

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - FOOD POVERTY

Wednesday, 5 June 2019

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Meredith (Chair), Councillor Roberts

Officers Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all those present to the inaugural meeting of Scrutiny Panel 1 – Food Poverty.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell (Deputy Chair) and Councillors Bottwood, Cali and Smith.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESS

There were none.

5. SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Scrutiny Panel considered the draft scope of the review – Food Poverty, making additions and updates as appropriate.

AGREED: That the scope of the review – Food Poverty, as appended to the minutes is presented to the July 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

The meeting concluded at 6:45 pm



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - FOOD POVERTY

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To examine the extent to which individuals and families are experiencing food poverty, the range of contributing factors and the changes that have been made to the way the Council and partners support residents during hardship.
- To review the impact and concentration of food poverty across the Borough of Northampton

Key Lines of Enquiry

- What are the impacts of food poverty?
- How widespread is food poverty in the borough?
- What strategic approaches are in existence to tackle food poverty?
- What approaches are in existence to reduce people's dependency on food aid, such as Food Banks?
- To receive an understanding of how food poverty is addressed
- To evaluate how the Borough Council, together with its partners, can collectively respond to food poverty
- To identify the specific issues relating to food poverty
- To identify the existence and impact of "holiday hunger"
- To identify how food poverty differs across the borough of Northampton and the reasons for this

2. Outcomes Required

- To make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take to mitigate the impact of food poverty in Northampton.
- To make recommendations on how the specific issues in relation to food poverty are dealt with from now until the new Unitary Authority.

3. Information Required

- Background data
- Background reports
- Best practice data
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Site visits (if applicable)

4. Format of Information

- Background data, including:
 - Presentation to set the scene: To identify the prevalence of the problem locally
 - Relevant national and local background research papers
 - Definitions – Food Poverty
 - Causes of food poverty
 - Best practice and successful initiatives in Northampton and comparable Local Authorities
 - Relevant Council Policies and Strategies
 - Relevant Statistics and relevant reports, including:
 - Poverty indicators
 - Demographics (national and Local)
 - UN report on food poverty
 - Institute of Fiscal Studies report on food poverty
 - Relevant Legislation, including:
 - Child Poverty Act 2010
 - Changes to Universal Credit
 - Introduction to benefits and the impact
 - Best practice external to Northampton

- Internal expert advisors:
 - Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
 - Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
 - Head of Revenues and Benefits, LGSS
 - Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC
 - Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team
 - Cabinet Member for Finance, NBC
 - Section 151 Officer, NBC

- External expert advisors:
 - Community Law, Northampton
 - Child Poverty Action Group
 - Education Services, Northamptonshire County Council
 - Director of Children’s Services, Northamptonshire County Council
 - Community and Voluntary Sector
 - Northamptonshire Citizens Advice Bureau
 - RESTORE
 - Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council
 - Rapid Relief
 - Representations of the Sikh Community
 - Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, NCC
 - Head Teachers of local primary and secondary schools (written evidence)
 - Local Youth Clubs, including Community Spaces
 - Partnership Manager, Department of Work and Pensions

- Site visit to be confirmed

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site visits
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-
 - Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

6. Co-Options to the Review

- Paul Foster, Community Organiser, Emmanuel Church, and Rachel McGrath, Chair, Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network, to be approached to be co-optees on this Scrutiny Panel

7. Community Impact Screening Assessment

- A Community Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8. Evidence gathering Timetable

June 2019 – January 2020

- 5 June 2019 - Scoping meeting
 - 17 July - Evidence gathering
 - 25 September - Evidence gathering
 - 20 November - Evidence gathering
 - 14 January 2020 - Approval of the final report
- Various site visits will be programmed during this period, if required.
- Further meetings to be programmed into the schedule

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

9. Responsible Officers

Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

10. Resources and Budgets

Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager to provide internal advice.

11. Final report presented by:

Completed by January 2020. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

12. Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (approximately October 2020)