more [inclusive economy](#). By the time the pandemic had started, improvements were underway to provide a more co-ordinated approach to those in poverty. We had just worked with the Hackney Food Justice Alliance to adopt a [Food Poverty Action Plan](#), we were working closely with advice providers to make sure their support was more connected and person centred and we had committed £500,000 in 2020/21 to develop poverty related support. This gave us the preparedness, during the pandemic, to support residents in poverty impacted directly and indirectly by the pandemic. In 2021/22 a further £500k was invested to develop the work further and this framework summarises how we have used this investment.

¹ Child and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-18, Hackney Council, 2016 [Link](#)

² UK Poverty: Causes, costs and solutions, JRF, 2016 [Link](#)

- 1.5. Throughout this time, the Council has kept in mind how we developed the long term cross sector partnerships we know we will need as we come out of the pandemic. This practical, granular work has been used to develop the poverty reduction framework; throughout the framework, case studies are used to bring to life what we have done.
- 1.6. It has now been two years since the pandemic began and leading organisations like the Resolution Foundation³ and Institute for Fiscal Studies⁴ are predicting further reductions in household income when it is already estimated half of children are already in poverty after housing costs. In Hackney 48% of children are estimated to be in poverty, after housing costs are taken into account. The challenge is considerable but must be addressed and we believe with the right action in both the immediate and longer term we can make a real difference to the lives of our residents.
- 1.7. It is not the responsibility of one cabinet member or department to progress this framework. The Cabinet Member for Employment Skills and Human Resources who is also the lead for Policy and Equality has worked alongside a number of cabinet members throughout the development of the framework. This has ensured close oversight from cabinet members responsible for Finance; Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Leisure; and Families, Early Years, Parks and Play.
- 1.8. The Government has recently launched a White Paper on Levelling Up. The paper focuses on regional inequality, and on levelling up other regions to be more economically successful. Hackney and London may fare better economically, relative to other parts of the country, but London has a higher proportion of people living in poverty than any other region. Although the White Paper does reference the need to look at London's unique situation, it also signals changes to housing and resourcing that could make poverty and inequality far worse. The detail behind the White Paper is yet to be shared, and specific consultations will follow on the Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Advisory Committee and the missions and measures that will become enshrined in law. The Poverty Reduction Framework provides the evidence base and business case to advocate for the needs of Hackney and London, for fair levels of resourcing and for an approach that looks at people in poverty as well as more deprived places.

2. GROUP DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Poverty Reduction has been a key priority throughout this administration, and was identified in the development of our long term vision, as articulated in the Community Strategy 2018-2028 and it is one of the Equality Objectives adopted in the Single Equality Scheme.

³ The Big Squeeze, Resolution Foundation, September 2021 [Link](#)

⁴ The Cost of Living Crunch, Institute for Fiscal Studies, January 2022 [Link](#)

- 2.2. The poverty reduction strategic framework is closely related to Hackney's Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-2025 which aims to create a strong and more inclusive local economy. The strategy takes a broader approach to more traditional approaches to local economic development, for example by focussing exclusively on job creation and investment, and looks at the quality of such jobs such as paying the London Living Wage, who can access them and how residents feel about the local economy. The poverty strategic framework being developed in the wider strategic context is recommended as best practice by Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- 2.3. The development of the strategic framework started just before the pandemic began in acknowledgement of the scale and worsening of the problem. For example, there was evidence that both child poverty and pensioner poverty had risen in recent years. The issue of in-work poverty also represented a significant change in the nature of poverty. The most obvious examples of financial difficulties were demonstrated through a growing demand for food support. In 2019 Hackney Council worked in partnership to develop a food action plan to respond to this particular issue.
- 2.4. The effects of the pandemic make the need for action even more urgent. The impacts have not been evenly distributed and that lower income families and individuals are more likely to have lost their jobs and to have got into household debt. There is also evidence that children and young people from lower income families will be more affected by school closures caused by the lockdowns which could lead to longer term and even lifetime disadvantage.
- 2.5. At the start of 2022 there is widespread expectation that this year will see a squeeze on living standards due to rising inflation as well as tax and national insurance changes. As a result more residents are likely to find themselves struggling to pay their bills and make ends meet.
- 2.6. This framework identifies **the importance of early years** to improve life chances for children. It advocates for **an early help approach for all ages**, so that the Council can work with others to try to prevent crisis points and needs becoming more complex. The framework identifies how the Council will work with partners to improve **the crisis support** that is available when things go wrong, because people on low incomes have no financial safety net. It **makes the connection between crisis support and early help**, because the request for help is likely to be an indication of greater need. It does this by providing frontline workers with the resources to offer follow up help and support. The framework highlights the impact of the **external drivers of poverty**, including low wages and housing costs, which drive up the cost of living. It sets out what the Council is doing to intervene in these markets, whilst being honest about the limitations. It sets out how the Council will firstly support **residents on low incomes to maximise their income and secure better jobs. It makes the case for shaping the labour market by** attracting sectors that offer better quality jobs and creating more inclusive and accessible pathways into these jobs, as well as

