

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	4 November 2025
Report of:	Pauline Stuchfield, Director of Housing and Communities
Portfolio of:	Councillor Katie Lomas (Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion) and Councillor Bob Webb (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education)

Decision Report: Tackling Poverty Today and Turning the Tide to Create Lasting Change - A Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for addressing Poverty in York 2025-2035

Subject of Report

1. This report presents for approval 'Tackling Poverty Today and Turning the Tide to Create Lasting Change - A Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for addressing Poverty in York 2025-2035' - a 10-year strategy and action plan for tackling poverty in York.
2. The strategy has been informed by significant consultation with Members, partner organisations and the communities and residents of York.
3. It describes the strategic approach that the council and partners will take over the next decade to reduce the number of people experiencing poverty now and in the future. It is designed to act as a framework that the council and partners will use to ensure the greatest impact on poverty levels in York.
4. The strategy sets a direction of travel until 2035. Whilst recognising that much can change during that length of time, the fundamentals around poverty will remain the same.

5. Executive are invited to approve the 10-year strategy and action plan and endorse it for adoption by Full Council on behalf of the city of York.

Benefits and Challenges

6. The strategy and action plan describe the strategic approach that city partners and the council will take over the next decade to reduce the number of people experiencing poverty in York.
7. It recognises that although there are many policies and powers that are outside of the control of local partners, there remain key opportunities that collectively the city can deliver to make life better for many of York's residents who are experiencing poverty. It also recognises that by doing nothing, nothing will change.
8. A key challenge of a poverty reduction strategy is that so much is driven by complex issues and national policy that cannot be easily remedied. Instead, the strategy encourages greater collaboration and enhanced awareness and understanding of the inequalities affecting many York residents.

Policy Basis for Decision

9. The 10 Year City Plan 2022-2032, co-designed by city partners, and approved by Council in December 2022, set a vision for the city, that by 2032 York will be a vibrant, prosperous, welcoming and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success. [City Partners](#) identified one of the key actions they would take would be to reduce poverty:

*“We will harness the capacity and capability in the city to **tackle the causes of poverty**. Recognising poverty and deprivation have direct impacts on health inequalities and economic opportunities, actions will focus on food, fuel, housing, financial inclusion and the resilience of the community sector.”*

10. The Council Plan 2023-2027, One City for All, recognises the inequalities experienced across the city and set a vision for the council to establish the conditions that would make the city a healthier, fairer, **more affordable**, more sustainable and more accessible place, where everyone feels valued.

11. The Council Plan also contains a specific action to: “Listen to lived experience to deliver a Cost-of-Living Plan; and together with partners, develop and deliver a 10-year Anti-Poverty Strategy and Plan, including supporting young people and households reduce the cost of heating and energy bills” (p.19).
12. The strategy and strategic action plan follow the Financial Inclusion Interim Strategy 2023-2025.

Financial Strategy Implications

13. The development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy does not directly incur additional expenditure. The strategy highlights areas where the council is allocating resources into mitigating poverty, for example retrofit in council housing.

Recommendation and Reason

14. Executive are invited to approve the 10-year strategy and action plan and endorse it for adoption by Full Council on behalf of the city of York.

Reason: In alignment with the Council Plan and 10 year strategies, the anti-poverty strategy and action plan, reflects the views of residents, communities, partners and Members, sets a direction of travel for the council and partners over the next 10 years to tackle poverty in York helping to support the most vulnerable in society.

Background

15. The strategy and action plan are the successors to the council's Financial Inclusion Interim Strategy 2023-25 approved on 13th May 2023.
16. Addressing poverty today, and preventing people from experiencing deprivation in the future, is a key aspect of the 10 Year City Plan and Council Plan. It underpins the work of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and is critical to improving the health of York residents.

