

Appendix A

Anti-Poverty Strategy Annual report 2022/23

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on delivery of key actions in the Council's third Anti-Poverty Strategy, which covers the period 2020-2024. During 2022/23 the Council has delivered a range of planned actions to help address of issues associated with poverty, including low pay, debt, food poverty, fuel poverty, digital inclusion, skills, access to employment, housing affordability, homelessness, and poor health outcomes. The Council has also worked with local communities and partner organisations to deliver additional activity to respond to the impacts in Cambridge of the rising cost of living in this period.

2.0 Cost of Living response

2.1 During 2022/23, increases in energy costs, food prices, fuel prices and other costs had a significant impact on household budgets in Cambridge and across the UK, particularly for residents on low incomes. The [Centre for Cities estimate](#) that the local inflation rate in Cambridge increased from 2.1% in March 2021 to 9.1% in January 2023. This rise in the cost of living has resulted in significant economic hardship for some local residents who are on low incomes. Over 2022/23, a record 13,121 food parcels were distributed by food banks to residents in Cambridge, a large increase on the previous record of 9,467 distributed in 2020/21.

2.2 The Anti-Poverty Strategy already includes a number of actions that will help address the rising cost of living by supporting residents to maximise their incomes and reduce their outgoings, particularly under Objective 1 (see 3.0 in the report below for an update on actions delivered during 2022/23 under Objective 1 of the APS).

2.3 We also took a number of additional steps over the past year to help address the cost of living for local residents. Much of this activity was delivered through the 'Heating and Health' project, which worked with communities to co-produce an approach to support residents who are experiencing damp and mould and associated health conditions as a result of not being able to heat their homes fully. The project was delivered using £179,000 funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS), as part of a combined total of £500,000 awarded to the City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council.

2.4 Key activities delivered through the Heating and Health project to help residents with the cost of living included:

- Organising a series of 11 [Cost of Living Support Pop-Ups](#) at community venues across the city from October 2022-February 2023. These events gave residents the opportunity to access support from a range of organisations in a single location, including Council services, the County Council's Think Communities team and a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations, such as Citizens Advice, Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) and Cambridge Water.
- Providing regular [Warm and Welcoming Spaces](#) at the Council's 5 community centres from November to March, which offered community events, quiet spaces and meals to local people.
- Promoting [additional warm spaces](#) at Cambridgeshire County Council's public libraries and 17 venues run by voluntary and community partners.
- Supporting partners to provide warm spaces and community meals by awarding £1,000 [winter support grants](#) to 43 voluntary and community organisations.
- Distributing hot water bottles, blankets and air-fryers to people in need. A total of 500 hot water bottles were distributed at the [Cost of Living Support Pop-Up](#) events. 130 heated blankets and 89 air fryers were distributed to residents in Council-managed assisted living schemes, and we identified 250 households who may benefit from additional support to reduce heating and cooking costs and offered them a free air fryer, with a 74% uptake.

2.5 In addition to the activity delivered through the Heating and Health project, the Council also took a number of other steps to support residents with the cost of living, including:

- Attending meetings of a multi-agency City Community Reference Group, which coordinated measures to help alleviate cost of living issues across partners in Cambridge.
- Carrying out a wide range of communication activity through the autumn and winter to help residents access support available with the cost of living, including a 4-page pull-out in the Council's residents magazine Cambridge Matters, a leaflet, social media messaging and dedicated [Cost of Living](#) webpages signposting people to support.
- Administering the Government's initial £150 energy rebate scheme, making over 40,000 payments to residents with a total value of £6 million.

- Providing a £240,000 local energy rebate scheme, which gave £22.50 top-ups for people on Council Tax bands A-D and disabled and low-income people living in band E-H properties.
- Providing a total of £20,000 to the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS) to ensure that they could meet increased demand for [energy vouchers](#) from Cambridge residents in urgent financial need. The vouchers could be used by people paying for energy by pre-payment meters or direct debit.
- Supporting Cambridge Sustainable Food and Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance's "[Cost of Food and Living Crisis Campaign](#)". The Council offered to match public donations up to £10,000 to the campaign, which aimed to raise funds for organisations providing frontline support to communities in Cambridge over the winter.

