

Cabinet

14 October 2021

Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire

Recommendation(s)

1. That Cabinet endorses the “Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire Strategy” and accompanying draft action plan.
2. That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for People, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education, to approve the project budget allocation, action plan and future revisions aligned to the strategy priorities for the allocated budget between April 2021 and March 2024.

1. Executive Summary

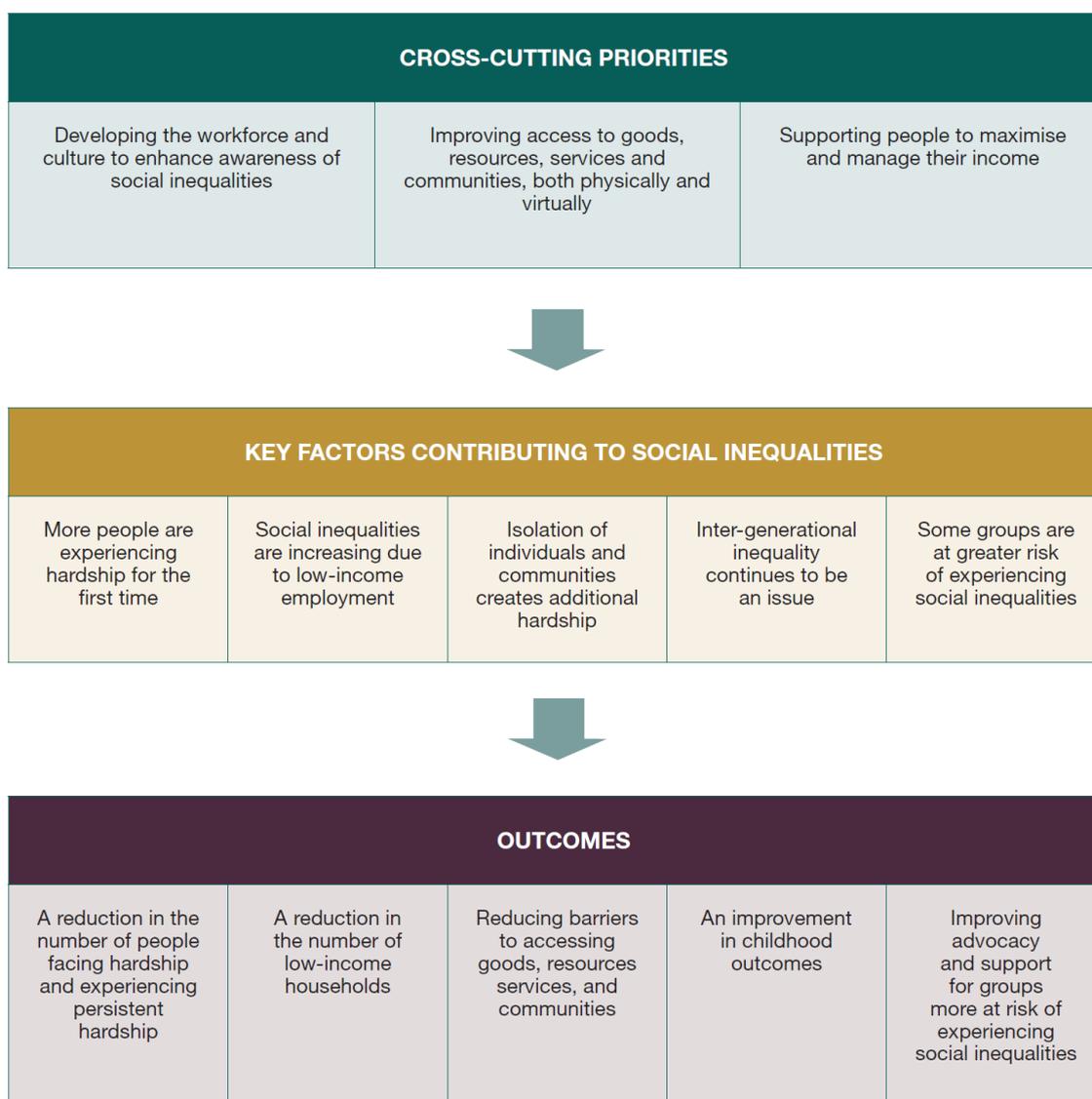
- 1.1 There is no single, universally accepted definition of poverty in the UK and it may be measured in a number of ways, such as disposable household income. However, income-based measures alone do not acknowledge its root causes, and we also need to consider metrics that better reflect the nature and experiences of people living in hardship, such as fuel poverty, affordable housing, gaps in attainment at school, teenage conception rates, unemployment rates and food bank access.
- 1.2 Although there is no single definition, there is collective agreement that we need to work in partnership to tackle the causes of and reduce the impact of social inequalities for people living in Warwickshire. The strategy sets the direction for Warwickshire on this agenda.
- 1.3 Work to develop a strategy on tackling social inequalities in Warwickshire commenced in August 2020, led by the Family Wellbeing team, within People Strategy and Commissioning. The timeline of the strategy development is summarised below:



- 1.4 The working group, consisting of key representatives from across WCC, focussed on developing the following:
- 1.4.1 Detailed analysis of current picture of social inequalities in Warwickshire to inform the strategy (*where are we now?*)
 - 1.4.2 A proposed strategy with focussed priorities (*where do we want to get to?*)
 - 1.4.3 An achievable action plan (*how are we going to get there?*)
- 1.5 As well as analysis of national and local data, a wide range of engagement took place with frontline practitioners, professionals, elected members and those with lived experience of social inequalities between October and December 2020. The findings from this work were used to develop the key findings and produce a set of recommended outcomes and priorities for the strategy. The priorities have been kept broad in order for us to design our on-going work programme based on identified need at a local level in conjunction with our place-based partners. As needs are likely to change over time, the priorities give us flexibility to responsively shape our work.

Delivering the vision

A set of cross-cutting priorities have been identified to collectively tackle the key factors contributing to social inequalities in Warwickshire, resulting in improved outcomes for Warwickshire residents.



- 1.6 The draft strategy was shared with those who took part in the original engagement activities and shared more widely with others with an interest in tackling social inequalities locally. Feedback from a survey on the draft strategy showed 87% agreed or strongly agreed with the outcomes and 94% agreed or strongly agreed with the 3 priorities (from 62 respondents across WCC, other public sector organisations and the third sector).
- 1.7 Following feedback from Corporate Board in April and May 2021, the final strategy (Appendix 1) has been produced for endorsement by Cabinet. The strategy will then be presented at the Health & Wellbeing Board for partnership endorsement in January 2022.
- 1.8 A draft action plan has been developed to shape the work of the 3 working groups aligned to the priorities and includes commitment from the third sector and District/Borough colleagues to support the delivery of the work programme (Appendix 2). The draft action plan includes an indication of the projects we will be progressing over the next 3 years and will be further developed using co-production with people with lived experience of social inequalities and those delivering front-line services to residents.
- 1.9 Regular updates demonstrating progress on delivering the strategy will be planned in as part of our action plan and work programme.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Budget has been agreed to support delivery of the strategy for the next 3 years from the “Preventing Vulnerability” fund:
 - 2021/22 - £300,000
 - 2022/23 - £250,000
 - 2023/24 - £250,000
- 2.2 We will consider future financial requirements to continue delivering against the priorities in line with the regular review points for the strategy. Business cases will be developed aligned to the priorities where the required funding is likely to exceed the budget already allocated to this work. We will also seek opportunities for funding outside of WCC that will support delivery of the programme.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Although there are no direct environmental implications for the strategy at this point, we will be working closely with colleagues within the Communities Directorate as part of the delivery of the Local Transport Plan. There may be opportunities for the strategy to have a positive impact on the environment in the context of sustainable travel.
- 3.2 A regular review of environmental implications will be included as part of the responsibilities of the working groups delivering the priorities.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 There is growing evidence that overall levels of social inequalities are rising, and this will be further compounded by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as inequalities between communities deepen. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with an increase in stressors such as financial loss, social isolation and concerns about accessing services.
- 4.2 The “Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire” strategy is an important step in tackling the causes of and addressing the impact of social inequalities in Warwickshire. It will help us to identify who is most in need of support and help us target the support we offer. By taking a public health approach to tackling social inequalities, we will use the principles of proportionate universalism. This approach recognises the gradient of need to ensure services are targeted to different levels of need but remain equitable. Our aim is to help our residents to have a decent and secure life, recognising that everyone has a role to play in tackling social inequalities across the system. The strategy will be supported by a long term, sustainable delivery plan over the next decade to 2030.
- 4.3 As well as the comprehensive engagement work undertaken to develop the “Tackling Social Inequalities Strategy” between October and December 2020, the Child Friendly Warwickshire survey undertaken in April 2021 also demonstrates tackling social inequalities is an area our young people believe is a priority. Of the 1,807 responses to the question ‘if you were in charge of your town what would be most important to you?’ the issue voted most important was “homelessness”, followed by “tackling child poverty”.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 The strategy will be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board in January 2022 for partner endorsement.
- 5.2 The working groups to deliver the priorities will be formally established and the action plan fully mobilised by the end of October 2021. We anticipate the programmes of activity will work closely with the place-based partnerships across the county as they include representation from a wide range of partners.

Appendices

1. “Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire” Strategy
2. “Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire” Draft Action Plan

Background Papers

1. Equality Impact Assessment

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s):

Other members: