



Glasgow City Council

General Purposes City Policy Committee

Report by Chief Executive

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Item 2

25th September 2018

Food Inequality Inquiry

Purpose of Report:

To provide members with an overview of the Council's current response to the Report of the Independent Working group on Food Poverty to help shape and develop the work to be carried out by the inquiry.

Recommendations: Committee is asked to

- Consider and comment on the report and highlight any areas where further information is required
- Highlight areas for further inquiry
- Review the timescale and inquiry process as at section 7 of the report

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The General Purposes Policy Development Committee has agreed to hold an inquiry into food insecurity. Food security is commonly understood as “all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences and support an active and healthy life.” There is strong evidence that the inability to access nutritious food due to poverty is the main reason people face food insecurity.
- 1.2 In Glasgow in recent years increasing numbers of people face food insecurity and the further roll out of the UK Governments Welfare Reform programme, particularly Universal Credit is likely to make this worse.

2 Scope of Inquiry

- 2.1 The Glasgow inquiry is acting on the recommendations of the national report - [Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland](#) - The Report of the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty. It recommends that organisations;

- Understand what is happening locally
- Prevent, look at what can be done through financial inclusion and other initiatives;
- Respond, do this more effectively
- Invest, look at longer term more sustainable models

- 2.2 The purpose of the inquiry is to consider

- The scale of food inequality in the city and what is already happening to address it.
- What steps the city can take to prevent food inequality. Most of these issues will relate to people’s income, financial inclusion and the impact of benefit changes and sanctions.
- How can the city make the best use of the services and approaches already available and respond more effectively. This will include looking at a range of services in a local area.
- What can the city do to invest in longer term sustainable solutions. This will look at what more can be done to make people less reliant on food banks and alternatives such a food co-operatives.

- 2.3 The remainder of this report provides members with an overview of the Council’s current response to the Report of the Independent Working group on Food Poverty to help shape and develop the work to be carried out by the inquiry.

3. Understanding Food Inequality in Glasgow

- 3.1 There is no one measure that can reliably present the level of food insecurity/ inequality in Scotland or Glasgow. The Independent Working Group on Food Poverty recommended that “the Scottish Government should introduce and

fund a robust system to measure food insecurity in Scotland”. There are, however a number of indicators or measures that are commonly looked at to get a sense of the size and scale of the issue and likely future trends.

- 3.2 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde carry out an Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey every 3 years. The 2018 Survey incorporates 8 questions on the Food Insecurity experiences scale. For Glasgow 11% of those surveyed had experienced at least one event in the last year which was an indication of food insecurity.
- 3.3 Foodbank usage, particularly the information provided by the Trussell Trust shows a year on year increase in usage and referrals. The potential impact of the roll out of Universal Credit on food bank usage has been flagged by the National Audit Office “ a report by the Trussell Trust suggested that foodbank usage had increased by 30% in the 6 months after Universal Credit full service rolled out in an area compared to 125 in non-Universal Credit areas”.
- 3.4 The [Understanding Glasgow website](#) produced by Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) provides an overview of poverty in Glasgow and an indication therefore of households who may be struggling to cope. :
 - A lower proportion of Glaswegians are coping financially (80% in 2014) compared to Scots as a whole (89%)
 - 34% of all children in the city were estimated to be living in poverty in 2016
 - The distribution of child poverty and vulnerability to child poverty varies dramatically across Glasgow - over 45% of children in some neighbourhoods live in child poverty compared to around 5% in other parts of the city
 - In 2014, 20% of children lived in workless households, 6.5% higher than the Scottish average
- 3.5 The Living Costs and Food Survey (last data available 2016) has consistently shown that households living in relative poverty spent a far higher proportion of their weekly income on food than those living in better off households.
- 3.6 Food insecurity is consistently linked to low income, including low-paid , insecure work and inadequate benefit levels. Rises in food prices as well as the cost of fuel and housing also impacts on household’s inability to afford food In 2017, the Trussell Trust reported that the most given reason for using foodbanks was low income (26%), followed by benefit delays (26%) and benefit changes (17%).
- 3.7 Modern malnutrition’ is also an aspect of food insecurity: Consuming a low cost diet that is high in calorific value but low in nutrients. Research shows that cheaper foods are often high in saturated fat, sugar and salt and that people often buy the same foods to avoid waste as well as dealing with hunger. Indeed food insecurity may be linked to obesity. Accessibility to a range of healthy food may depend on the presence of medium and large stores in an area. Access to and cost of transport may also be an issue.

4. Preventing Food Insecurity

- 4.1 In order to effectively address food insecurity, measures need to be put in place to help to increase and maximise income as well as reduce the wider costs that households often face which diminish their ability to buy nutritious food.(e.g. housing costs, energy, school education and transport costs.) The remainder of this section gives an overview of some of the ongoing activity in these areas by the Council and their partners.