working with local employers to improve terms and conditions and pay London Living Wage. The framework sets out what we are doing to **increase affordable housing supply**, but is honest about what is possible, given the local housing market and national policy.

- 2.7. This is all underpinned by a focus on **improving ways of working** and valuing and supporting frontline workers, so that, whenever the Council comes into contact with someone on a low income, we work with empathy and compassion and support the whole person. We work with all of their needs, not just the presenting issue, but also all of the strengths and resources they have around them.
- 2.8. The framework sets out five interconnecting areas of focus that allow us to mitigate the immediate impacts of poverty through better crisis support, whilst putting in place the longer term work needed. This focuses on early years and early help and addressing the external drivers of poverty, like low wages and housing costs. The framework is underpinned by ways of working which can have an immediate positive impact on crisis support, whilst also helping us work more preventatively in the longer term.
- 2.9. The framework has been developed through a comprehensive poverty evidence base. The framework and its outcomes have been informed through close collaboration with frontline staff, council services and partners. Analysis of poverty strategies from other local authorities, the Scottish and Welsh Government and Hackney's previous work on child poverty has also contributed to the development of the framework.
- 2.10. Once approved the framework will be accompanied by a delivery plan with council services and a range of strategic partners including local community groups. This will highlight the key milestones and what needs to be prioritised in the first year. There are a set of measures in the framework which will help us understand poverty and the impact the framework is having. The action plan will take these measures of impact as its foundation.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1. **That Cabinet adopts the Hackney Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework**

4. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 4.1. The Poverty Reduction framework has five areas of focus. Through these areas, the framework addresses both the immediate needs of people in poverty now and longer term actions which will prevent poverty for people in the future. Focusing exclusively on responding to the needs of those in poverty today would lack the ambition to reduce poverty while focussing only on longer term factors would neglect the needs of people in the here and now who are struggling financially.

The areas of focus

1. Prevention, early years and early help

Aim: to focus on prevention, early years and early help for all ages, as a key way to improve life chances and tackle poverty.

2. Tackling low wages and cost of living

Aim: to take actions to address low wages and the cost of living, as key drivers of poverty in London.

3. Responding to the material needs of poverty

Aim: to better meet people's immediate material needs and offer more preventative help.

4. Prioritising poverty reduction across the system

Aim: to ensure poverty reduction is a priority across the system

5. Ways of working

Aim: to help people on low incomes address all the issues which matter, not just the presenting issue.

Why the Council has developed a poverty reduction strategic framework

- 4.2. Poverty Reduction has been a key priority since 2018, and was identified in the development of our long term vision, as articulated in the Community Strategy 2018-2028 and it is one of the Equality Objectives adopted in the Single Equality Scheme. As well as there being a clear evidenced case for tackling poverty residents from all backgrounds have consistently told us, over the last five years, that they wanted there to be more of a focus on poverty and responding to those struggling to access the benefits of London's economy.
- 4.3. The poverty reduction strategic framework is closely related to Hackney's Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-2025 which aims to create a strong and more inclusive local economy. Hackney's Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-2025 was approved in November 2019. The Strategy sets a new direction for local economic development by combining a focus on economic performance with community development and social inclusion. This shows that as well as creating a strong economy we want to ensure that residents are able to benefit from the local economy, access opportunities, and shape decisions.
- 4.4. The poverty reduction strategic framework is an opportunity to provide a focus and sharpen our attention on the needs of lower income residents. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation recommends as good practice that local authorities develop a local economic development strategy, focussing on

inclusion as well as economic performance, alongside a poverty reduction strategy.

