TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

10 MARCH 2020

PART I

Report Title	**Poverty in Teignbridge**
Purpose of Report	To highlight the significant actions and resources already being undertaken by the council to mitigate the causes and impact of poverty locally
Recommendation(s)	This paper invites the Executive Committee to consider whether it wishes to recommend any further actions to be undertaken, including consultation with key partner agencies to ensure actions are meeting the desired outcomes.
Financial Implications	Please see Section 5 Implications, Risk Management & Climate Change Impact Martin.Flitcroft@Teignbridge.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer
Legal Implications	Please see Section 5 Implications, Risk Management & Climate Change Impact karen.trickey@teignbridge.gov.uk Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
Risk Assessment	Not applicable
Environmental/ Climate Change Implications	Not applicable david.eaton@teignbridge.gov.uk
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Requested by	Leader of the Council/Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategic Direction: Cllr Gordon Hook
Appendices / Background Papers	Presentation attached

1 Introduction / background

A request has been made by the Leader of the Council for officers to investigate the levels of poverty in Teignbridge in line with the Joseph Roundtree Foundation's strategy, which highlights the causes and consequences of poverty.

Source: Joseph Roundtree Foundation

2 Measuring poverty

Although there is no single, universally accepted definition of poverty, it is generally acknowledged that it means having difficulty paying your rent, heating your home, or paying for essential goods and services. It means facing marginalisation and even discrimination and can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

Various poverty measures based on disposable household income are in common use, but trends can look quite different depending on the geography and measures used. The most widely-used definition in the UK and Europe describes individuals as experiencing 'relative poverty' if their household income is below 60% of the national median. In 2019 the median household disposable income in the UK was £29,400[1], which means that households in Teignbridge whose annual income falls below £17,640 could be considered to be in 'relative poverty'.

However, income will not always reflect the extent to which a family can afford necessities. Poverty can also be presented before and after housing costs, where the latter can generate higher levels of poverty, depending on tenure and location.

Measures of deprivation are not the same as measures of income, as they relate to how people live. Deprivation is the consequence of a lack of income and other resources. The Indices of Deprivation combine information from the seven domains, including health, living environment etc to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation called the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)[2].

1. Average household income, UK: Financial year ending 2019
2. The Index of Multiple Deprivation

3 Causes and consequences of poverty in the UK

The causes of poverty are things that reduce household resources, or increase household need and the cost of meeting them. Life events and moments of transition, for example becoming ill, bereavement, redundancy, or a relationship breakdown are all common triggers for poverty.

3.1 Causes of poverty

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, some of the causes of poverty in the UK today are:

1. High costs of housing, essential goods and services
2. An ineffective benefit system
3. Unemployment and low-paid jobs lacking prospects and security, or a lack of jobs
4. Low levels of skills, including digital, or education
5. Discrimination
6. Abuse, trauma or chaotic lives

3.2 Consequences of poverty in the UK

Some of the consequences of poverty are:

1. health problems
2. housing problems
3. being a victim, or perpetrator of crime
4. drug, or alcohol problems
5. lower educational achievement
6. poverty itself – poverty in childhood increases the risk of unemployment and low pay in adulthood, and lower savings in later life
7. homelessness
8. teenage parenthood, relationship and family problems
9. biological effects – poverty early in a child's life can have a harmful effect on their brain development

Source: Joseph Roundtree Foundation 2019

4 Initiatives by the council to tackle the causes of poverty

Local government is responsible for a range of vital services for people and businesses in defined areas. Among them are well known functions such as social care, schools, housing, benefits, planning, council tax and waste collection.

Councillors work with local people and partners, such as local businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities. To this end local authorities and other public bodies are already working hard to alleviate poverty where resources allow.

This report highlights the significant actions and resources already being undertaken by Teignbridge District Council, under the remit of a 'second tier' council, to mitigate the causes and impact of poverty locally. It quantifies the number of households being helped and/or the current levels of investment.

4.1 Actions being taken to mitigate the high costs of housing, essential goods and services

a. Developing a strand in the council strategy to address housing issues as a priority: **A roof over Our Heads**

b. Delivery of affordable, social housing for rent; around 157 per year, including new housing schemes developed to high eco and low energy standards. For example, Passivhaus in Christow and our proposals for East Street and Drake Road, Newton Abbot.

c. Managing 1,038 households on the housing register and allocating around 400 social homes a year

d. Housing Services has secured **£695,000 Warm Homes Funding** to provide first time air source heat pumps and gas central heating to 200 fuel poor homes. An

additional £160,000 has been secured for first time gas central heating to residents living in park homes

e. Managing 18 gypsies and traveller pitches at Haldon. The Council continues to exceed Local Plan delivery targets delivering 48 pitches

f. Encouraging and supporting around 100 households registered for downsizing to reduce housing costs

g. Annually administering £10,000 toward personalised budgets for clients within our accommodation project for rough sleepers

h. Improving around 180 homes a year through council intervention, including enforcement and the provision of loans and grants to those most in need

i. Helping to keep around 250 people a year independent at home through the provision of grants, adaptations and support

j. Preventing and relieving homelessness for over 900 households a year, through assistance, advice and statutory assessments

k. Assisted 341 households in 2018/19 into temporary accommodation until they could get back on their feet

l. Adopted in 2019, our tenancy strategy champions local housing affordability and the transparent allocation of social housing

m. Last year we provided 289 loans and grants to improve housing conditions and make homes more thermally efficient

Community funding

Additionally, the council maintains service level agreements with both the Community Voluntary Service and Citizens Advice. Both organisations work in the community to support local residents.

n. **The Citizens Advice** receive £52,130 from the council over three years. In 2018/19, 9,438 unique clients were seen by Teignbridge Citizens Advice, who went on to help 468 households with financial advice worth £6,824 to each household a year.

o. **The Community and Voluntary Service** receive £57,000 for a three year contract, which covers £35,000 for the core service, £8,000 for funding advice and £14,000 for volunteer work. They are currently in the second year of the contract. They support local charities, voluntary groups, and social enterprises in Teignbridge to build a stronger community. In 2018/19, among other projects, they:
   - Supported 86 groups to develop their capability and development work
   - Provided 36 learning opportunities
   - Supported 103 community groups with financial sustainability, including funding advice

- Sourced £551,435 of grant income across 111 local groups

p. **The Rural Aid fund** is a £40,000 budget for the enhancement of community life; it is intended to support projects that improve access to services, improve the health and wellbeing of the local community and meet the needs of minority and vulnerable groups. Parish and town councils currently submit one bid a year, of up to £5,000, which generally results in the award of around 20 grant awards of £2,000 each. The budget report for 2020/21 is reducing this budget to £26,000pa, to be divided into 13 grants of £2,000. Alternative funding arrangements are being considered, for example Lottery, crowd funding, or funding by town and parishes councils themselves.

4.2 Actions taken to improve our benefit system

Since the introduction of Universal Credit in September 2018, assessments and payments for those under retirement age are now undertaken by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), which, under welfare reform, now includes the housing element of Universal Credit. The council, however, is still responsible for the payment of Housing Benefit to those who have reached pension age, are homeless, are in receipt of a Severe Disability Premium, or have more than 3 children in their household.

The council is also responsible for further initiatives to assist households on low incomes:

a. **The payment of Housing Benefit to** 5,629 working age households and those who have reached pension age, are homeless, or who are in receipt of a Severe Disability Premium

b. **The council tax support scheme** is a local means tested scheme to help people on a low income to pay their council tax. Currently 4,408 households (7% of all households in Teignbridge) are eligible for support. 61% of all claimants receive 100% council tax reduction, 35% record some sort of disability and 34% are female lone parents

c. Providing £194,000 in 2019 towards our **Discretionary Housing Payments** (DHP) to help those most in need with housing costs. To date we have made 161 awards with an average payment of £434 per household

d. The council operates an **Exceptional Hardship Fund** for those who need additional support and don’t qualify under our Council Tax Support Scheme. In 2017 and 2018 we helped 42 households, who on average received £402 of assistance

e. We offer appointments with **Homemaker**, who offer money and debt advice to households on low income. Each year they support around 336 households, bringing each an estimated financial uplift of around £340 a month in extra income and savings

f. Funding the **Stronger Communities Fund** to support the local economy and welfare groups, for example foodbanks, who support over 1,800 households annually (3,074 food packs, £2,294 fuel top-ups), by offering community funding, such as rent subsidies

g. Hosting the **Teign Welfare Reform Group**, proactively working with key partners and statutory agencies to monitor and mitigate changes to the welfare system when it impacts registered providers and residents