Ensuring Work is a reliable route out of poverty

- 4.2 Foodbanks have reported increasing numbers of people referred due to low income. The Council has a long standing commitment to promoting the Living Wage. It was the first Council in Scotland to introduce a Living Wage and has been proactive in using community benefits in procurement to deliver employment and training programmes for local people. However a recent report by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) estimates that around 150,000 jobs in the Glasgow City Region are paid below the real Living Wage.
- 4.3 Glasgow has a long history of neighbourhood renewal and place based regeneration. [The Council Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022](#) sets out a vision to have “ a world class city with a thriving inclusive economy where everyone can flourish and benefit from the city’s success”. The CSP sets out clear commitments to ensure that the City Deal benefits the people of Glasgow, including increasing the number of employers who pay the Living Wage and initiatives on In Work Progression. The Independent Commission for Economic Growth is also advising the City Region partners on the scope for inclusive growth and has flagged that health challenges for Glasgow continue to act as a constraint on inclusive growth.
- 4.4 The [Health and Inequality Commission](#) highlighted the challenge of mental health inequalities in Glasgow. Around 75,000 people experience common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression and adults living in the most deprived areas of the city are approximately twice as likely to have common mental health problems. The Commissions report also outlined the impact of loneliness and social isolation as both a cause and a consequence of poverty and mental illhealth. The Commissions recommendations have been taken account of in Glasgows Community Plan. Community Link Workers (CLWs) are based in GP practices and provide non clinical support to patients and help them connect with local services and initiatives.

Social Security and Food Insecurity

- 4.5 The Poverty Leadership Panel (PLP) ensures that the voice of people with lived experience of poverty is heard in strategy and service development. Our Financial Inclusion Strategy provides the framework for investment of £3.5million in advice agencies across the city to ensure our most vulnerable

citizens can access advice and information to prevent them becoming financially excluded. In addition there are targeted approaches :

- Helping Heroes provides support for veterans, their families and carers
- MacMillan and the Long Term conditions project provides targeted early intervention and support.

- 4.7 The Council has allocated £2million to develop and deliver Financial and Digital Inclusion support in preparation for Universal Credit full service roll out in September. Across Glasgow an expected 12,596 people are likely to make a claim for UC within the first 6 months of full service roll out .
(add table with breakdown by Jobcentre catchment)

Reducing Wider Costs to ease chronic income shortages

- 4.8 It is estimated that around 34% of the population of Glasgow are in fuel poverty with around 8% being in extreme fuel poverty. Around 45% of those in fuel poverty in the city are elderly. The Council and its partners have invested significantly in energy efficiency improvements across the city. However since 2010 fuel price increases have been far in excess of wages increases. [G Heat](#) is a partnership between Glasgow City Council and housing bodies which provides independent advice on energy related issues to households in the city on a face to face basis. Since it started in 2010, G Heat has worked with over 14,000 households across the city.
- 4.9 There are a number of measures in place to help reduce household costs relating to school :
- All pupils P1 to P4 now receive free school meals
 - The school clothing grant is now £110 per child, £10 above the national minimum requirement
 - £2million has been made available for holiday activity programmes that provide a meal for participating children, building on and complementing existing schemes such as Children in Scotlands Food, Families and Futures programme.
 - The Cost of the School Day involves children and young people, parents/carers and school staff in identifying financial barriers and taking steps to remove costs associated with attending school

5. Respond

- 5.1 The Independent Working Group's report asserts that where people face hunger due to an acute income crisis they should be provided with cash to buy the food they need immediately. The Scottish Welfare Fund is a national scheme delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government by all 32 local authorities. It replaced elements of the Social Fund (previously provided by DWP) and provides both Crisis and Community Care Grants . A Crisis grant can be provided for an emergency for example running out of income . In

Glasgow. In Glasgow, from 1st April to 31st July 2018, 9,177 applications were received for Crisis Grants The average award was £83.

- 5.2 A referral to a food provider will still often be a first response for a household facing acute food insecurity. Since 2013, the Council has coordinated the Glasgow Foodbank Forum to support foodbanks in the short term and develop a sustainable future for the sector. A number of foodbanks provide ad hoc advice surgeries, all known Foodbanks have links with a number of financial agencies via GAIN and a number work closely with the big 6 utilities. Food banks provide a response to clear and pressing needs, however they tend to face organizational and practical challenges including limited volunteers and donations as well as a lack of control over the quality and quantity of food they receive. In short, they are not a long term solution to hunger
- 5.3 A dignified response to food poverty means that people in need ought to have access to food that other people would value. Food redistribution from the manufacturing and retail sectors can play a part in this. Fare Share takes surplus safe quality food from the food industry and redistributes it to frontline services, such as foodbanks, day centres and soup kitchens.