- 4.5. In addition to the Inclusive Economy Strategy the poverty reduction strategic framework also interacts with and builds off a number of other areas of work. For example, the current framework is the first poverty strategic framework for all ages in Hackney but has been informed by previous work on child poverty, as set out in the Child and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-2018. The poverty reduction strategic framework has also been informed by and will support Hackney's food action plan developed in 2019.

How the Council developed the poverty reduction strategic framework

- 4.6. The first step in the strategy development was agreeing a set of key lines of inquiry for the poverty reduction strategic framework. This was done by drawing on the Local Economic Assessment which had been carried out for the Inclusive Economy Strategy, existing work on poverty reduction, including the Child and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-18, a review of other poverty strategies from other organisations including Salford Council, Cambridge City Council, Tower Hamlets, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government. We also undertook a brief literature review of the best available evidence on poverty reduction in the UK. This drew heavily on work from organisations like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)
- 4.7. Key lines of inquiry were developed that were firmly based on a framework used by JRF which looked at poverty according to the following drivers:
- Market forces (e.g. labour market, housing market, childcare)
 - The State (e.g. benefits system)
 - Individual risk factors (e.g. disability)
 - Socio-economic factors (e.g. ethnicity, gender)
 - Life events (e.g. retirement, bereavement)
 - Protective factors (e.g. family support, strong communities)
- 4.8. These drivers were agreed by Directors and Cabinet leads in October 2018, along with a paper setting out the case for a "multi-dimensional approach". This proposed we should have a focus on mitigation and alleviation of poverty as well as tackling the long term drivers of poverty, for the following reasons:
- Taking a singular approach that seeks to lift a specific cohort out of poverty, for example, can be practical and tangible, but it can lead to simplistic responses which are ineffective or unsustainable on their own.
 - The proposed approach can strengthen existing activity that seeks to tackle specific inequalities, adding a strong poverty reduction focus to this existing work e.g. to address labour market disadvantage for disabled people, to tackle inequalities for young black men.

- Given limited resources and the limited impact the Council can have within a wider system, this work will help determine what we prioritise to have an impact.
- The approach helps instil a culture and approach which embeds poverty reduction and economic wellbeing, as well as new ways of working. This includes with regards to those who are in contact with multiple services, and are in a cycle of homelessness and destitution.

The paper highlights the interdependency with inclusive growth, and identifies the opportunity to consider how growth and change might bring benefits but also exacerbate poverty and lead to higher rates of stress, anxiety and mental illness. The approach encourages looking to the future, given the trend in the labour market towards insecure employment, wage stagnation, the growth in the private rented sector and the income and housing inequalities experienced by younger generations.

- 4.9. We then developed a full evidence base for Hackney in 2019 according to these key lines of enquiry. We also agreed on our working definition for poverty based on the 2014 JRF definition: 'When a person's resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)'
- 4.10. During this time, the Council also worked with Hackney Food Justice Alliance to undertake a review of Food Poverty and completed a Food Poverty Action Plan early in 2020. The plan synthesised data on need with residents' lived experience of poverty and stakeholder perspectives and highlighted the need for greater coordination of emergency support and advice and joined up with preventative work. The actions in the plan are now reflected in this framework.
- 4.11. In early 2020 we completed a comprehensive mapping and gapping of what the Council was already doing (including with partners) against these lines of enquiry. This was informed by staff engagement, as well as attending senior management meetings.
- 4.12. The start of the pandemic in the UK in March 2020 affected the course of development of the framework as the first national lockdown was implemented. The research and engagement we had completed up to this point helped the council understand the issues which might affect people beyond the primary health and economic impacts and this informed the Council's pandemic response from the very beginning as well as the Community Impact Assessment which was updated on a weekly basis during the first six months of the pandemic.
- 4.13. An early working version of the framework was agreed in September 2020. A Poverty Reduction Network was established to drive the work needed within Council services further. The intention was always to keep the framework

flexible and adaptive to the changing circumstances of the pandemic.
Drafting of a full written framework began in October 2021.