4.0 Objective 1 - Helping people on low incomes to maximise their income and minimise their costs

4.1 The following sections of this report provide a summary of the key actions delivered during 2022/23 under each of the 5 objectives of the Council's current Anti-Poverty Strategy for 2020-2024. Key activities which helped deliver Objective 1 during 2022/23 included:

- Continuing to pay all directly employed Council staff at least the Real Living Wage. In October 2022, the Council implemented the new £10.90 per hour rate, which was introduced by the Living Wage Foundation in response to the increasing cost of living.
- Continuing to pay all agency workers the Real Living Wage after 4 weeks, and all Council tenders and contracts require contractors to meet the Living Wage Foundation's criteria (any staff employed by contractors who work for a minimum of 2 hours or more for 8 consecutive weeks on Council premises are paid the Real Living Wage).
- Continuing to promote Living Wage accreditation to local employers. The council held two events and carried out a range of other promotional activity during national Living Wage week in November 2022. There were 73 employers accredited with the Living Wage Foundation in the Greater Cambridge area in March 2023.
- Allocating just over £1m worth of Community Grants to 65 organisations to deliver projects aiming to reduce social and economic deprivation in Cambridge.

- Supporting benefits claimants to receive their full entitlement. In 2022/23 the Council helped households to receive a total of £27.4m in Housing Benefit, £158,737 in Discretionary Housing Payments and provided £8.2m in Council Tax Support to 6,800 households.
- Organising a food justice event in Cambridge in May 2022 to bring together local partners to discuss opportunities to collaborate.
- Progressing the food distribution and community kitchen project (formally known as Food Hub project). The project relocated from Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre in 2022, moving into temporary accommodation on Barnwell Drive. Following this, the project plans to be housed at the North-East Cambridge meanwhile site for up to 15 years (subject to planning approvals).
- Continuing to partner with Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) to provide tailored energy advice and grant support to residents. External funding was secured to continue this support for 18 months, starting from March 2023 onwards.
- Working with Cambridge Online to support Council tenants to access the internet and use digital technology, including providing volunteers (at Talbot House and Brandon Court) and new computer kiosks (at Brandon Court and Mansel Court) at several of our sheltered housing schemes.
- Awarding £40,000 from the Community Grants in 2023/24 to Cambridge Online to provide a range of digital inclusion support, including: providing a digital inclusion hub; running weekly digital outreach sessions at the Meadows Community Centre and Browns Field Community Centre, and investigating opportunities in Romsey, Cherry Hinton and Queen Edith's; providing 7 digital hubs for older people across the city; and running a laptop and tablet donation scheme.
- Working with the Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership, which brings together local voluntary and community groups providing support to digitally excluded households.

5.0 Objective 2 - Strengthening families and communities, including supporting groups of people that are more likely to experience poverty

5.1 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2022/23 included:

- Funding Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) to support people to volunteer and to build the capacity of local organisations to work with volunteers. In 2022/23 CCVS provided 1:1 advice to 82 people, organised 15 volunteering events, advised 17 organisations and delivered training for volunteer managers.

- Providing five weeks of free holiday activities for families with primary-school aged children in Cambridge's parks during July and August 2023. At a time when the cost of living was increasing, the sessions provided free access to physical activities such as orienteering, table tennis and outdoor play, and also crafts, games and other activities inspired by the collections of the University of Cambridge Museums.
- Providing 10 community days, and 11 skip days to save residents money from disposing of almost 150 tonnes of bulky waste and encourage residents to have a sense of pride in their neighbourhood.
- Awarding a total of over £18,000 in small grants to 40 community groups that organised events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which were attended by over 6,000 people. The Council also awarded Community Grant funding to other events that promoted community cohesion and community pride such as the Mill Road Winter Fair.
- Working with local organisations and communities to provide events to celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion. These included events during South Asian History Month, Black History Month, Disability History Month, Women's Heritage Month, and LGBTQ History Month. The Council was unable to hold a civic event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2023 due to an increase in coronavirus rates, but an event is planned in June 2023 during Refugee Week.
- Launching a new round of the Council's Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP), following a review of the process in 2021/22. 70 viable submissions for small capital improvement schemes in local communities were received. These have been prioritised and approved projects are now under development. A further round of project applications is planned for 2023.
- Developing regeneration proposals for East Barnwell. Following community engagement, the East Barnwell Framework for Change was completed. Proposals for a regeneration scheme for the East Barnwell Centre were presented to the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2022, which would include a new community centre, library, pre-school facility, commercial premises, affordable housing and public open space.
- Securing £1.3m funding from the national Sharing Prosperity Fund (SPF) via Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to deliver a number of projects in Cambridge from April 2023 to early 2025. One of these SPF supported projects is the Focus on Abbey project, which will bring people together from across the community, voluntary, public and private sectors to identify opportunities to work together to improve quality of life in the Abbey area, address entrenched inequalities and empower the community. The project seeks to move away from a deficit model description of Abbey:

building on a shared understanding the strengths and assets of the area and the opportunities; and taking a wealth-building approach. The project will build on work done to create the East Barnwell Framework for Change masterplan and planned regeneration and development in the area through the East Barnwell Regeneration Project.