17. York has a strong history of addressing poverty and its causes, most notably through the work of Joseph and Seebohm Rowntree, with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation even today considered a world leading authority on tackling deprivation.
18. Across York, work continues with the myriad organisations and charities, many of whom have been consulted so far in the development of the strategy and plan, working to tackle poverty, deprivation and inequality in the city.
19. Yet, despite these efforts, the reality is that some of York's residents are in poverty and that this is something that, whilst more prevalent in some parts of the city than others, exists in every ward.
20. In alignment with the development of this strategy, the University of York and Policy in Practice have been looking at data from the LIFT (low-income family tracker) platform to understand the prevalence of poverty in the city. This is achieved through providing an indicative poverty figure through the utilisation of information about households in receipt of benefits finding nearly 4,000 households in the city in either relative or deep poverty.
21. It has been developed to provide a structured approach to tackling and addressing the root causes of poverty over the decade ahead, and includes:
 - A recommendation that all city partners use the shared definition ie. the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition.
 - Key performance indicators to monitor progress.
 - Three strategic objectives that address issues today, prepare for the future and prevent further people falling into poverty – with an expectation that when developing projects to tackle poverty, it is clear whether the outcome is to address today's issues, or to prepare for a better future.
 - A strategic action plan setting out actions already underway or interventions in development.
 - A recognition that some communities are more adversely affected than others, and as a result, interventions will be targeted to areas of most need for those who are currently

experiencing poverty, and more universal for interventions to prevent people from falling into poverty.

Consultation Analysis

Strategy initiation

22. The strategy and strategic action plan were developed in collaboration with services across the council.
23. The council's adoption of the Poverty Truth Commission's Organisational Standards, informed the development of the strategy, including the value of recognising the different time frames associated with the strategic objectives and outcomes, and need for clarity and a joined-up approach.
24. Discussions, both individual and in group settings, to inform the approach to the strategy and the actions identified have taken place with representatives from:
 - St Michael le Belfry and One Voice Church Network
 - Welfare Benefits Unit
 - York Foodbank
 - Aviva
 - Two Ridings Community Foundation
 - University of York
 - Community Furniture Store
 - York CVS
 - Money and Pensions Service
 - York Carers Centre
 - North Yorkshire Business and Education Partnership
 - Advice York network meeting
 - Pride of Place anchor institution meeting
 - Policy in Practice
25. A council presentation and subsequent discussion at the recent Resolve Poverty Conference in March 2025 further informed the approach following insight from other local authority attendees including Manchester and Bolton Councils and the North-East Combined Authority. This was followed up with a subsequent roundtable event, hosted by the University of York, with participants from nearby local authorities, such as Bradford, who shared their experience in developing an anti-poverty strategy.

Public consultation

26. A public consultation ran from 4 August to 13 October 2025 (extended from original deadline of 29 September 2025). The draft strategy/action plan and accompanying consultation survey were made available on the council's website, and paper copies were available via the council's customer service centre in West Offices, the York library network, Citizens Advice, the Community Furniture Store and York Food Bank distribution centres.
27. The consultation received a total of 153 responses. A summary of feedback is contained as **Annex B** of this report. Full consultation responses will be hosted on the York Open Data Platform.
28. Workshops were also organised with interest groups to enable feedback on the strategy. A schedule of meetings that took place is highlighted below:

Date	Group
Wednesday 13 August	Ageing without Children
Wednesday 3 September	Good Place Network
Wednesday 10th September	Armed Forces Community
Tuesday 16 September	Financial Inclusion Steering Group
Tuesday 23 September	Gypsy & Traveller Working Group
Tuesday 23 September	Schools Forum
Wednesday 24 September	Pride of Place
Wednesday 24 September	LGBT Forum

29. Discussions have also taken place with a representative of the Poverty Truth Commission to confirm the broad direction of travel for the strategy and identify any activity that could support poverty alleviation as suggested by people with lived experience of poverty.
30. Informal engagement sessions were also held with representatives from York St John University.

31. Overarching feedback from the consultation and workshops alluded to the need for a more detailed action plan to tackle poverty in the city to include emphasis on tackling the high cost of housing, low pay and insecure work, and the high cost of bills. Transport costs, cost of childcare, and skills support were also referenced as areas that could have greater emphasis in the strategy and action plan.
32. On 8 September 2025, City of York Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee provided feedback on the strategy. Scrutiny identified the need for a more detailed action plan together with additional reference to strategic work being undertaken with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to tackle poverty in the city and wider region, a review of the key performance indicators to align more closely with the action plan, and a more considered review of the proactive role that the council could play in tackling poverty.
33. The feedback received during the consultation was invaluable in enhancing the strategy, ensuring lived experience and the views of residents and expert groups are reflected in the final document.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

34. Executive can choose to:
 - 1) Reject the strategy and action plan
 - 2) Reject the strategy and action plan and set out further additions and edits
 - 3) Approve the strategy and action plan and endorse it for adoption by Full Council on behalf of the city of York.

Executive are recommended to approve **option 3**, approve *the strategy and action plan and endorse it for adoption by Full Council*.