The areas of focus

Long term prevention	Tackling market drivers	Mitigation
1. Prevention, early years and early help	2. Tackling low wages and cost of living	3. Responding to the material needs of poverty
Aim: to focus on prevention, early years and early help for all ages, as a key way to improve life chances and tackle poverty.	Aim: to take actions to address low wages and the cost of living, as key drivers of poverty in London.	Aim: to better meet people’s immediate material needs and offer more preventative help.
Strategic objective: to support children and families in a child’s early years and to provide early help to prevent crisis points and needs becoming more complex as someone gets older.	Strategic Objective: to maximise opportunities for affordable housing and good quality employment, making the case for national policy change when needed.	Strategic Objective: to develop a more coordinated emergency support and advice offer, with more preventative help, and to make the case for a better benefits system.
We will focus on identification and prevention of harm, escalation of need and crisis by strengthening our early help offer for residents of all ages.	We will take long term action to address what is driving poverty in London, specifically low wages, housing costs and the cost of living.	We will take action in response to the direct material needs of people already experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty and destitution.
Cross cutting		
4. Prioritising poverty reduction across the system Aim: to ensure poverty reduction is a priority across the system Strategic objective: to ensure the needs, drivers and impacts of poverty are understood and that responses are embedded into key strategy We will influence the whole system so we are better able to tackle poverty because poverty is a complex issue which cuts across many other areas.		

5. Ways of working

Aim: to help people on low incomes address all the issues which matter, not just the presenting issue.

Strategic Objective: To offer training, support and resources to all staff across sectors so they can work with residents in a strengths based way.

We need to look at how all services that come into contact with residents understand the impact of poverty and the approaches that are needed to work preventatively and in a strength based way. This work has already started during the pandemic and will be a priority to continue in the first year of this framework to build momentum, and because it underpins the other areas of focus.

Outcomes Measures

- 4.14. Our approach to measurement and evaluation has three parts to it:
- Direct measures of poverty and our aspirations for poverty reduction
 - Wider contextual indicators
 - Success measures for delivery for the council and partners
- 4.15. In addition to monitoring direct measures of poverty and wider contextual indicators we will also measure and evaluate how our own activities are reducing poverty. These outcomes will need to be linked to those who are most in poverty and explain how actions respond to their needs.

Delivery

- 4.16. The framework is designed to be a live document which is flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances. Although accountability for the framework will sit within the Council, the framework will also guide partnership working.
- 4.17. The framework will be driven by Hackney's Corporate Leadership Team, which includes the Chief Executive and Group Directors. Directors will report to Cabinet Leads identified as leads for poverty reduction, who directly report to the Mayor.

5. DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 There is no legal requirement on local authorities to develop a poverty reduction strategy or framework. There used to be a legal requirement focused on child poverty but this is no longer the case.
- 5.2 Poverty Reduction has, however, been a key priority throughout this administration, and was identified in the development of our long term vision, as articulated in the Community Strategy 2018-2028 and it is one of the Equality Objectives adopted in the Single Equality Scheme. As well as there

being a clear evidenced case for tackling poverty base, consultation for the Community Strategy and Equality Scheme showed that residents from all backgrounds have consistently told us, over the last five years, that they also wanted there to be more of a focus on poverty and responding to those struggling to access the benefits of London's economy.

5.3 JRF (Joseph Rowntree Foundation), a leading organisation on poverty and low income in the UK, recommends that local government develops a local economic development strategy with a focus on inclusion and accompanies this with a focus on poverty reduction which we have sought to do through this framework and the Inclusive Economy Strategy adopted in 2019.

5.4 The other options which were considered were to:

Do nothing: this was rejected because poverty reduction is an identified priority based on a clear evidence base about levels and impacts of poverty

Rely on delivery of the inclusive economy strategy, focusing on building prosperity through education, skills and good employment: this was rejected because we wanted to respond to the clear evidence base around taking action in early years to improve life chances and earlier help for people of all ages. We also wanted to improve support that responds to material impacts of poverty because people struggling with money today cannot benefit from any of the wider actions if they are struggling to meet basic needs, and the risk is that they become more vulnerable.

Adopt a more singular focus, for example prioritising early help and intervention, or employment and skills or lifting one group out of poverty. This was rejected because a decision was taken in October 2018 to take a more multi-dimensional approach and the reasons for this are set out under 4.9.

