

**Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board
Report for Information**

Report to: Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board - 29 August 2018

Subject: Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 Implementation update

Report of: Angela Harrington, Head of Work and Skills, Strategic Development Directorate
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Summary

This report sets out the progress that has been made towards implementing the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-22. The report briefly summarises the rationale for the development of the Strategy and outlines the governance structure that has been established to support the implementation of the Strategy. It also provides a progress update against the Strategy's priorities together with some of the challenges which need to be overcome and the proposed next steps.

Recommendations

The Board are asked to note the contents of the report and provide suggestions on how some of the challenges highlighted in the report may be addressed.

Wards Affected: All

Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
Getting the youngest people in our communities off to the best start	Ensuring that the basic needs of children living in low income families are met and that they are supported to become more resilient.
Improving people's mental health and wellbeing	Focus on financial exclusion and supporting residents with managing finances and debts which can lead to mental health issues.
Bringing people into employment and ensuring good work for all	Focus on sustainable work as a route out of poverty with a particular focus on the improving the quality and flexibility of childcare.
Enabling people to keep well and live independently as they grow older	
Turning round the lives of troubled families as part of the Confident	

and Achieving Manchester programme	
One health and care system – right care, right place, right time	
Self-care	Supporting families to be more resilient by improving communication and poverty proofing services.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022
Our Manchester Strategy 2016 -2025

1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 was approved by Manchester City Council's Executive in September 2017 and was officially launched on 4 October 2017 at the Manchester Financial Inclusion Conference.
- 1.2 The Strategy was developed for a number of reasons. Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country by local authority area with an estimated one in three children under 16 living in poverty. There was a recognition that if outcomes for the city's residents were to be improved then poverty in the city needed to be tackled. The negative impact of government welfare reforms on families, high levels of financial exclusion and rising levels of debt were also of issues of particular concern.
- 1.3 A mixed methods research approach was used to develop the Strategy. This included a working group comprising of Council officers and partners from across the city including academics and community organisations. A detailed analysis of national and local data was also undertaken along with a comprehensive literature review. This work was underpinned by strengths based conversations with children and families in low income areas of the city, making the Strategy one of the first to fully adopt the principles of the Our Manchester approach.
- 1.4 The Strategy seeks to add value by identifying a small number of key priorities which would have the most impact on children and their families. The Strategy sets out three clear themes with 10 priorities which are listed below in Table 1. More detail on each of the priorities is provided in the Executive Summary in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Summary of the themes and priorities of the Strategy

Sustainable work as a route out of poverty
1. Affordable childcare for parents
2. The role of anchor institutions
Focus on the basics - raising and protecting family incomes
3. Mitigating the impact of welfare reform on families with children
4. Tackling the poverty premium
5. Food and fuel
6. Improving children's health
Boosting resilience and building on strengths
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)

8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)

9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)

10. Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)