- Progressing plans for the proposed development and regeneration of the North East Cambridge area. The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NEC AAP) proposed submission plan was approved by Councillors in Autumn 2021. The plan sets out policy proposals regarding social, community and cultural infrastructure, shops and local services, and improving connectivity between North East Cambridge and neighbouring areas. The outcome of the Development Consent Order process is now awaited before the AAP moves onto consultation and submission for adoption.
- Developing policies for inclusion in the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service consulted on the first policy proposals in for Local Plan in 2021, including proposals regarding transport and connectivity and the design of new developments. The next stage for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is production of a draft plan, which will be considered by members later in 2023 prior to consultation.

6.0 Objective 3 - Promoting an inclusive economy, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes

6.1 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2022/23 included:

- Working with a range of partner organisations to develop the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 'Region of Learning' project to promote learning pathways, evidence formal and informal learning and skills through digital badges, and link to live labour market opportunities. The project has recruited 521 young people to date and achieved its targets for participation by disabled people (135 young people) and minority ethnic people (114 young people).
- Working with members of the My Cambridge local cultural partnership and the national charity Social Mobility Business Partnership (SMBP) to deliver a Work Skills and Insight Week in July 2022, which introduced 30 young people from low-income backgrounds in years 11 and 12 to local creative industries. The Council has worked with My Cambridge and SMBP to organise a free work experience week in July 2023 for young people in years 12 and 13 with a focus on careers in the arts and culture.
- Developing policies for inclusion in the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service consulted on the first policy

proposals in for Local Plan in 2021, which included approaches to ensuring a mix of employment sites, protecting industrial land, delivering affordable workspace, and providing employment opportunities through new developments. The next stage for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is production of a draft plan, which will be considered by members later in 2023 prior to consultation.

- Progressing plans for the proposed development and regeneration of the North East Cambridge area. The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NEC AAP) proposed submission plan was approved by Councillors in Autumn 2021. Policy 29 in the plan sets out how development should create meaningful employment and training opportunities for existing residents in neighbouring disadvantaged communities during both the construction and operational phases of the development. The outcome of the Development Consent Order process is now awaited before the AAP moves onto consultation and submission for adoption.
- Continuing to fund the Tempo ‘time-credit’ scheme from the Council’s Community Grants. Time credits are awarded to volunteers for hours spent volunteering and they can be redeemed in a local and national network of venues. In 2022/23 Tempo were funded to offer time credits to at least 100 volunteers working with 13 small local voluntary and community groups, and to build the capacity of these groups to support volunteers.
- Supporting a £2m, 4-year Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) skills and apprenticeship service being delivered by Form the Future and Cambridge Regional College from 2020/21. In 2022/23 the service supported 223 apprenticeship starts, 332 adults with careers information advice and guidance, 53 students to access work experience and industry placements, 50 students accessing a mentoring programme and 977 careers guidance activities for children and young people.
- Continuing to work with partners in the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to ensure the delivery of transport infrastructure that connects more deprived wards of Cambridge with the city centre and that economic development, employment and skills investment supports people on low incomes and reduces inequalities. During 2022/23 GCP:
 - Carried out public consultation on the Making Connections scheme which proposes to improve bus services across the city and reduce congestion by introducing a Sustainable Travel Zone;
 - Continued construction of the Milton Road improvement scheme;
 - Completed phase 1 of the Chisholm Trail cycling route (including the Abbey-Chesterton Bridge) and consultation on phase 2 schemes (Coldhams Lane and Cromwell Road).

- Contributing to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) new Economic Growth Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which will inform investment decisions with a primary goal to reduce inequality and drive levelling up within and between the three economies of Peterborough, Fenland and Greater Cambridge.