Adopt a full strategy rather than a framework. This was considered and rejected in 2020. The reason was because we were in the midst of a second wave of the pandemic and had consciously decided to build a pandemic response for those in poverty who were impacted directly and indirectly by the pandemic, that would develop the longer term system of support needed in communities to tackle poverty. This was adopted as a principle in the pandemic response plans for wave 2. By developing a framework, we were able to draw on an agile, responsive framework to deliver the pandemic response that could be tested and developed further during the pandemic. A decision was then taken in summer 2021 to develop the framework further and publish it as a working policy framework for 2022 onwards.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1. Policy Context

- 6.2. In 2010 the Government, with cross-party support, made it a legal requirement as part of the Child Poverty Act 2010 for governments to have a child poverty strategy. This legal requirement was accompanied with a set of targets to reduce child poverty by 2020.
- 6.3. In 2016 the Government abolished the legal requirements set out under the Child Poverty Act 2010 with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. This removed targets for poverty reduction and set new statutory measures associated with the number of children living in workless households and educational attainment at GCSE for disadvantaged young people (this includes young people eligible for Free School Meals).
- 6.4. Despite the changes to child poverty, from a statutory perspective, data is published annually which gives estimates of children living in poverty as part of the Households Below Average Income data release from DWP.
- 6.5. The Scottish Government replicated similar statutory targets to the Child Poverty Act 2010 in its Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017. The Welsh Government has similarly maintained a focus on child poverty and continues to have a strategy and publish progress updates against overall targets. Consequently, England is in the unusual position of having some related measures on statute (e.g. workless households) but having no overall statutory poverty targets, even for child poverty, and reporting quite comprehensive poverty data on an annual basis for all ages.
- 6.6. The recent Levelling Up White Paper is grounded in a wide understanding of what is needed in communities to bring about economic prosperity-including the social as well as economic dimensions (safety, health and wellbeing). Tackling poverty, or focusing on people in poverty (as opposed to places) is not part of the missions or measures proposed and there is a concern that policies proposed around housing and resources could disadvantage Londoners.
- 6.7. At a regional level the London Recovery Board is taking a lead in recovering from the effects of the pandemic. The Board is chaired jointly by the Chair of London Councils, Georgia Gould and Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. The aims of the board are to reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth, support communities, including those most impacted by the virus, help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities, narrow social, economic and health inequalities and accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London. One mission set out by the London Recovery Board relates to the creation of a Robust Safety Net. This mission sets out that: By 2025, every Londoner is able to access the support they need to prevent financial hardship. This mission specifically makes

reference to local welfare assistance, food support and debt services as services key to achieving this mission.

- 6.8. At the local level Hackney Council has previously set out a strategic approach to child poverty. In 2014 Hackney Council undertook an extensive evidence needs assessment at the local level. This informed strategy development and a set of principles for child poverty reduction. This approach was refreshed in 2016 with the publication of the Child and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-2018.
- 6.9. In 2019 Hackney Council adopted its [Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-2025](#) which sets out its approach to building a strong and inclusive local economy. This strategy sets out how the council sees overall economic performance and social and community inclusion as integral to economic success.
- 6.10. The Council's [Community Strategy for 2018-2028](#) sets out a vision for Hackney over the ten year period. Residents from all backgrounds and income groups are concerned about the fact that some sections of the community are excluded from the economic changes that we have seen in the borough and are concerned about poverty and the growing inequality. Our response was to focus Hackney's Community Strategy on five cross-cutting priorities:
- A borough where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life and the whole community can benefit from growth
 - A borough where residents and local businesses fulfil their potential and everyone enjoys the benefits of increased local prosperity and contributes to community life
 - A greener and environmentally sustainable community which is prepared for the future
 - An open, cohesive, safer and supportive community
 - A borough with healthy, active and independent residents

6.11. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Supporting Hackney's equality objectives