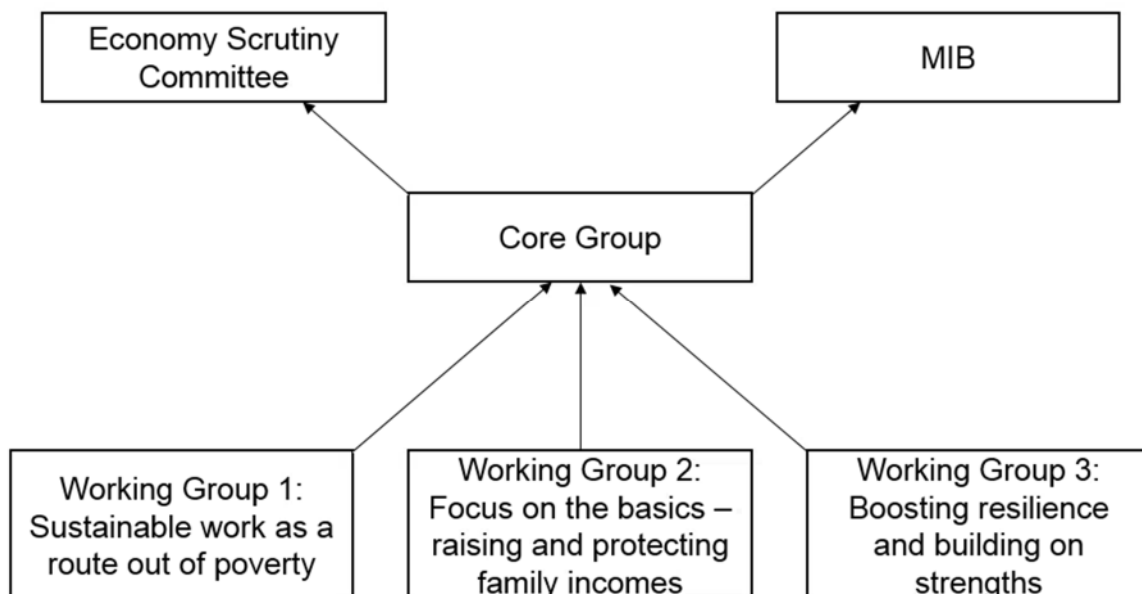
1.5 The Board previously received a report in March 2017 which outlined the progress which had been made in developing the Strategy. Now that the Strategy has been launched, this report will outline the governance structure that has been established to implement the Strategy. It will also provide a progress update in respect of the Strategy’s main priorities together with some of the major challenges which need to be overcome and the proposed next steps.

2.0 Governance structure

2.1 Following the launch of the Strategy, Council officers worked with partners to establish a governance structure which focused on the key themes and priorities identified in the Strategy. As with the development of the Strategy, the governance structure sought to foster a collaborative approach and includes a range of partners with an interest in the agenda or significant influence within their area of specialism. A key ambition was to ensure that the voice of residents continues to be central to the delivery of the Strategy and as such, residents with lived experience of poverty have been engaged in a number of ways.

2.2 A Core Group was established to oversee delivery of the Strategy and is currently chaired by the Council’s Head of Work and Skills. Membership of the group includes the Deputy Leader of the Council, Greater Manchester Poverty Action, Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit, Northwards Housing, Save the Children, Oxfam and Manchester Health and Care Commissioning. The group is accountable to the Our Manchester Investment Board and Economy Scrutiny Committee where it will be required to periodically report on progress. The Core Group is underpinned by three Working Groups which are aligned to each of the three themes of the Strategy.

Figure 1: Family Poverty Strategy governance structure



2.4 The Core Group has identified the following priorities for the first 12 months:

- To work with the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit and Greater Manchester Poverty Action to develop a better measure of poverty which accurately reflects the cost of living in Manchester/Greater Manchester. This could be a version of the Minimum Income Standard or Households Below Average Income measure and should include a projection for poverty levels in the future;
- To drive forward the work with Anchor Institutions in partnership with the Our Manchester Forum;
- To take on the role of influencer in the city, ensuring that the Strategy is fully embedded across Manchester;
- To take forward proposals from the Working Groups by sourcing funding opportunities and addressing issues and blockages.

2.5 The Chairs of each of the Working Groups report into the Core Group and are responsible for delivering a number of specific priorities that best fit with their theme. A summary of the progress which has been made by the Working Groups is provided below.

Working Group 1: Sustainable work as a route out of poverty

2.6 The key priorities for the group for the first 12 months are as follows:

- Assessing the childcare offer in the city in terms of its quality and affordability, but also its fit with modern flexible employment patterns;
- Involving people with experience of using childcare providers whilst working or trying to find work;

- Engaging providers of daycare to better understand their barriers and challenges; and
 - Using the learning to inform changes to future tenders for childcare.
- 2.7 The group is chaired by the Council's Access and Sufficiency Manager and benefits from broad representation which includes representatives from schools, daycare providers, residents with lived experience of poverty as well as a number of statutory organisations including Job Centre Plus. The group has focussed on understanding and analysing some of the challenges for working parents.
- 2.8 Some good progress has already been made to date in assessing the childcare offer in the city which is summarised below:
- **Cost of Childcare:** This has been recognised as a major challenge for families for a number of reasons. The high cost of childcare can be a barrier to many families taking up paid employment, especially for single parents. The Council has rolled out the universal national 30 hours of free childcare scheme to over 3's and the means tested provision for children aged 2 - 3 is also still in place, but not enough families are aware that childcare funding is available to them and are not accessing this support. In addition, there isn't a specific funding stream for children aged 0-2 and again this is yet another barrier for families and women in particular looking to return to work.
 - **Flexible and accessible childcare:** The work of the group has also recognised the importance of flexible and accessible childcare. Working patterns have changed considerably in the last 5-10 years with more people undertaking shift work and working more flexibly to try and balance their home and work lives. Early analysis has indicated that daycare providers in Manchester haven't fully responded to the cultural shift in working patterns. A survey is currently being undertaken with daycare providers to assess childcare options. In addition, the group is also planning on undertaking a consultation with parents and carers as well as employers as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018. It is anticipated that these research pieces will provide the group with a better understanding of the flexibility required by families to secure sustainable work and the volume of suitable provision.
 - **Challenges for daycare providers:** Daycare providers are also facing a number of challenges which inevitably impact on their business and ultimately their childcare offer. For instance, the cost of business rates as well as the ability of daycare providers to recruit and retain qualified staff means that they aren't always able to give families the flexibility they need and costs are subsequently passed on to them. To address this issue, the group have identified local daycare providers that are able provide greater flexibility. They are examining how these models work with a view to promoting and sharing good practise with other providers in Manchester.
- 2.9 The group have also noted a number of challenges which need to be overcome for the work to be progressed. Childcare providers will require

support to strengthen their business models in order to provide flexible and cheaper childcare. This will require high level business advice and support and is clearly not something that is going to be resolved in the short term.

- 2.10 In addition, the group has struggled to retain residents with lived experience of poverty and are currently investigating different options to ensure that input from residents can be maintained.

Working Group 2: Focus on the basics - raising and protecting family incomes

- 2.11 The key priorities for this working group for the next 12 months are:
- Developing an evidence base to demonstrate the positive impact on health and income of fuel poverty/energy efficiency programmes. This will also include other resilience factors such as the positive impact of a warm home on children's ability to learn;
 - Focusing on financial inclusion to maximise household incomes;
 - Promoting sustainable food help solutions including food cooperatives; and
 - Improving children's health.
- 2.12 The Working Group is currently chaired by the Head of Housing at Manchester City Council and includes a diverse range of partners who have practical experience in the areas of food and fuel poverty including FareShare/Emerge, One Manchester Housing and the Citizens Advice Bureau. There have been three meetings to date in a variety of community settings across the city including at FareShare in New Smithfield Market.
- 2.13 The group has focussed on food and fuel poverty and the ways in which these agendas could better connected. Representatives from the Working Group recently met with NEA (National Energy Action) who are the national governing body for fuel poverty to look at how they can support the group to address fuel poverty in the city. The NEA have offered to provide training on fuel poverty to front line workers and schools to raise awareness of fuel poverty, its impact and the support available for residents. The group are looking to utilise this offer and are currently developing a proposal. The ambition is that support in relation to fuel poverty will be provided alongside support and advice around food poverty at the point of contact (whether that contact is at food banks, the Citizens Advice Bureau or any other organisation offering advice and support). It is intended that this approach will mean that both issues are addressed jointly and in doing so, reduce the impact of poverty on residents.
- 2.14 The group has also faced a number of challenges, not least the huge remit covered by the 'basics' and it has taken some time to agree on the initial areas of focus. Plans are also underway to recruit a more permanent chair from a non-Council organisation who has the right skills and experience and is able to commit the resource required to drive forward the work of the group.

Working Group 3: Boosting resilience and building on strengths

2.15 The key priorities for this Working Group for the next 12 months are:

- Improved communications of existing schemes to residents and front line staff;
- exploring ways to expand schemes and support available for residents;
- workforce development to improve understanding and impact of poverty;
- Developing a poverty proofing toolkit which services and organisations across the city can implement to improve the way in which they support service users who are in poverty; and
- Developing a better understanding of who to target with this work.