6. Invest

- 6.1 The Independent Working Group Report argues for the need to develop the community food sector to provide a more dignified and joined up response to food in security; a decline in stand alone emergency food provision and an increase in community food hubs. It also proposes the collaborative development of community food plans based on
- Asset based community development
 - Healthy, sustainable and fair food
 - Resource sharing
 - Dignity and inclusiveness
 - Additionality ; any new resources to add to local spend not replace it
- 6.2 The Community Food sector is well established in Glasgow. With a traditional focus on production and supply of ethical food, organisations have developed to work alongside those experiencing food insecurity. Some examples of initiatives in Glasgow include :
- Milton Community Garden (part of the [North Glasgow Food Initiative](#))
 - [Woodlands Community Garden](#)
 - [Urban Roots](#)
- 6.3 There are already models operating in the city taking a coordinated, localized approach to food insecurity and inequality. This includes mapping of food providers (foodbanks, community meal providers and others) in the north of the city coordinated by Glasgow North West CAB. In conjunction with Urban Roots, who had produced a similar resource for the southside , an on line

resource mapping food providers across the whole of Glasgow is now available on [Urban Roots website](#).

6.4 Glasgow Food Policy Partnership brings together public and voluntary sector organisations who work at a city wide level on food related issues. The Council has played a key role in establishing and supporting this approach. The Partnership has previously launched a statement of collective commitment to working on three key areas, which are:

- Food Poverty – tackling food poverty and securing access to affordable healthy food in order to contribute to reducing health and social inequalities.
- Waste_ - reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.
- Local Food Economy – enabling the development of a vibrant and diverse sustainable local food economy across the city.

Its work on food poverty has particularly focused on the need to move beyond food banks as an emergency response in order to build a more sustainable and empowering model of community-based food hubs. Such a model would draw on local assets, enhance existing linkages with agencies and residents, and look to use the role of food as a means of supporting broader social cohesion across the city's diverse communities. Discussions have also taken place with Edinburgh City Council on developing this important agenda.

6.5 The Council Strategic Plan contains a commitment to support the development of Glasgow as a Sustainable Food City. As part of this the Council has been participating in a UK-wide Sustainable Food Cities programme hosted by the Soil Association. This initiative recognises the vital role that food plays in all aspects of a city's life – for individuals, for businesses, for the local environment, but also for its global impact. One of the key aspects of current work with the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership is looking to support the city in meeting the accreditation requirements of this programme, which will be a tangible recognition of local progress. As part of this Land and Environmental Services is taking forward work to develop a food growing strategy, which will also meet a statutory requirement placed on the Council by the Community Empowerment Act. This is supported by existing allotment provision in the city, by Stalled Spaces provision and by the broader recognition of the potential role of the city's land assets in supporting greater local food production.

7. **Next steps**

7.1 The information provided in this report is intended to help the Committee to further consider and prioritise areas to consider as part of the inquiry. There is clearly a wide range of activity across Glasgow and many areas are well developed. Some initial contributions that could support the work of the inquiry include :

- Rev Dr Martin Johnston, chair of the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty

- Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- North Glasgow Community Food Initiative
- Glasgow North West Citizens Advice Bureau/Urban Roots
- Fareshare
- Food retailer representative bodies

7.2 This is an expansive area and it is clear from initial consideration that there is already a range of good practice in place across the city and in some areas progress towards a coordinated approach is being developed. A broad plan of work could include

September 25TH – Overview report
Council Family response

November 13th - Evidence from elsewhere (to include GCPH, other Councils)

Evidence from Community Initiatives
National perspective

Subject to other items on the workplan, it is proposed to allocate the full Committee session on 13th November to this item. In addition, following that in November/early December, members may wish to consider scheduling a separate policy development session, to review and consider the findings so far.

January 22ND 2019 – Interim recommendations

8 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	No direct financial impacts as a result of the report
<i>Legal:</i>	No new legal issues
<i>Personnel:</i>	Work on the inquiry will be supported by existing Council staff
<i>Procurement:</i>	No relevant procurement issues

Council Strategic Plan: A Sustainable and Low Carbon City : 52 – support the development of Glasgow as a sustainable food city
A Healthier City :

Equality Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the</i>	Not directly.
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*Council's Equality
Outcomes 2017-22*

*What are the
potential equality
impacts as a result
of this report?*

An equality focus will be built into the work of the inquiry

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The activity around food growing will have a positive economic impact

Social:

Improving service response will have a positive impact on citizens affected by food inequality

Economic:

**Privacy and Data
Protection impacts:**

None identified

9 Recommendations

Committee is asked to

- Consider and comment on the report and highlight any areas where further information is required
- Highlight areas for further inquiry
- Review the timescale and inquiry process as at section 7 of the report