7.0 Objective 4 – Addressing the high cost of housing, improve housing conditions, and reduce homelessness

7.1 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2022/23 included:

- Completing 208 new Council homes to rent, starting on site with a further 144 new homes and approving 137 more homes to be built as part of the Council's affordable housing programme. 21 of the council homes started on site are to be Passivhaus Certified, and a further 84 received planning approval targeting Passivhaus performance standards.
- Approving the Greater Cambridge Affordable Rents policy in June 2022. The policy is not enforceable, but sets an expectation that affordable rents will be set at or below 60% of the medium market rents or the current Local Housing Allowance rate, whichever is lower. Monitoring processes are being put in place to assess to what extent the policy is being followed for homes completed during 2023/24 onwards.
- Improving energy efficiency in existing Council homes. This has included installing external wall insulation and solar PV to 96 existing Council homes with poor energy efficiency ratings. The Council also launched a £5m Net Zero Carbon Homes pilot project, where up to 50 Council homes will be retrofitted to net zero carbon standards. During 2022/23, the Council has actively engaged with interested council tenants to join the pilot project, and work is expected to take place during 2023 and 2024.
- Supporting energy efficiency improvements in privately-owned homes in Cambridge. Working in partnership with all the Cambridgeshire local authorities through the Action on Energy Partnership, during 2022/23 we used a total of £2.4m in Government funding (from the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme and the Sustainable Warmth scheme) to retrofit energy efficiency measures in 271 homes across Cambridgeshire, with 101 of these in Cambridge.
- Taking action to ensure that private rented properties in Cambridge meet energy efficiency standards. This included contacting the landlords of 277 rental properties in the city regarding Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations, (MEES), bringing 21 private rented properties up to at least an

'E' energy performance rating, issuing 3 compliance notices and issuing 3 financial penalty notices for £1,000 each.

- Ensuring Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are licenced where required and proactively taking enforcement against landlords or property managers that are not complying through:
 - Issuing and renewing 167 mandatory HMO licences
 - Investigating 112 complaints relating to HMOs
 - Revoking 20 mandatory HMO licences.

- Continuing the 'Housing First' approach which provides self-contained accommodation and support for rough sleepers. An interim review in June 2022 showed that 14 Housing First units had tenants and a further 8 Housing First properties had been earmarked on new housing development sites.

- Continuing to implement actions to address domestic abuse as part of the Council's existing Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. A public Domestic Abuse Conference was held to mark White Ribbon Day in 2022 and a Survivors Conference was held in September 2022 in partnership with Cambridge Women's Aid to gather feedback for service improvements. The Council is currently recruiting a fixed-term Specialist Housing Worker (Domestic Abuse) to collate and analyse feedback directly from survivors of domestic abuse.

8.0 Objective 5 - Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes

8.1 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2022/23 included:

- Continuing to provide 50% reductions on entry prices at our leisure centres for people receiving Means Tested Benefits, leading to 56,878 discounted entries during 2022/23.

- Supporting swimming lessons for pupils from low-income households. The Council has provided funding for five primary schools, to deliver additional teaching resource in swimming lessons for pupils in year 4, 5 and 6. Funding has also been provided for up to 100 pupils in year 5 and 6 who are not predicted to reach Key Stage 2 swimming standard requirements, to access lessons.

- Supporting an exercise referral scheme, under which health professionals referred 251 people for subsidised 12-week exercise programmes at local gyms and sports centres.

- Supporting physical activity programmes for low income households. In 2022/23, this included:
 - Running free or low-cost weekly sports sessions through the Invigorate programme for mental health service users and residents interested in improving their mental health and wellbeing through exercise.
 - Promoting the Grassroots Physical Activity Fund (funded by The Leys school), which provides up to £250 per family for children from low-income families to take part in grassroots sports activities.
 - Inviting local community groups and fitness instructors to apply for £300 grants from the Community Kickstart Fund to help set up or run inclusive sports or fitness sessions for people in Cambridge. Funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, and administered by Cambridge City Council, the £300 grants can be used to cover costs such as hiring facilities, paying a coach or instructor or purchasing equipment.
 - Running popular Healthy Weights sessions people under 11 and their families to engage in different sports together. There are also courses specifically for families where a parent or child has a disability or long-term health condition.
- Promoting a free, online, month-long health and wellbeing festival in January 2023. The festival included a range of physical activity and wellbeing activities suitable for beginners. The festival is organised by the Healthy You service, which is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council and run in partnership with the City Council and other district Councils.
- Working with local partners to provide a regular programme of free lunches in Council community centres and other community venues during the school holidays, when costs tend to increase for families.
- Piloting a free six-week family cooking course by a nutritionist which was targeted at low-income families, funded by the Healthy You service.