2.16 This Working Group is chaired by the Council's Head of Reform and Innovation and includes a range of partner organisations from across Manchester including Cedar Mount Academy, Wythenshawe Community Housing and The Place at Platt Lane. The group have had four meetings to date again in a variety of community settings to encourage participation from residents and have focused on communications and poverty proofing.

2.17 Progress has been made in a number of areas including:

- **Mapping analysis:** A mapping exercise has been undertaken which investigated which communications schemes currently exist and how they are communicated to residents. As part of this exercise, existing tools were tested with residents with lived experience of poverty by members of the working group in different settings including early health hubs, libraries and job centres in order to get as wider perspective as possible. Based on the findings of these conversations, a number of tools and approaches have been identified. For instance, one conclusion was that residents like to receive information via hard copy leaflets and posters at the first point of contact and they also like to receive information verbally from trusted sources such as community organisations. Representatives from the working group are currently in conversation with the Council's Communications Team about how to take this forward.
- **Poverty Proofing:** The group have reviewed a number of poverty proofing toolkits which have been produced by national agencies or other local authorities. Overall analysis from the different toolkits has indicated that poverty proofing has had a positive impact on residents who are experiencing poverty. For instance, Children North East researched the experience of young people in poverty and found that they were stigmatised on a daily basis. The action plan they put in place to address the stigma has resulted in a number of benefits for children including improved attendance and attainment as well as a greater take up of free school meals. The next step is to test poverty proofing toolkits in Manchester schools.

2.18 Despite this progress, a number of challenges have also been identified by the Group. The first is in relation to resources, for example the cost of developing communication tools and poverty proofing toolkits. The second is in

consistently connecting the work to the real lived experience of people experiencing poverty. This is currently achieved via individual organisations who are members of the group, however there is a collective recognition that much broader engagement with residents is required.

3.0 Added Value

- 3.1 The process of developing the Strategy and establishing the governance to support its implementation, has resulted in a number of additional softer benefits which are important to capture. These are things which would not have happened without a renewed collective focus on tackling poverty.
- 3.2 Distinct partnerships have been formed across Manchester and within teams across the Council itself. For instance, One Manchester (who currently sit on the basics Working Group) has formed a partnership with the Council's Resources and Programmes team and have jointly submitted a Horizon 2020 European funding application to tackle fuel poverty. If successful, the bid will see European partners working in collaboration to understand the causes of fuel poverty and collectively design solutions to address it.
- 3.3 There has also been an increased awareness of community projects and best practice models which has enhanced Manchester's offer around family poverty. For example, The Bread and Butter Thing are a community led charity who provide quality food supplies for low income families at a heavily discounted rate and have been operating in the south of Manchester. Council officers involved in implementing the Strategy were able to spend some time with them and recognised that their business model was an excellent example of Our Manchester in action. The voluntary sector including Northwards Housing and YES Manchester are supporting The Bread and Butter Thing' to identify suitable venues in the north of the city to roll out their model and a member of their board has joined the Basics Working Group. It is anticipated that going forward, the Council and its partners will better promote these type of Our Manchester initiatives to residents as a way of tackling poverty and building resilience in neighbourhoods.
- 3.4 A Manchester Poverty Truth Commission is also expected to be launched in late 2018 or early 2019. The Poverty Truth Commission (which was originally developed in Glasgow six years ago and more recently, was launched and worked well in Salford) engages people with lived experience of poverty directly with key civic and business leaders to influence and inform policy change. It is hoped that the work of the Manchester Poverty Truth Commission will complement the implementation of the Family Poverty Strategy and will support, inform and influence the work of the Core Group and Working Groups, as well as the Council, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Manchester Local Care Organisation.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 To further support the implementation of the Family Poverty Strategy, the following next steps will be undertaken by the Core and Working Groups:

- **Harnessing the role of anchor institutions:** Anchor institutions have a significant role to play in addressing poverty as they are vital components of local economies and create and sustain significant numbers of jobs. As they are rooted in their locality, they are unlikely to leave as a result of market or other forces. Anchor institutions in Manchester will be invited to a breakfast event in the Autumn which will be hosted by the Deputy Leader of the Council to discuss how they can better support the objectives in the Strategy. It will include representation of the public private and third sector. Anchor institutions will be asked to make specific commitments to improve the life chances of families living in poverty.
- **Supporting the delivery of key priorities via a structured implementation plan:** As highlighted in the report, one of the key challenges for all three of the Working Groups has been agreeing priorities and staying focussed on them. A 12 months high level plan setting out key milestones for each of the Working Groups together with timescales for delivery should provide a clear structure for delivery. A highlight report setting out progress will be provided to the Core Group at every meeting to ensure that they can continue monitoring progress and providing support and advice where blockages may occur. In addition, 6 weekly meetings bringing together the chairs from each of the Working Groups will be arranged to share learning and good practice across the governance structure.
- **Strengthen the membership of the Core and Working Groups:** Plans are underway to strengthen the governance structure so that both the Core and Working Groups better represent the diversity of Manchester and that the voice of residents becomes integral to decision making.
- **Communications:** Discussions are currently taking place with the Council's Communications Team to identify the most effective methods of promoting all the support the city offers to its residents who are affected by poverty.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Board are asked to note the content of the report and the progress that has been made in implementing the Family Poverty Strategy.
- 5.2 As highlighted in the report, Anchor institutions which include a number of health partners can help the city tackle poverty in a number of positive ways. For example, through their employment and recruitment practices, Anchor institutions are able to prioritise employment and other opportunities for young people, families and neighbourhoods where family poverty is prevalent. In addition, Anchor institutions can utilise their assets (people and buildings) to the benefit of Manchester residents and the voluntary and community sector by encouraging employees to volunteer in communities and or offering buildings and wider facilities for the use of voluntary and community sector groups. Health partners are asked to consider these and other ways in which they in their role as Anchor institutions are able to tackle poverty to the mutual benefit of children, their families and the City's diverse residents.

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022

Executive Summary

Vision

Our aim is for everyone in the city to have the same opportunities, life chances and potential to lead safe, healthy, happy and fulfilled lives, no matter where they are born or live. This means reducing the disparities between different areas of the city. The most successful societies in the long term are those that are the least polarised.

Although the numbers are falling, one in three children in the city continue to grow up in poverty. We need to work with these families to lift them out of poverty. We want all children growing up in the city to achieve their potential, but too many of these children in difficult situations never do and they continue to face significant challenges as a consequence of welfare reforms and austerity.

Introduction

'Unless you support everyone so we all have the same opportunities in life you risk people slipping through the cracks'

(Quote from Our Manchester Strategy Consultation)

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 recognises that inequality remains a significant issue in Manchester which is fundamentally unfair but is also holding back the city. The 'A Progressive and Equitable' theme of the Strategy sets out how the city can become more equal by improving residents health, skills and creating improved employment opportunities.

There has always been a strong social case for tackling poverty and child poverty in particular. This remains the case and Manchester firmly believes that tackling poverty in society is the responsibility of everyone who works and lives in the city. But increasingly, it is being recognised that there is also a compelling economic case for tackling poverty. The recently approved Greater Manchester Strategy has 'living well in Greater Manchester' at its core, recognising the importance of people and place in ensuring residents reach their full potential, improve productivity and help to reduce the pressure on public spending in areas such as health and welfare.

The Family Poverty Strategy recognises that the causes of poverty are varied and that many of the challenges families in poverty face are interdependent. There are many existing strategies and programmes of work underway in Manchester which seek to deal with some of the issues faced by families in poverty. This Strategy supports the delivery of some of these strategies, but also aims to provide a challenge to others to ensure that addressing poverty is a central component of their delivery.

Background and scope of the Strategy

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 removed the duty on local authorities to produce a strategy and also sought to make changes to national targets and measures of poverty. The local implications of the Act were considered and it was decided that a Family Poverty Strategy for Manchester was still needed due to the high numbers of children living in poverty in the city. It was agreed that the refreshed

strategy would seek to add value by focussing on those areas not already covered by existing programmes of work or strategies such as debt and welfare reform.

Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty by local authority area with 35.5% of children under 16 living in poverty. Of those living in poverty, the vast majority (69.4%) are living in out of work poverty, whereas 13.6% are living in in work poverty and 16.2% are classed as other poor. The 35.5% figure equates to 36,255 children under 16 living in poverty out of a total number of 101,845.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has also predicted that the number of children living in poverty will rise sharply by 2020, in part due to planned benefit reforms affecting families with children. This Strategy seeks to ensure that children living in Manchester are protected against these national changes wherever possible.

This Strategy focuses on families with children up to the age of 19 who are living in poverty. Children aged 16 to 19 are included in recognition of the importance of this transition point and progression into post 16 further education or a job with training.

The Family Poverty Strategy seeks to build on the risk and resilience approach adopted by the 'Our Manchester, Our Children: The Manchester Children and Young People's Plan' which seeks to improve outcomes for children by decreasing risk and increasing resilience. It recognises that there are certain fundamental needs that every Manchester child should be able to count on. These include a safe, warm home environment; stable parenting; regular healthy meals; access to healthcare; and a family income above 60% of the national median. Along with these basic needs there are also a number of resilience factors that can help a child to succeed and reach their potential, despite any problems or setbacks they may face. These are:

- **Belonging** e.g. having good friends, loving relationships, opportunities to socialise, pride in your neighbourhood, being able to move between – and communicate accordingly – in different environments.
- **Learning** e.g. having appropriate space and equipment to learn, opportunities for parents to learn how to support their child's learning, ability to have ideas and aspirations, knowing what is possible, having positive role models, recognition of (and access to) different kinds of informal learning (including through culture and sport), development of 'soft' skills.
- **Coping** e.g. mental toughness, ability to see the positive, ability to handle emotions and deal with problems, opportunities to be good at things, feeling valued, knowing where to get help, services recognising where children need help.

How will poverty be addressed?

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation recommends that national and local government, businesses, Anchor Institutions, voluntary sector organisations, communities and citizens themselves, work together to solve poverty.

These recommendations appear to be sensible and align well to Manchester's focus on sustainable employment as a route out of poverty, providing the basics and also

building resilience. They provide a useful framework to test in a Manchester context and have helped to inform the local set of priorities.

Manchester specific priorities – what will we do?

The aim of this Strategy is to add value by identifying a small number of important priorities which will make a significant impact on children and their families, but that are not already being delivered in the city. The priorities are set out under three main themes which are summarised below and have been developed following a detailed analysis of the available intelligence and with input from a range of partners. Each of the priorities has an identified lead or working group who have been tasked with driving its implementation. The 10 priorities are set out in the table below under three clear headings.

Table 1: Summary of the themes and priorities of the Strategy

Sustainable work as a route out of poverty
1. Affordable childcare for parents
2. The role of Anchor Institutions
Focus on the basics – raising and protecting family incomes
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Boosting resilience and building on strengths
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)
8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)
9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)
10. Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)

Theme 1: Sustainable work as a route out of poverty

The Strategy recognises that well-paid and sustainable work remains the best way of increasing household incomes and moving families out of poverty. Manchester’s economy needs to be one which can provide opportunities for local people to benefit from the growth of the city. This very much aligns with the ‘progressive and equitable’ theme of the Our Manchester Strategy and the recent national and local work on inclusive growth. The Manchester Work and Skills Strategy 2016-2021 sets out a number of objectives and priorities which will deliver positive outcomes for Manchester residents and will help to address inequalities.

Theme 2: Focus on the Basics – raising and protecting family incomes

Although raising household incomes through employment remains the best route out of poverty, there are a number of challenges facing families living in poverty that need to be addressed in the short-term such as the impact of welfare reforms, the poverty premium and the cost of food and fuel.

Theme 3: Boosting resilience and building on strengths

Where basic needs cannot be met, families need to be supported to become more resilient. It is recognised that boosting resilience in children and their parents is more likely to lead to positive outcomes in relation to education, employment and their ability to cope with future challenges. It is also important for professionals and organisations to change the way they work to allow them to better recognise the strengths of a child or their family.