4.3 Actions taken to tackle unemployment and low-paid jobs, lacking prospects and security, or a lack of jobs

a. Developing a strand in the council strategy to address wage and employment issues as a priority: **Investing in prosperity** and **Great places to live and work**

b. Facilitating links between businesses and education providers
The council helps to promote links between businesses and education that is facilitated by the People Plus contract that started in June 2019.
- 49 Clients have attended the Link Up Start Up scheme, where employed people receiving business support and workshops to become self-employed
- 32 were then seen on a 1:1 and these were all accepted on to the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) programme, currently a 65% conversion rate, but clients do have 6 months to consider joining the programme from their info session
- 23 clients in the NEA mentoring stage
- 9 clients have successfully completed the NEA process and are now trading

c. Promoting the delivery of new employment space - Since 2018 the council has invested £3,704,192 in new commercial, industrial estates and buildings. Economic Development is working with two developers who are bringing forward two separate employment sites of 26 acres in total. There are currently 19 businesses looking for space of at least 1,000 sqft, with a total demand of 588,792 sqft of mostly industrial and warehouse space

d. Promoting apprenticeships in the local area - The council provided 85 days of work placement to young people in 2018/19 and is working alongside South Devon College to promote their events to Teignbridge businesses. Currently there are no statistics, but with Orlo, our social media management tool, we will be able to monitor engagement for the next year

e. Promoting employee ownership - Economic Development and Procurement are currently putting together a business case for Community Wealth Building for the council and other 'anchor institutions'. This basically means looking at what we purchase and trying to get more local companies to bid, and where local suppliers don't exist, looking towards establishing worker co-operatives to bid for tenders

f. South West Mutual Bank - We have a £50,000 stake in the South West Mutual, they are still in the stages of getting their licence approved, so are unlikely to be functioning any time soon.

g. Community funding
The Teignbridge Stronger Communities Fund, supports local projects, as part of 'Crowdfund Devon'. It provides funding for local projects, but must raise 25% of their target before they are considered. Eligible campaigns are match-funded up to a maximum of £2,500. Funding is available for projects that support:

1. The local economy and welfare, for example a community shop, or food bank
2. Community facilities
3. Digital inclusion
4. Sport, leisure, arts, heritage, or culture

h. Rent subsidy. To help support the voluntary and community sector, some eligible groups can use properties owned and leased by the council at a subsidised, or reduced rent of up to 75% or £4,000 (whichever is less) on the rental value of the premises. The council currently provides rent subsidy to community hubs, such as the Buckland Community Centre, Kingsway Residents Association and the Meadow Centre in West Teignmouth.

i. **The Councillors' Community Fund** supports one-off projects. Applications can only be received from not-for-profit groups and organisations, not individuals. Councillors currently have £1,500 each year to spend on projects within their wards. Projects costing more than £1,500 could be supported by other councillors combining monies. Additionally, Devon County councillors each have £10,000 of funding to award from their locality budgets. It should be noted that the 2020/21 budget proposal is to reduce this fund to £1,000 per councillor, so alternative funding arrangements may need to be considered, for example Lottery, or crowd funding.

j. **The Doing What Matters Fund** can provide up to £20,000 for individual projects. Projects must have a significant impact on the wellbeing of local people and communities.

k. **The Making the Connection Fund** gives small, one-off grants of up to £300 to support community-led ideas and initiatives across Devon.

TDC community funding

l. Protecting low income families in poor housing - Housing Services has successfully bid for £20,000 to tackle poor quality housing within the private rental sector (PRS), improving standards with property and management agents through engagement and enforcement and supporting landlords to meet their legal responsibilities.

4.4 Action taken to tackle low levels of skills (including digital), or education

Devon County Council is the county's education authority and since the Children Act 2004 is also responsible for children's services. Teignbridge District Council, however, is still committed to a number of initiatives to help households on low incomes:

a. Developing a strand in the council strategy to address skills and education issues as a priority: **Investing in prosperity**

b. **Teignbridge CVS is a partner in the #Focus5 project**, which provides support to young people across Devon and Somerset who may be struggling to move forwards in life. The project provides unique, flexible, one-to-one support to young people aged 15 to 18 across Devon who need help taking small steps into education, employment or training. The project aims to help young people develop the five main skills identified as being gateways to employment; Communication, Customer Service, Organisations, Teamwork and Problem Solving.

www.cswfocus5.co.uk

c. **Broadband -** Full Council (19 Nov 19) has approved to commit £250,000 to local broadband funding, subject to satisfactory assurances being received from Connecting Devon and Somerset that the council's investment is spent only in Teignbridge. This rollout project covers the rural areas of Devon and Somerset. Teignbridge is the only Devon district contributing, whereas all Somerset districts have contributed. Devon and Somerset County Councils have also contributed, as has the Local Enterprise Partnership. All contributions are match funded by Government, and we have reassurances that the match funding for our £250k will also be spent in Teignbridge alone.

d. The Economic Development Team has started working with the **Careers and Enterprise Company** as an enterprise advisor. Under new Gatsby benchmarks, all schools now have to provide each pupil with a significant contact with an employer for each year.