- 6.12. Before the pandemic, the Council was focused on tackling key inequalities by making this front and centre of the way services were delivered, as well as through work that focused on specific groups facing inequality. The [Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022](#) was developed to identify the proactive work needed, informed by a [detailed analysis of demographics and of inequality](#).
- 6.13. The analysis considered inequality by socio economic disadvantage. This is in line with the Council's voluntary adoption of the socio-economic duty, when it was dropped from the Equality Act by central government, before the Act was adopted in 2010. It is also in line with the intersectional,

structural and systemic approach that we take to tackling inequality, considering all of the drivers of inequality in the round. The scheme responds to this approach by articulating how poverty was a key driver of inequality. A significant part of progressing the scheme, and of tackling inequality, is therefore through the commitment to poverty reduction and to shaping a more inclusive economy

- 6.14. The scheme also recognises that poverty is linked to structural disadvantage and discrimination and the actions needed to build tolerance and understanding of diversity. This is underpinned by the final priority to build a cohesive and inclusive borough. The scheme adopted two enabling objectives to embed prevention into service delivery and promote a culture of inclusive leadership. The focus on both of these enabling objectives has sharpened during the pandemic. The framework builds on the objectives in the single equality scheme, progressing actions needed under the first objective, focusing on those who are structurally disadvantaged and most likely to be in poverty, promoting cohesion as a result of this , because tackling poverty and key inequalities are cornerstones of how you build cohesive communities. The Ways of Working area of focus in the framework strongly supports the two enabling objectives of the Single Equality Scheme, focusing heavily on how we embed prevention into service provision and making a strong connection between the way we work and the positive impact we can have on residents.

The poverty reduction framework highlights the groups who are most at risk of poverty so that we can take a strengthened focus across the system to supporting these groups

- 6.15. The poverty reduction framework is underpinned by a detailed evidence base considering the groups who are most likely to be at risk of poverty and the drivers of poverty. As this evidence base was already under development at the beginning of the pandemic, we were able to use this analysis to shape the pandemic response. In March 2020, a [Community Impact Assessment](#) was established, so that the likely direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic in the short, medium and long term could at least be understood, in advance of the official data. This has been informed by national, regional and local intelligence, both quantitative and qualitative. This assessment has helped us understand likely impacts and actions needed and informed our pandemic response and what is needed in the longer term to tackle poverty and inequality.
- 6.16. This has led to the development of more extensive and inclusive ways to reach and support communities. The pandemic has, as we expected, had a differential impact on communities, nationally and locally, and groups whose outcomes were more likely to be worse have been hit hardest. It is too early to reliably look at data and assess the full impact that the pandemic might have had on outcomes, and whether the actions taken, have, in any way, mitigated against this. This work gives us a much better understanding of the

preventative work needed and of how to work in partnership to best deliver this work. The framework now takes this work forward.

The Poverty Reduction Framework is informed by a strengthened position on anti-racism

6.17. The commitment to anti-racism, adopted in July 2020, was an important public statement that responded to the impacts of the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and the growing Black Lives Matter movement. It was built on the foundation of Hackney's Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme. Being an anti-racist organisation is about tackling much more than conscious hatred and grappling with racism that is far more embedded in society. By structural racial inequality, we mean the inequality that is created by the social structures that disadvantage some groups more than others, now and historically. We need to continue to work with partners proactively to redress this balance. This does not mean always treating everyone equally, it means that sometimes people need more support or focus because they are more disadvantaged. By systemic racism, we mean the ways that systems can discriminate through often covert and unchecked prejudice, assumptions, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping about people from different ethnic minority backgrounds. The poverty reduction framework is informed by this approach. It sets out the need to identify groups who are most likely to need early help and intervention, to improve life chances. It sets out a way to continue to build partnerships to respond to material impacts of poverty that have good reach into all sections of the community.

6.18. Sustainability

6.19. Climate change will impact residents in poverty more than others, globally and locally. Most of the major changes that are needed to avert the climate crisis require structural changes to be achieved. Moving to a climate neutral economy, protecting biodiversity and transforming local food systems has the potential to rapidly deliver jobs, growth and improve the way of life of all citizens. The Poverty Reduction Framework has been developed in parallel to the early development of a new climate action plan which is due to be adopted later in 2022. We are ensuring that the understanding of poverty in Hackney is centred in the approach to climate change:

- through the mitigating actions that will be needed in response to the impacts of climate change, for example rising fuel and food costs, the costs of adapting homes for decarbonisation and the changing labour market
- through changes that improve air quality and quality of life, and counter the urban heat island effect. These changes will particularly benefit those in overcrowded housing with no outdoor space, who are more likely to be on low incomes.
- through shaping a green economy which is also an inclusive economy and creates new job opportunities

- through taking action to develop a local food system which is accessible and affordable and healthy, including making the local food poverty response as sustainable as possible by using local organisations and volunteers, co-ordinating food waste and developing local food systems, by working with local growers and developing food cooperatives.

