

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee

30 July 2019

Report of the Assistant Director – Legal & Governance

Food Poverty Scrutiny Review

Summary

1. This report invites the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee to nominate a Member to sit on an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee established by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) to investigate food poverty in York.

Background

2. During the previous administration, CSMC agreed to carry out a scrutiny review into Financial Inclusion in York with the aim of understanding the impact of Universal Credit on the city's citizens and the activities being run to promote Financial Inclusion.
3. In September 2018 CSMC agreed an initial remit for the review. However, in November 2018 CSMC considered a request that a 19 July 2018 Motion to Council on Food Poverty be added to the review remit. This was agreed and the following objectives were added:
 - i. To understand how the above issues are linked to apparently increasing levels of food poverty in York, including work on the following:
 - the background to food poverty in York including any available local statistics and how local measurement might be improved;
 - the current role of crisis support in York in mitigating food poverty;
 - a range of options for the Council and its partners to improve the city wide response to food poverty in York.

4. The Financial Inclusion Scrutiny Review Task Group had its final meeting on 13 February 2019 when it was agreed that issues around increasing food poverty in the city were complex and this should be the subject of a separate piece of work which could be picked up by the new administration after May's elections.
5. The review recommendations were agreed by Executive in March 2019 and these included a recommendation to the new administration that a deeper scrutiny review into the causes of and responses to food poverty is considered.
6. The topic was first considered by the new CSMC in June 2019 and again in July 2019 when Members agreed that as this subject cuts across the remits of other scrutiny committees the review should be carried out by an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee involving Members of other scrutiny committees. As a result CSMC agreed to invite a nominee from the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee to take part in this piece of work, along with CSMC nominees Cllrs Fenton and Rowley.
7. CSMC also agreed the following remit for the review:
 - i. Identify indicators and measures for York to monitor the impact of food poverty
 - ii. Identify areas of best practice within these activities.
 - iii. Identify opportunities to coordinate activities to increase impact and carry out an assessment of current service provision and sustainability
 - iv. Identify opportunities to target activities at the lowest income households to more effectively prevent food poverty

Consultation

8. A scoping report considered by CSMC in July (Annex 1) was written in consultation with officers from teams across the Council engaged in work to reduce poverty. For the review into food poverty to be successful Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee Members will need to engage with organisations such as York Foodbank, York Food Poverty Alliance and informal providers of food aid.

Options

9. Member can consider the information in this report and its annex and can:
 - i. Agree to nominate a Member of this Committee to sit on the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee looking into food poverty in York, or;
 - ii. Agree that food poverty is not a priority of this Committee and inform CSMC is does not wish to be involved in this review.

Analysis

10. There is no analysis in this report.

Council Plan

11. This report is linked to 'a prosperous city for all' and 'a Council that listens to residents' priorities in the Council Plan.

Implications

12. There are no implications associated with the recommendation in this report. However, if the Committee decide not to participate in this review CSMC will most likely proceed without representation from this Committee.

Risk Management

13. There are no risks associated with the recommendation in this report. However, while York may appear to be a rich city with a buoyant tourist industry, poverty is real – and growing – in a climate where food prices continue to rise and many incomes remain stagnant and this could present a significant risk to sections of the community unless there is a coordinated response to food poverty in York.

Recommendations

14. Members are asked to note the content of this report and its annex and nominate a Member to sit on the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee investigating food poverty in York.

Reason: To understand and help tackle issues related to food poverty in York

Contact Details

Author:

Steve Entwistle

Scrutiny Officer

Tel: 01904 554279

steven.entwistle@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Dawn Steel,

Head of Civic & Democratic Services.

Tel: 01904 551030

dawn.steel@york.gov.uk

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – CSMC Scoping report into food poverty