4.5 Actions reducing discrimination

Developing a strand in the council strategy to address inclusion issues as a priority: **Strong communities**

The South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership is made up of statutory and voluntary organisations working together to reduce crime and disorder, including hate crime and abuse. The budget from the police and crime commissioners, via the Safer Devon Partnership, will be £25,000 in 2020/21.

Teignbridge Leisure provide 20% concessions to help support people who are on a limited income to have affordable access to leisure opportunities

Delivering the **Opening Doors Project**, developed between the Police, Teignbridge Council, Active Devon, Street Games, Schools and local sports providers to facilitate

access to sport for vulnerable young people in partnership with Newton Abbot Leisure centre

Our Street **Homeless Outreach and Support Service** is a project funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. We have a dedicated Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Rough Sleeper Navigator who conduct street outreach visits on average two/ three mornings per week, responding to reports of people seen sleeping rough within Teignbridge.

4.6 Actions taken to tackle abuse, trauma or chaotic lives

Issues around abuse and chaotic lives are complicated and life-long. As a district council we defer to Devon County Council to deal with matters, such as social services, child protection, family support, adoption and fostering, children in care etc. However, through some of the work we do, such as homelessness legislation and safeguarding work with key partners, we can identify issues and intervene accordingly.

a. **The South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership** works to reduce crime, including substance misuse and domestic violence. The partnership seeks to address the latter through its Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy and associated forum, which successfully secured £5,000 in funding

b. A Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), coordinated by our **Rough Sleeper Coordinator**, covers Teignbridge, South Hams and West Devon. Key agencies meet on a monthly basis to remove barriers to service access and providing holistic, joined up support to people who are rough sleeping, or who have a recently slept rough

c. Since the adoption of the Council Strategy (2016) we have managed 962 households through **temporary accommodation** into more permanent homes and have preventing homelessness by helping 1,094 households into alternative accommodation

d. **Safeguarding training**, including information on domestic violence and abuse, drugs and alcohol, county lines, and radicalisation was given to 160 of Teignbridge's Refuse and Cleansing staff. Safeguarding training is mandatory to all staff. 50 cases were referred to the Safeguarding Team in 2019

e. Successfully bidding to the Home Office for the delivery of the **Turning Corners Programme** to the value of £538,000, which covers Torbay, Teignbridge and South Hams to address young gang culture.

5 Implications, Risk management & Climate change impact

5.1 Financial

The financial implications are highlighted throughout the report. Future funding will be linked to the budget proposals contained in the budget report for 2020/21 and alternative funding stream options.

It should be noted that budget reductions to the Rural Aid Fund (4.1.q) and the Councillors' Community Fund (4.3.j) will impact the council's capacity to deliver these initiatives.

5.2 Legal

Should the Committee wish to consider the formation of a task and finish group, it should ensure, given the breath of the topic, that it has clear terms of reference, including:

(a) The group's initial terms of reference, which might focus on recommending priorities to committee for a potential strategy;
(b) The group's membership, which might initially be limited to a small group of officers and members, but extended to involve others including outside bodies, as priorities are subsequently clarified
(c) The timescale for an initial report back to the committee, for example a preliminary report back to committee by end of the financial year

5.3 Risks

None identified

5.4 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

None identified

6 Alternative options

Not applicable

7 Conclusion

The Council is undertaking considerable proactive work to combat poverty in the district and this is reflected in the Council Strategy and associated strategies, as set out below. It is also recognised that some of the root causes of poverty are outside the Council's direct influence and control.

Many of the strategies developed by Teignbridge seek to mitigate the causes and impact of poverty, namely:

- Council Strategy 2016 to 2025
- Housing Strategy 2015 to 2020 (under review)
- Homelessness Strategy 2016 to 2021
- Tenancy Strategy 2019
- Community Engagement Strategy 2017 to 2021
- Economic Development Plan 2018 to 2023
- S Devon & Dartmoor Community Safety Plan

Additionally, when considering the adoption, or review of policies, or strategies members require a Business Impact Assessment to consider the effects on local residents. These documents highlight issues such as financial hardship, climate change and the impact upon people with protected characteristics.

8 Recommendations

This paper invites the Executive Committee to consider whether it wishes to recommend any further actions to be undertaken, including consultation with key partner agencies to ensure actions are meeting the desired outcomes.