



EXECUTIVE 18th November 2021

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| Report Title | Proposal to establish a Poverty Truth Commission for North Northamptonshire |
| Report Author | David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing |
| Executive Member | Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing |

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| Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there public sector equality duty implications? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974 | Not applicable. |

List of Appendices

Appendix A:

Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire's Proposal for a Poverty Truth Commission

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report requests that the Executive consider establishing a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) for North Northamptonshire.
- 1.2. It also seeks delegation of authority from the Executive to the Executive Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this grant process and deliver the programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. PTCs exist across the UK, supported by the Poverty Truth Network, which is a charity that supports local groups to establish Poverty Truth Commissions. They are mechanisms for raising the profile of poverty, evidencing the lived experience and supporting anti-poverty resolutions.
- 2.2. Executive is asked to support the establishment of a Poverty Truth Commission for North Northamptonshire. The PTC will be facilitated by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire, who will be supported by the Poverty Truth Network.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a. Establish a Poverty Truth Commission to be facilitated by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire;
 - b. Award grant funding to Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire of £14,426 for the purpose of facilitating the creation and management of a poverty truth commission;
 - c. Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and / or actions required in relation to the award of the grant funding.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. In North Northamptonshire, 37,400 households are experiencing some form of income deprivation, with 11,530 households in fuel poverty¹.
- 4.2. Poverty has a cumulative negative effect on people's health throughout their life. During early childhood it influences cognitive and physical development. It can have long-term implications for children's life chances and health in adulthood. Unemployment, low-paid work, inadequate benefit entitlements, a lack of affordable and poor-quality housing and living in deprived neighbourhoods have negative health impacts².
- 4.3. In North Northamptonshire, Corby, Wellingborough and Kettering all fall within the top 20% of the most deprived areas within the National Index of Multiple Deprivation³.

¹ Figures taken from Northamptonshire Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019/20

² Michael Marmot (2020), Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on.

³ Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 Profile North Northamptonshire (Proposed Unitary)

- 4.4. The Poverty Truth Network (PTN) is a registered charity which supports local groups to establish Poverty Truth Commissions across the UK. It nurtures the work of local commissions and provides a strategic national response to factors that contribute to poverty, which consistently emerge from the local commissions. It also engages with a wider movement of organisations and programmes that seek to alleviate poverty in all its forms.
- 4.5. The PTN supports local groups to establish new Poverty Truth Commissions; nurtures the work of local commissions; provides a strategic national response to factors that contribute to poverty that consistently emerge from the local commissions; and engages with a wider movement of organisations and programmes that seek to alleviate poverty in all its forms.
- 4.6. The objectives of the PTN are the prevention and relief of poverty and financial hardship, by but not limited to, understanding the factors that contribute to poverty and the most appropriate ways to mitigate these, educating the public regarding these factors and developing and promoting programs that enable others, especially those with a lived experience of poverty, to take action to mitigate these factors.
- 4.7. Evidence from the PTN has been able to demonstrate the benefits from creating a PTC, such as bringing together those with a lived experience of the struggle against poverty and leaders within an area. The commission works collectively to understand the nature of poverty, what are some of the underlying issues that create poverty and explore creative ways of addressing them.
- 4.8. Whilst there is a vast amount of data already available around poverty, a PTC focuses on the impact local decisions have on individuals. It provides commissioners of services with knowledge of local factors that can be taken into account when planning and delivering services.
- 4.9. Should the proposal be approved to take forward, the work of a PTC would complement the projects in development under the Housing & Communities Directorate, such as the Levelling Up and Community Approaches programmes, and will help inform the debate on poverty prevention and how this can be addressed with Officers, Members and Partners.
- 4.10. The setting up of a PTC follows four phases:
 - a. Phase 1: The setting up of a start-up group and recruitment of the facilitation team
 - b. Phase 2: Recruitment of grassroots and civic / business commissioners and launch
 - c. Phase 3: Full Commission meetings and task groups
 - d. Phase 4: Embedding the work of the Commission

4.11. The Poverty Truth Network have identified a number of commission impacts which can be categorised into four themes:

- a. Individual: Increased confidence, employment, friendship, motivation, understanding
- b. Organisational: Changing the way things are managed can improve efficiency
- c. Policy level: positive local knowledge informs policy work that is effective for the local community;
- d. Wider societal level: promoting discussion and understanding informs public debate around issues of poverty.

4.12 It is proposed that the Council provide grant funding to Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN) to set up a PTC for North Northamptonshire in accordance with the provisions championed by the PTN.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1. Advice was sought from the Procurement Team and the PTC can be arranged through a Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) grant agreement with VIN rather than a contract.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1. Resources and Financial

6.1.1. VIN are asking for £14,426 contribution from NNC which can be met from the existing VCSE grant budgets for 2021-22.

6.1.2. The contribution to VIN allows the evidence from the PTC to be obtained to inform other key priorities for the Council such as Levelling Up and addressing health inequalities.

6.1.3. Due to the number of vacancies and limited capacity within the Housing and Communities teams to undertake the volume of work associated with a PTC, the contribution to VIN allows Council officers to focus on stabilisation, service review and restructures whilst delivering the vast array of projects already identified in our Long-Term Plans.

6.2. Legal

6.2.1 A VCSE grant agreement will be in place with VIN.

- 6.2.2 The Legal Services team will be engaged, to ensure a full and appropriate agreement is prepared for this requirement.
- 6.2.3 As with current VCSE grant agreements between the Council and voluntary sector organisations, a specification will be written which will clearly outline the core objectives, project requirements, key outcomes, performance indicators and any additional requirements, such as safeguarding policies, training records and consider ways of working to reduce the impact on the climate.

6.3. Risk

- 6.3.1 There is a risk that the North Northants PTC does not provide sufficient valuable insight which can be used to inform future work programmes.
- 6.2.4 However, officers will regularly review and monitor performance and address any underperformance early in the VCSE agreement through the relevant clauses.

6.4. Consultation

- 6.4.1. An initial briefing was taken to the Corporate Leadership Team and then discussed in detail with the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing.
- 6.4.2. At this stage there has been no consultation with user groups outside of the Council.

6.5. Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.5.1. The commissioning process and / or any part of the requirement may be selected for consideration by Scrutiny.
- 6.5.2. The work of the PTC will provide a useful evidence base for the Scrutiny Panel on Levelling Up.

6.6. Climate Impact

- 6.6.1. Through the VCSE grant agreement, the Council is committed to ongoing improvements to combat climate change implications and will continue to seek to reduce carbon footprint where possible.
- 6.6.2. Any work undertaken by VIN, should this recommendation be accepted, will be required to consider how they work to reduce the impact on the climate. For example, minimise the number of journeys required by car, holding meetings where attendees can bike, walk or use public transport to get to.

6.7. Community Impact

- 6.7.1. The PTC will be able to identify specific themes relating to poverty which can inform the debate on poverty prevention and how this can be addressed by the Council in future.
- 6.7.2. The findings will complement the projects in development under the Housing & Communities Directorate, such as Levelling Up and Community Approaches programmes.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1. Northamptonshire Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019/20
[Link to the Annual Report 2019/20](#)
- 7.2. Michael Marmot (2020), Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on.
[Link to the Marmot Review](#)
- 7.3. Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 Profile North Northamptonshire (Proposed Unitary)
[IMD Profile NORTH Northamptonshire - Oct 2019.pdf](#)