

Terms of Reference

Title: West Cheshire Poverty Truth Advisory Board (PTAB):

Background: At a Full Cabinet meeting on 8 July 2020 Cllr Mandy Clare presented a report outlining the learning gained from two successful Poverty Truth Commissions and proposals for future work to support and empower local residents experiencing the effects of poverty. Cabinet agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council for Cheshire West and Chester Council to declare a poverty emergency. In addition, Cabinet also established a Poverty Truth Advisory Board, to oversee the poverty agenda and report to Cabinet as a sub-group.

Purpose: The Board will act in an advisory and support capacity (a sounding board) to services across the Council and partner agencies. It will build on the learning from two Poverty Truth Commissions, ensuring people with lived experience are at the heart of any decision making.

Principles/Functions:

- Bring the poverty agenda to the forefront and respond to any changes/challenges that the communities of West Cheshire face using a Social Justice and Social Action approach
- Listen and learn from people with lived experience of poverty (Community Inspirers).
- Influence the Council and partner organisations to recognise people with lived experience as key stakeholders, making it acceptable for people with lived experience of poverty to share their insights, participate and influence on their own terms, including a dedicated on-line presence.
- secure a robust framework to ensure that change in how decisions are made is permanent.
- Build a community to help inform our work and make use of visiting members (formally linked specialist advisers to the group), all community inspirers to bring in knowledge and expertise, in appreciation of the scale of the cross-cutting nature of poverty.
- Reduce the stigmas and assumptions attached to the use of the word poverty.
- Gather further data to evidence the impact covid-19 is having on those already in poverty, or likely to experience it as a result.
- Use our knowledge and evidence to influence those in positions of power to review how we tackle poverty within Cheshire West and beyond
- Advise and develop policy to inform decisions on the use of appropriate funding to support the poverty agenda, now and in the future, including hardship funding.
- Timely and pro-active involvement in Council policy reviews etc.

- Build knowledge of how decision making and influencing works within Local Government and beyond and how the Poverty Truth Advisory Board can work within it to fulfil its aims.
- Explore and develop opportunities to network within the wider community and beyond West Cheshire to make change-making more accessible to people experiencing poverty or on low incomes. This could include working with other PTC and the Poverty Truth Network and national organisations eg JRF.
- Facilitate and encourage more of our Community Inspirers to be accepted within formal positions of influence eg. within Local Government or academia and relevant professions.

Accountability: The Poverty Truth Advisory Board will be co-chaired by Cllr Mandy Clare as Poverty and Inequality Champion and a Community Inspirer. The Board will report to Cabinet, at agreed frequencies, as a sub-group, while retaining strong links to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The PTAB will record and measure outcomes and hold others to account.

Membership and responsibilities:

We will aim to keep membership the same as this is important to develop relationships and adds consistency. There will also be a balance of at least 50% community inspirers 50% sector representatives in paid roles. The Board will also include cross- party representation.

- Co-Chair - Councillor Mandy Clare, Poverty and Inequality Champion – Labour
- Co-Chair - Antony Spurway (November 2020 to April 2021), Community Inspirer
- Advisory Officer - Clare Roberts, Poverty Work Coordinator, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Advisory Officer - Mark Grady, Senior Manager, Early Help & Prevention, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Advisory Officer - Susan Taylor, Transactional Services Manager, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Board member - Councillor Rachel Williams, Conservative
- Board member - Clare Harrison, Cheshire West Voluntary Action
- Board member - Wayne Gales, Weaver Vale Housing Trust
- Board member - Stephanie Ellis, The Welcome Network
- Board member - Liz Dickinson, Citizens Advice
- Board member - Alexis Redmond, Private Sector representative
- Board member - Debra Webb, Chair of Share
- Board member - Andrea Campbell, Health Sector representative
- Board member - Peter Middleman, Trade Union rep
- Board member - David Briggs, Lord Lieutenant for Cheshire
- Board member - Alison Dimelow, Community Inspirers

- Board member - Antony Spurway, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Barbara Dean, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Gus Cairnes, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Kay Finnerty, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Linda Brooks, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Tracy Goodwin, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Tyra Goodwin, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Shirley Rigby, Community Inspirers
- Board member - Susan Whitfield, Community Inspirers

Roles and responsibilities:

Co-Chairs

The PTAB will be co-chaired by Cllr Mandy Clare as Poverty and Inequality Champion and an agreed Community Inspirer. To fairly elect a Co-chair the Board have asked for Community Inspirers to express an interest in the role by submitting a short-written statement. Members will then vote and the person with the majority vote will be elected for **6 months**.

The Co-chairs will work alongside each other, investing time to develop a relationship which will involve meeting up outside of Board meetings and regular catch up calls.

Responsibilities will include:

- Overseeing meetings - announcing the items on the agenda and ensuring meetings run to time.
- Ensure all members have an equal and fair chance to participate.
- Ensure all Board members have access to timely, relevant, accurate and honest information to enable them to reach informed decisions and enable meeting time to be productive.
- Provide updates to full Cabinet, where appropriate and attend Cabinet briefings when requested.
- Nominate and support other Board and community members to present items, where appropriate to other relevant groups/boards.

Co-chairs have been elected as follows:

- Antony Spurway – November 2020 to April 2021
- Barbara Dean – May 2021 to October 2021
- Gus Cairns – November 2021 to April 2022

Advisory Officers

Advisory Officers are employed by the Council and have responsibilities in different service areas. Their role on the Board is to support the purpose and functions of the Poverty Truth Advisory Board through their different areas of expertise.

Board members

Members will include a balance of Community Inspirers and sector representatives in paid roles. This gives recognition to the value and importance of involving people with lived experience within the decision-making process. The aim, to give consistency and maintain relationships is a 50/50 split and members are asked not to send substitutes to meetings, for this reason. Board members should be willing to share their knowledge, expertise and experience in an open and honest way to support the functions of the Poverty Truth Advisory Board. They will be able to take recommendations forward in their organisation and/or community and influence other key decision makers to do the same.

Poverty Truth Community members

One ambition of the Poverty Truth Advisory Board is to build a community to help inform its work; bringing in knowledge and expertise when necessary and in appreciation of the scale of the poverty agenda. The community will include all existing community inspirers and work to engage with more. Other poverty truth community members may include:

- Elected members
- Sub-groups
- Other working groups and committees eg. Health and Wellbeing Board
- Partners from PTC 1 and 2
- Specialist advisors

Note: Everyone involved in the Poverty Truth Advisory Board is expected to work within the agreed code of conduct/working together model

Meetings: Monthly. 22 September 2020 3-4.30pm, 3 November 2020 1-2.30pm and then every fourth Tuesday of month 11am – 12.30pm. Notes and actions will be made at all meetings and shared between the Members and made public.

Review: The Board will continually review its terms of reference as it naturally evolves, and priorities develop