6.20. Consultations

There is no legal requirement to produce a poverty strategic framework and has been a choice made by Hackney Council. As a strategic framework rather than a full formal strategy we have not run a formal public consultation. However, the framework has been shaped through extensive engagement with relevant partners and services and engagement events.

External

2019/2020 Formative work that shaped the framework:

- Lived experience interviews with residents in food poverty as part of developing the food poverty plan in 2019
- Stakeholder engagement to develop the food poverty action plan in 2019
- Sessions with frontline staff and management teams
- Ongoing community partnership and food network meetings throughout the pandemic

2021/2022 Discussion of the framework:

Hackney's Food Network which has a membership of around 60 organisations providing the local food poverty response

Advice Network with a membership of leading local advice providers

Council Poverty Network of around 30 key council services and some partner organisations working on poverty and related issues including adult social care, children's social care, housing management, and financial inclusion.

The work has also been shared with members of the Audit Committee and this was reported on in a public report in January 2022. The work was discussed at the Scrutiny Chairs Panel in February 2022.

As a result of this engagement, we have made the following changes and amendments:

Focus and needs

- Referenced more specifically, the needs of rough sleepers and single homeless men Explaining and framing the work

- Referenced Hackney's past work on poverty more fully, particularly child poverty
- Referenced evidence base for what works in terms of programmes and social policy
- Included case studies for each focus area to illustrate the work with practical examples Developing the delivery plan
- Developed a timeline for delivery over the eight years and broken this down into immediate, medium term and long term timeframes and how these will relate to one another
- Moved the delivery and governance section higher in the document

6.21. **Risk Assessment**

The term poverty can be interpreted as too technical, especially when referring to 60% of median income which is the standard international measure. This can be limiting in terms of the open conversation we want to have about such issues. As a result, we also refer to residents on a lower income and struggling financially.

There is a related risk that talking about poverty reduction could be seen as too negative and not focussing on prosperity and a good standard of living. However, it should be noted that the focus on poverty reduction was in acknowledgement to consultation with residents and residents explaining they thought that Hackney was sometimes too positive and not open about some of the difficulties many residents face.

There is a risk that the framework is seen as not fully addressing issues such as housing supply and employment and skills adequately as well as area regeneration. These are issues that already have delivery structures attached to them and strategies such as the Housing Strategy and Inclusive Economy Strategy. Explaining the relationship between the framework and these structures and the added value of the framework for work going on in other areas is key to this and why we have a section specifically on links to other strategic areas.

There is an overall risk that poverty will worsen locally because of the way structural inequality and market forces are making lives worse, increasing living costs and driving down wages. What we can influence locally is limited and so adopting a framework can build expectations or make the Council seem naive .

7. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 7.1 The recommendation of this report is to approve the Hackney Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework . The proposed Strategic Framework sets out the Council's approach to poverty reduction and builds upon previous work focussed on child poverty.

7.2 There are no direct financial implications emerging from the approval of the Hackney Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework. However, it is planned that once approved the framework will be accompanied by a delivery plan with Council services and a range of strategic partners including local community groups. Actions arising from the development of this plan will need to be developed in the context of the significant financial challenges facing the Council and contained within existing budgets.

8. VAT Implications on Land & Property Transactions

None

9. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE SERVICES

9.1 As has been stated earlier in this report, there is no legal requirement placed on the Council to produce a poverty strategic framework.

9.2 The recommendation in paragraph 3.1 of this Report is a key decision under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as it is an executive decision, which is likely (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority. Key decisions can be made by Cabinet under Article 13.6 of the Constitution. Therefore this Report is being presented to Cabinet for approval.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Poverty Reduction Framework

EXEMPT

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012 publication of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required

HMT Cover note Poverty Reduction October 2018

Poverty Evidence Base - 201

Strengths and Gap Analysis - Feb 2020

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