Reason: Approving the strategy and action plan will set a clear framework for the council and partners to pursue activity to reduce poverty in the city.

Rejecting the strategy would mean that the council and partners did not have a framework through which to tackle poverty in the

city, leading to missed opportunities for improving the lives of residents.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial** - The development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy does not directly incur additional expenditure. The strategy highlights areas where the council is allocating resources into mitigating poverty eg retrofit in council housing.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications contained within this report.
- **Legal** - There are no legal implications contained within this report.
- **Procurement** - There are no procurement implications contained within this report.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Public Health welcomes the strategy and action plan to tackle poverty in York and strongly supports its vision. Poverty is a fundamental public health issue and addressing its root causes is critical to improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities across our population.

Poverty represents an escalating public health crisis, shaped by long-standing inequalities. It significantly impacts people's ability to live healthy and fulfilling lives by limiting access to the key social determinants of health—sufficient income, secure employment, decent housing, quality education, nutritious food, and essential services.

The health impacts of poverty are both immediate and long-term. Living in poverty is linked to:

- Lower life expectancy and fewer years lived in good health.
- Increased risk of chronic diseases, respiratory illness, and mental health conditions.
- Greater exposure to unsafe or substandard housing, as tragically illustrated in the death of Awaab Ishak.

- Higher rates of infant and child mortality, malnutrition, and developmental delays.
- Barriers to health-promoting behaviours and increased prevalence of health-harming ones, such as tobacco and alcohol use and gambling.
- Certain groups are disproportionately affected, including lone-parent families, larger households, carers, disabled individuals, and people from many ethnic minority communities. These inequalities have deepened in recent years, further entrenching disadvantage and poor health outcomes.

Reducing poverty is one of the most impactful ways to improve public health outcomes and build a fairer, healthier York for all.

- **Environment and Climate action** - Those in poverty are least responsible for the causes of climate change; however, they are also the most likely to be negatively impacted by the consequences. Tackling poverty in York is vital for a just transition towards net zero, ensuring access to well paid jobs, affordable energy, food and other resources.

Evidence indicates that individual greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are directly related to levels of consumption. It is therefore vital that alongside tackling poverty, we de-couple the link between consumption and GHGs by providing sustainable alternatives.

- **Affordability** - The strategy reflects activity to improve affordability in the city for residents and is therefore a positive development for the city.
- **Equalities and Human Rights** - The equalities impacts are contained within the Equalities Impact Assessment provided.
- **Data Protection and Privacy** - The data protection impact assessment (DPIAs) screening questions were completed for the recommendations and options in this report and as there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed to set these out, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed

following the approved recommendations and options from this report and a DPIA completed if required

- **Communications** - Communications will be required to support efforts to highlight activity and support to alleviate poverty working cross-partnership via regular networks
- **Economy** - see Affordability implication and key elements of the strategy around skills and employment.

Risks and Mitigations

Reputational: The strategy is expected amongst a wide range of partners and representative organisations. Failure to finalise the strategy would indicate a stepping back of this important issue.

Community engagement: Consultation has taken place with residents and various community groups. They have provided comprehensive feedback to ensure that the strategy and action plan fully reflects the needs of York's communities. A decision not to progress with the strategy will undermine the consultation process – this can be mitigated through approval of the strategy.

Capacity: The strategy responds directly to the Council Plan and 10-year strategies. However, capacity is limited within the council to undertake significant activity – this can be mitigated through effective, enhanced partnership working.

Wards Impacted: All

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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Report approved:	Yes
Date:	24/10/2025

Background papers

Council Plan 2023-2027, One City for All, [Council Plan](#)

Financial Inclusion Interim Strategy 2023-2025, [Financial Inclusion Strategy](#)

York 2032 strategic framework, [York 2032 strategic framework](#)

Corporate Scrutiny Meeting, 8 September 2025 [Agenda Item 5 - 10 year anti-poverty strategy](#)

Annexes

Annex A: 10-year anti-poverty strategy - Tackling Poverty Today and Turning the Tide to Create Lasting Change - A Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for addressing Poverty in York 2025-2035

Annex B: Analysis of consultation feedback

Annex C: Equalities Impact Assessment

Abbreviations:

CVS – Centre for Voluntary Service

DPIA - Data Protection Impact Assessment

GHG – Greenhouse gas emissions

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender

LIFT - Low-income family tracker