



Author/Lead Officer of Report: *Emily Standbrook-Shaw, Policy & Improvement Officer.*

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Report of: *Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee*

Report to: *Co-operative Executive*

Date of Decision: *22nd September 2021*

Subject: *Food Poverty – Scrutiny Report and Recommendations*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Co-operative Executive Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>All</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee</i>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i>		

Purpose of Report:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee 2020/21 set up a working group to consider Food Poverty in Sheffield. The working group produced a report, approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 25th March 2021.

It was intended to present this report to the April Cabinet meeting of the 2020/21 Municipal Year, however this meeting did not go ahead. This meant it was not possible to present the report to the Executive before the changes to committee structures and membership following the May 2021 election.

This has implications for the report as it was originally envisaged that this would be an interim report, and scrutiny policy development work on food poverty would continue during 2021/22. As scrutiny committees will no longer be carrying out policy development work, this will not happen through scrutiny, however Members feel it is important to present the OSMC report to the Executive, in order that the Scrutiny findings can inform future work around poverty.

Drawing on the working group's findings, the report sets out their recommendations around 4 themes:

- Strategy and Culture
- Developing a comprehensive network of food support – mapping and development
- Navigating the system
- Leadership

This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's report to Co-operative Executive – attached at Appendix 1 – for consideration and response.

Recommendations:

Co-operative Executive is asked to:

1. Thank the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for its work in relation to Food Poverty in Sheffield.
2. Consider and note the Scrutiny Food Poverty Working Group Report that is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
3. Agree that a Co-operative Executive response to the recommendations in the report be provided to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Background Papers:

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Food Poverty Working Group – Interim Report March 2021 (attached as Appendix 1)
Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, 25th March 2021
All documents are available from scrutiny@sheffield.gov.uk

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
		Legal: <i>Andrea Simpson</i>
		Equalities: <i>Adele Robinson</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>N/A – report of Scrutiny Committee</i>
3	Executive Member consulted:	<i>N/A – report of Scrutiny Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Emily Standbrook-Shaw</i>	Job Title: <i>Policy & Improvement Officer</i>
	Date: <i>1st September 2021</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 In December 2020 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) decided to establish a working group to consider food poverty in Sheffield. The first phase of work, which focussed on the role of the Council in relation to food poverty and food projects, was carried out during February and March 2021.

The report of the working group was approved by OSMC at its meeting on the 25th March 2021, and OSMC agreed to ask Cabinet to respond to the findings and recommendations in the report. It was intended to present this report to the April Cabinet meeting of the 2020/21 Municipal Year, however this meeting did not go ahead. This meant it was not possible to present the report to the Executive before the changes to committee structures and membership following the May 2021 election.

This has implications for the report as it was originally envisaged that this would be an interim report, and scrutiny policy development work on food poverty would continue during 2021/22. As scrutiny committees will no longer be carrying out policy development work, this will not happen through scrutiny, however Members feel it is important to present the OSMC report to the Executive, in order that the Scrutiny findings can inform future work around poverty.

The working group found that we have a rich and diverse picture of food projects working across the city, but that we need to develop a better understanding of what provision is out there, and look at how we can better help people to access the right form of food support for them. The group found that we need a strategic approach and culture that tackles the underlying, structural causes of poverty, and clear leadership to drive this complex agenda forwards.

Recommendations

The report's recommendations are set out around four themes:

a. Strategy & Culture

- Sheffield City Council should implement the Tackling Poverty Framework by prioritising development of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. Tackling Food Poverty should be one element of this. It should be a citywide effort, across public services, the VCF, communities and business, and take a long term, structural approach to find lasting solutions.
- As part of the action plan, Sheffield City Council should identify ways to foster a culture that challenges stigma, and ensures that Sheffield people are aware of, and able to access the benefits that they are entitled to.

- Sheffield City Council's processes should reflect this culture – and ensure that there aren't any unnecessary barriers to people accessing support. We should consider how our processes that affect people in hardship - eg, council tax support, rent, poverty related grants, could be improved.
- b. Developing a comprehensive network of food support – mapping and development**
- Sheffield City Council should consider how it can work with food partners to accelerate the mapping of food support across the city.
 - Sheffield City Council should work with food partners to ensure that when people access emergency food aid, they are also able to access wider forms of advice and support to help move beyond crisis.
 - Sheffield City Council should consider how it can work with food partners to encourage joint working across the sector, to ensure that we have a range of viable initiatives in Sheffield beyond emergency food provision, that enable people to move through the rungs of the 'Food Ladder' - such as social eating projects and community pantries.
- c. Navigating the System**
- Sheffield City Council should consider how it can work with partners to develop mechanisms to help people find and access the right form of food support for them.
- d. Leadership**
- Sheffield City Council should identify where internal political and organisational leadership on poverty, food poverty and food insecurity sits in order to drive progress on this cross-cutting agenda.

The full report is attached at Appendix 1 for Co-operative Executive's consideration.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 We know that food poverty impacts on people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, sense of self, and contributes to social isolation. We know that food poverty has been on the rise over recent years, and that Covid has pushed more people into food poverty, with the worst yet to come.

The Committee undertook this work with the aim of developing recommendations that will improve the Council's response to food poverty, helping to drive progress on this important agenda, ultimately improving outcomes for people in our most vulnerable communities.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The working group spoke to a wide range of people during this work – Sheffield City Council officers, VCF organisations, food projects and academics. They also ran a public 'Call for Evidence' where people were invited to share their experiences of food poverty. Appendix 1 of the group's report lists the witnesses the group heard from and evidence gathered.

If there are any changes to service delivery or policy resulting from the response to the scrutiny committee's recommendations, consideration will need to be given as to whether consultation is required/appropriate.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. These are often collectively referred to as the 'general duties to promote equality'. We have considered our obligations under this duty and found that there are no direct equality of opportunity implications arising as a result of this report. However, any specific changes to service delivery or policy arising in response to scrutiny recommendations will need to include the consideration of equality implications.

- 4.1.2 This first phase of the scrutiny work has focussed on city-wide, strategic issues, although the group has noted in its terms of reference the need to understand how the extent, impact and experience of food poverty differs across groups and communities in Sheffield. Actions arising from the scrutiny recommendations will be able to look at this in more detail.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The implementation of any of the recommendations from the Committee's report may be subject to further decision making in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation. This would include any financial and commercial implications.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Scrutiny committees have an explicit power to make reports or recommendations to the Executive under section 9F(2) of the Local Government Act 2000.

4.3.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The implementation of any of the recommendations from the Committee's report may be subject to further decision making, and the legal implications of any proposal would be fully considered at that time.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The working group heard and discussed many issues during the course of this work, and identified areas for consideration in future policy development work on food poverty (see section 3.5 of the attached report).

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee asks the Co-operative Executive to consider and respond to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, with the aim of improving the Council's response to food poverty.

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