

West Cheshire Poverty Truth Advisory Board

3 November 2020, at 1pm – 2.30pm

Online MS Teams

Attendees: Clare Roberts, Cllr Mandy Clare, Mark Grady, Debra Webb, Barbara Dean, Gus Cairns, Antony Spurway, Susan Taylor, Alexis Redmond, Alison Dimelow, David Briggs, Steph Ellis, Clare Harrison, Andrea Campbell.

Apologies: Liz Dickinson, Cllr Rachel Williams, Wayne Gales, Steph Ellis, Tracy Goodwin, Shirley Rigby, Linda Brooks, Tyra Goodwin, Peter Middleman, Susan Whitfield, Kay Finnerty.

Item 1: All welcomed and apologies noted.

Mandy congratulated Antony in his new role as co-chair.

No amendments to notes from last meeting's notes.

Item 2: Update on Leaders Champion role and Poverty Emergency

Mandy put forward the motion to declare a poverty emergency to full Council on 22 October, this was agreed and opens the door to support our work moving forward. We have a firm in stance to not accept that poverty is inevitable. Poverty is recognised, together with climate change as a priority for the Council as it will impact most areas of their work. Also acknowledges the disproportionate affect Covid has had on people on low incomes. The declaration recognises that poverty is an equalities issue and provides us with a common platform for raising the profile of this and pushing for change alongside other councils. It commits us to broadening our networks and the scope of what we can achieve during a period of crisis and change.

Item 3: Recovery and Renewal Plan.

Presentation and draft plan have been circulated via email to PTAB members. It was agreed that a small group would review the document and provide feedback. All welcome to send comments via email direct to Clare or Mandy.

Item 4: Poverty Truth Team updates

Clare talked about the regular catch up calls with Inspirers and continuing support for people. Some Inspirers involved in new areas of work or legacy projects from PTC2, such as Beans on toast, Housing and homelessness, MHPB.

Facilitators had made great inroads to roll out workshops around the How we Live film, so far delivering to Young people at Chester International school, trainee teachers at UOC and workforce development for internal and partner agency staff working with families and children.

Item 5: Working group updates

Data collection and analysis – sub-group are meeting on 19/11/20. Clare H and Debra both offered “real life” stories to support qualitative data.

Website design and content - Initial meeting with Officers on 12/11/20. Webpage will provide an online platform for everything that sits within the Poverty Emergency initiative, including the work within the PTAB. The landing page will provide an overview of the Poverty Emergency commitments and resources other councils can use to make their own declaration. We can use it to showcase good practice on poverty from within CW&C and wider afield and keep people updated. The PTAB section will include documents, videos, a link to our How We Live training, a newsletter and more.

Transport Review - The group have presented a report summarising our comments with evidence from our lived experience and making recommendations. Meeting with ARUP (consultants supporting the review) 4/11/20.

COVID-19 Hardship Fund – There has been two meetings of the group so far. Agreed approach that will support all who are entitled to the £150 grant plus 25% of their Council Tax arrears. Projections at this stage are that this will leave funding that the group will consider in January how to utilise in a targeted approach in line with the guidance to support those with the greatest need.

Item 6: Current and emerging challenges

Steph from Welcome Network provided an update on how they are funded by CWCC to co-ordinate and share grants to holiday hunger projects. During October half-term approx 1300 meals provided for families across the borough. There was very much an influx of offers of help, given the Government announcement not to extend FSM over half-term. Ambition is to be able to offer a better, well-coordinated offer at Christmas, with provision being more freely available to everyone. Discussion around organisation signing up to values and maybe a kitemark in recognition of this. Meeting of interested stakeholders to be co-ordinated by Steph.

Community Connectors – David gave an update on this project that came from the success of PTC1. There are now 5 full time Connectors working across West Cheshire and Alongside this, Citizens Advice Cheshire West is developing a network of volunteer connectors throughout Cheshire West to signpost and help connect people to the right support. Volunteer connectors are typically people who already work or volunteer in their local community and understand the needs of local residents. Free online coaching is available to help them know how to connect to our services.

To find out more <https://www.citizensadvicecw.org.uk/news/volunteer-connectors>

PTAB asked to either become Volunteer Connectors themselves or to help promote the service through their networks

<https://www.citizensadvicecw.org.uk/Pages/Category/community-connectors>

Debra has interested to understand how this could support advocacy work the teams at Share offer, David and Debra to meet outside of meeting.

Item 7: A fairer future – our approach to tackling poverty and inequality (the strategy)

PTAB agreed to form a small task and finish group, lead by the co-chairs to work on developing a poverty strategy – under the working title of A Fairer Future.

Clare to arrange first meeting.

Poverty Truth team to develop ideas on how to involve young people in this work.

Agreed actions:

1. Clare to produce a list of “who’s who” to share with PTAB members.
2. All to feedback on Recovery and Renewal plan. Small group to meet by end of week (8th Nov)
3. Data analysis working group meeting on 19/11/20.
4. Transport working group meeting with ARUP 4/11/20.
5. All to promote Community Connector service through their networks.
6. All to notify Clare if want to be on Fairer Future Task and Finish group.
7. Poverty Truth team to develop ideas on how to involve young people.

Dates of next meeting:

- Tuesday 24 November 11am - 1pm.