Implementation

Three subgroups will be established to drive forward the priorities under each of the three themes. To ensure follow through with the Our Manchester approach outlined in Appendix 1, the subgroups will also involve the voices of those with lived experience of poverty.

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress will be reported to the Manchester Investment Board which includes key stakeholders from a range of sectors across the city. Manchester City Council will also review progress via its existing Committee Structure. As the themes in Table 1 don't lend themselves to readily available quantitative metrics with clear baselines, a narrative update approach may be more workable than a metric based outcomes framework, however, overarching quantitative reporting of income measures, fuel poverty and Key Stage 4 attainment will continue.

Update reports will be in the form of progress updates against the 10 priorities set out above and will include a narrative on the activity to date alongside specific data and intelligence where relevant to evidencing progress. Updates will also include any relevant information from other work which will help to deliver the aims of the Strategy including Health, Work and Skills, Early Years and Education.

Conclusion: A call to action

In summary, this Strategy calls for everyone in Manchester to work together to do everything they can to address poverty and inequality in the city, wherever they come across it. This will require work across public services, businesses, voluntary groups and communities to help families into work, get the basics right, and support families to become more resilient.

Appendix 1: What we did - The 'Our Manchester' Approach

Working Group

A Working Group was established in January 2016 to lead the development of the new Manchester Family Poverty Strategy. The Group comprised officers from across Manchester City Council as well as external organisations such as the University of Manchester, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and Manchester Metropolitan University. The Group met monthly and workshops were held to focus on particular areas of the Strategy's development.

Using the 'Our Manchester' approach, the Working Group and other volunteers were trained to undertake a series of ethnographic, strength based conversations with over 120 residents across the city, to hear about the lived experience of poverty in Manchester. This was complemented by bespoke creative engagement sessions led by Z-arts and Contact Theatre, and by 96 contributions from primary school children who were engaged by City in the Community.

The Strategy is for the whole of Manchester, not just the Council, and calls on the city's Anchor Institutions to demonstrate what they are doing to tackle poverty and its effects. CLES contributed findings from their interviews with key local institutions regarding the current and potential role of Manchester's Anchor Institutions in addressing poverty.

Literature review

A thorough review of published national and local research was undertaken to fully understand the issues relating to poverty in 2017. This included research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the University of Manchester.

Data and intelligence

Manchester City Council's Performance and Intelligence team undertook a thorough review of available data on the spatial distribution of poverty and other related issues across the city. A ward comparison table also revealed some stark inequalities between different wards of the city.

The analysis highlighted deep concentrations of family poverty in certain geographic locations and that a place-based approach in these areas is required to help lift families out of poverty. Areas requiring particular focus are: the area to the north-east of the city centre comprising Harpurhey, Miles Platting and Newton Heath; the majority of Moss Side; and the neighbourhoods which make up the former Benchill ward in Wythenshawe.

Strength based conversations

In line with the new 'Our Manchester' approach, it was agreed that the research needed to be complemented by hearing directly from residents about their experience of living in poverty. A strengths-based approach was taken, in order to draw out the positive assets that help people in Manchester to be resilient to poverty and its effects, whilst not shying away from the deep problems encountered by many of those experiencing poverty. Conversations were based around two main questions:

- What's great about bringing up a family in Manchester?
- What could be better?

During September and October 2016, 25 members of the working group and other volunteers spoke with over 120 residents, focusing on areas of the city with the highest levels of child poverty and engaging with particular groups who were thought to be more likely than others to be vulnerable to the effects of poverty. The engagements took a number of different formats including semi-structured 1:1 interviews, group discussions, informal conversations and written responses. Through the training and engagement tools provided, officers were encouraged to keep an open mind, set aside any assumptions and allow residents time to voice their opinions and talk about their experiences in an informal, non-threatening interaction.

A thematic analysis of the strength based conversations has been completed and this is included in the Strategy. The Working Group is committed to ensuring that this analysis is done in a thorough and robust way to ensure that the values of 'Our Manchester' are upheld and the voices of residents are heard and captured. A 'Plan on A Page' communications document highlighting key issues to be addressed has also been created to use in further conversations with the community.