

Annex A - Implementation of Recommendations from Financial Inclusion Scrutiny Review

Recommendation	Implementation as of September 2019
<p>i. Recommend to the new administration that a deeper scrutiny review into the causes of and responses to food poverty is considered, taking into account key elements of the York Food Poverty Alliance report.</p>	<p>This issue has been taken forward by the new Customer and Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee. The Committee agreed a remit and invited the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee to nominate a Member to join an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee to undertake this scrutiny review</p>
<p>And requests Council to:</p> <p>ii. Agree that a review and refresh of the 2012 Financial Inclusion Policy and associated Action Plan should be undertaken. This review should include, but not be limited to, consideration of the work of Advice York and the Financial Inclusion Steering Group, the impact of the roll-out of Universal Credit, measures to address food poverty and support for digital inclusion;</p>	<p>The Financial Inclusion Steering Group approved a delivery plan in September for the review and refresh of the Strategy which will become a Financial Inclusion Policy. The foundation steps have been taken in terms of reviewing the York context, and next steps will include development of key themes.</p>

<p>iii. Consider broadening the membership of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group to include organisations such as the Welfare Benefits Unit;</p>	<p>The Financial Inclusion Steering Group now includes the Welfare Benefits Unit and Joseph Rowntree Foundation to future meetings. Consideration is to be given to hold an annual meeting with wider involvement, perhaps tied in to the annual Executive report on Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits.</p>
<p>iv. Investigate options for securing long-term funding support for successful time-limited FISG grant funded schemes, such as the Citizens Advice York GP Surgeries Advice Scheme;</p>	<p>This was formally committed to in an Executive Member Report considered by the joint Executive Portfolio Holders on 12th August 2019. The following work was agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As part of the next budget consultation and planning process, that strategies around securing longer term solutions to those schemes that have had a successful track record in delivering real outcomes for residents, are developed and secured in 3 year (or more) Service Level Agreements. The budget approvals would be sought during the coming budget setting process for 2020/21 and the Service Level Agreements approved individually at joint portfolio holder decision sessions. 2) Sustainability of financial inclusion projects should also be considered as part of the development of the refreshed Financial Inclusion Policy later this financial year

<p>v. Continue to monitor the impact of Universal Credit in York and agree that future six-monthly reports on Financial Inclusion are considered by the Executive rather than the Executive Member;</p>	<p>Action completed and the first Annual report was presented to Executive Report 18th July 2019. Interim reports will be presented in December each year.</p>
<p>vi. Commission the FISG to examine the current provision of digital and IT services available for benefit claimants at West Offices and other publicly-accessible buildings to ensure these facilities are accessible for all who need them;</p>	<p>This will be incorporated into Digital Inclusion work as part of the new Financial Inclusion Strategy and Work Plan but also as a separate policy area in itself.</p> <p>This is monitored at every meeting of Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) going forward as part of the Digital Inclusion agenda item also the Head of Service Benefits update report.</p>
<p>vii. Ensure the language and terminology on CYC forms used for requesting financial assistance is easily understood and adequately conveys the necessary information to people who may have difficulties filling in these forms;</p>	<p>This work is ongoing and in some cases has been completed. Officers are measuring the effect of any change in wording in terms of application numbers.</p> <p>This will be monitored at every meeting of Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) going forward as part of the Head of Service Benefits update report.</p>

<p>viii. Seek out and learn from best practice elsewhere on how best to engage with ‘hard to reach’ groups who may not necessarily be comfortable reaching out to statutory bodies when they need advice or support;</p>	<p>Work already done includes working with Leeds City Region and looking at other councils approaches eg Gateshead and Leeds</p> <p>Also looking at option of engaging with third sector body to assist with Digital Inclusion review. Will include learning from the experience of other bodies.</p> <p>Contacts have been made with local partners regarding a ‘Digital Eagles’ model that has been successful elsewhere.</p>
<p>ix. Raise awareness within Council directorates of the impact that their policies and actions can have on more vulnerable members of the community, and encourage more cross-council and cross-partner engagement;</p>	<p>Financial Inclusion Steering Group have reviewed its internal membership to ensure Directorate Management Team level representation from all key service areas to supplement the recent addition of Public Health To consider holding regular events at which operational staff can be engaged through awareness sessions on key issues. This worked well in a similar session on the York Financial Assistance Scheme.</p>

<p>x. Ensure that after May 2019 all new and existing Members have comprehensive training around Financial Inclusion so they have a full understanding of the role of the council and its partners.</p>	<p>The training is to be included in the member development programme this civic year, draft dates are being finalised.</p>
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