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**Meeting of the Health Select Committee 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

**Report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing**

**Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy 2024-2034**

**Purpose of report**

1. To request comments and views on the draft Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy 2024-2034.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Committee:
  - Reviews the draft Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy 2024-2034 (See appendix 1).
  - Provides feedback and comments to influence its development.

**Background**

3. Dudley, like the rest of the country, is faced with ongoing cost-of-living pressures.
4. Financial wellbeing and health are intertwined: poor financial wellbeing can have a negative effect on an individual's wellbeing, and poor health can lead to poverty.
5. Dudley should be a place where everyone can experience a decent quality of life, including access to essential items, clean and safe housing, healthy food, transport, and a job that pays a living wage.
6. Our children and young people should be able to grow up in environments that enable them to thrive, free from the negative impacts and stigma of poverty and feeling positive about the future.
7. The Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy will take a whole system approach with an aim to improve quality of life for residents;

alleviate pressure on public service by addressing the root causes of financial hardship; foster economic resilience and social equity, with the aim of improving overall community prosperity and wellbeing.

8. Following engagement with Dudley's communities, voluntary and community sectors, statutory partners, and businesses, and building on our learning from the Household Support Fund and other initiatives, we have identified 3 ambitious themes that will make a difference to the residents of Dudley over different timescales.
9. Central to this is a concerted shift to prevention and earlier intervention across multiple services and the wider system. We need to be addressing the root causes of poverty, not just responding to poverty crisis.
  - Preventing poverty
  - Helping people out of poverty
  - Mitigating the impact of poverty
10. Each theme will be enabled by:
  - Community development using a strengths-based approach – building upon the assets, skills, and capabilities that individuals and communities possess.
  - Enhancing workforce resilience to strengthen the support for residents and support the emotional wellbeing of frontline workers.
  - Optimising communications with residents so that they receive the information that they need to strengthen their financial resilience.
11. For each theme, there will be a whole system action plan developed across our partnerships.
12. The proposed governance and oversight is through a Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategic Partnership Group reporting up into the Forging a Future Board in recognition that all of Dudley's Boards and Partnerships play an important role

## **Next Steps**

13.
  - The strategy will be finalised having taken into account Members' feedback and comments, as well as wider partner feedback.
  - The Strategy will be presented to the Forging a Future for All Board (TBC) for approval.
  - System leads for the objectives will be identified and agreed, and action plans drafted, building upon existing work

## **Finance**

14. The strategy will be completed within existing financial resource. Some elements of the strategy may require additional investment but this will need to be scoped out and appropriate processes followed during implementation. Where possible, we will seek external funding (e.g. grants).

## **Law**

15. No specific legal implications.

## **Risk Management**

16. No risks identified.

## **Equality Impact**

17. A high-level screening equality impact assessment has been completed.
18. The implementation of the strategy should have a positive impact on disadvantaged communities in Dudley, including those with protected characteristics.
19. As the strategy is being implemented, EQIAs will be undertaken for specific changes to services or processes in line with DMBC or partner policies (dependent on where change is being made).
20. Implementation of the strategy should help improve the lives of children and young people in Dudley who are more likely to be living in poverty compared to other age groups.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

21. Implementation of the strategy will be managed within existing resources.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

22. There are no commercial/procurement implications to be considered.

## **Council Plan**

23. Financial sustainability, efficiency and providing best value.

- Adherence to our financial management through tighter spend controls, delivering agreed savings, and compliance to procurement and contract management guidelines.
- Develop new ways of working, reshaping our services and operating models.

24. Governance and control

- Build and strengthen effective governance and control by defining a clear and transparent governance and decision-making structure.
- Meet our obligations regarding regulatory compliance and assurance through focussed reporting with clear accountability.

25. Leadership and culture

- Encourage our employees to actively participate in continuous improvement and sustainability.

26. Delivering for our customers, residents, and communities.

- Enhance our customer experience by promoting digital self-service options whilst recognising individual needs and improving engagement.
- Empower individuals of all ages to make choices and exercise independence in their lives and provide care and support when necessary.
- While delivering services within communities, provide safe clean spaces, promote healthy lifestyles, support wellbeing, and reduce inequality.

27. Supporting businesses and the local economy.

- Ensure access to quality education and training for all, raising aspirations and increasing skills.



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## **Appendices**

- *Appendix 1* – Draft Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy 2024-2034.