

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - FOOD POVERTY**

**Wednesday, 17 July 2019**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Meredith (Chair), Councillors Bottwood, Roberts, Russell and Smith

**Officers** Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager  
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

**1. APOLOGIES**

There were none.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Alan Bottwood, declared an interest as a Board Member of NPH in respect of the organisation Happy to Help.

This declaration would be for the life of this Review.

**3. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

There were none.

**4. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 as a true and accurate record.

**5. PRESENTATION TO SET THE SCENE**

Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager, gave the Scrutiny Panel a comprehensive presentation regarding food poverty and the work undertaken internally. The salient points were emphasised.

The definition of food poverty used by Restore was highlighted to the Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel commented, asked questions and heard:

- Progress regarding PC terminals in community venues would be investigated and reported to the Panel. NPH are looking to put PCs in all of their Hubs.
- The Panel heard that Officers working in the Council's One Stop Shop, each month donate items of food that can be donated to those in need. This is funded totally by the staff who do this mainly because they come into contact with people on a daily basis that require food donations and other assistance.
- Food Banks are licensed to donate food. Should a family or individual be in real need for food but cannot obtain a food voucher, they can receive a food parcel from

the One Stop Shop. Concern was raised that staff feel the need to provide such food parcels; it should be a more structured provision

- In response to a query, should someone need a food bank voucher they are required to complete a standard form that amongst other questions asks for details of the number of individuals living in the property. Individuals can receive three vouchers from an Agency – the purpose being to prevent dependency upon food vouchers.
- Food Banks operate on different days around the borough. The Panel noted that a week's supply of food can be very heavy to carry
- The Panel suggested a potential that an emergency fund is established for the provision of food parcels.
- Councillor Roberts referred to a report that was undertaken in 2019 that detailed the number of children living in poverty, she undertook to provide the link to this report.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

## **6. CORE QUESTIONS**

The draft core questions were agreed, in addition to the inclusion of the following core question

Are you aware of the number of people who are registered for pupil premium.

## **7. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FOOD POVERTY NETWORK**

The information provided from the recent meeting of the Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network was noted and would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

## **8. SITE VISITS**

The Scrutiny Panel considered the briefing note suggesting potential sites visits.

It was AGREED:

- 1 The Chair, together with the Customer Services Manager and Democratic and Member Services Manager undertakes a site visit to a food bank and reports the findings back to the Panel.
- 2 Councillors Russell and Roberts, together with the Democratic and Member Services Manager undertakes a site visit to a food bank and reports the findings back to the Panel.
- 3 The organiser of a holiday club is invited to attend a Panel meeting and provide details of the club and their experiences.
- 4 That the Panel provides anonymised data around school teachers providing food to children to inform the evidence base of this review.

## **9. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Community Impact Assessment (CIA) for this Review was approved and would be published on the Overview and Scrutiny webpage.

The meeting concluded at 7:10 pm