

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Scrutiny Panel 1 – Food Poverty

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at The Jeffrey Room,
The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on
25 September 2019 at 6pm

George Candler
Chief Executive

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding **Scrutiny Panel 1 - Food Poverty** please visit the website www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Members of the Panel

Chair	Councillor Dennis Meredith
Panel Members	Councillor Mohammed Azizur Rahman (Aziz) Councillor Alan L Bottwood Councillor Muna Cali Councillor Emma Roberts Councillor Cathrine Russell Councillor Zoe Smith
Co-opted Members	Paul Foster, Community Organiser Clive Ireson, Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network

Calendar of meetings

Date	Room
20 November 2019 6:00 pm 14 January 2020 2 March 31 March	All meetings to be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 1 - Food Poverty

Agenda

Item No and Time	Title	Pages	Action required
1. 6pm	Apologies		The Chair to note any apologies for absence.
2.	Declarations of Interest		Members to state any interests.
3.	Deputations and Public Addresses		<p>The Chair to note public address requests.</p> <p>The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a Public Address Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak</p>
4.	Minutes	1 - 3	The Scrutiny Panel to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019.
5. 6:05pm to 7:30pm	Witness evidence	4	<p>The Scrutiny Panel to receive a response to its core questions from a number of key expert advisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, NBC and Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC ➤ Head of Revenues and Benefits, LGSS ➤ Quality and Training Team Leader, LGSS ➤ Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC, Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 1 - Food Poverty

			and the Community Safety Team
6. 7:30pm	Site Visits	5	The Chair to report back on the recent site visits.

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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

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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – FOOD POVERTY CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review:

- To examine the extent to which individuals and families are experiencing food poverty, the range of contributing factors and the changes that have been made to the way the Council and partners support residents during hardship.
- To review the impact and concentration of food poverty across the Borough of Northampton

The required outcomes are:

- To make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take to mitigate the impact of food poverty in Northampton.
- To make recommendations on how the specific issues in relation to food poverty are dealt with from now until the new Unitary Authority.

CORE QUESTIONS:

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

1. In your opinion, what are the main impacts of food poverty?
2. How widespread do you understand food poverty in the borough to be?
3. In your opinion does food poverty differ across the borough of Northampton and what are the reasons for this?
4. What strategic approaches are you aware of to tackle food poverty?
5. What approaches are in existence to reduce people's dependency on food aid, such as Food Banks?
6. How do you understand food poverty is being addressed?
7. How can the Borough Council, together with its partners, can collectively respond to food poverty?
8. In your opinion what are the specific issues relating to food poverty?
9. Are you aware of the existence of "holiday hunger" and what is its impact?
10. Please supply details of the support that your organisation or group offers?
11. Please supply details of your thoughts on suggested solutions regarding food poverty.
12. Are you aware of the number of people who are registered for pupil premium? Please supply details.
13. Do you have further information or comments regarding food poverty which you would like to inform the Scrutiny Panel?



**NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – FOOD POVERTY

25 SEPTEMBER 2019

BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISITS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its inaugural scoping meeting, the Scrutiny Panel agreed that it would attend various site visits to inform its evidence base.

2 SITE VISITS

RESTORE Food Bank, Central Vineyard Church, Sheep Street, Northampton

- 2.1 On Thursday 22 August 2019, Councillor Dennis Meredith (Chair), together with Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, met with the lead Support Worker for the Food Bank
- 2.2 Key information gathered from the site visit:
- Restore's hope for the town is to see people's lives restored and for the town to be renewed, the town thriving, businesses growing and people happy and enjoying themselves.
 - Restore has over 100 referral Agencies and began over ten years ago.
 - Restore costs £100,000 to run and currently it receives a partnership grant from NBC of £6,000 per year.
 - The Foodbank and Café is open from 10am to 12 noon, it is open to anyone who can have a free tea/coffee/squash and a pastry. The pastries have been donated by a local supermarket. Originally the HUB was open twice weekly but it was not an appropriate setting for families so it changed to a café style. On average there are normally around 30 attendees with 10-20 food parcels given out. Most food is donated by the public and there are various food drop off points. Fresh vegetables such as onions, potatoes, green vegetables, and root vegetables are useful.
 - A number of the main supermarkets have a contract with "Fareshare" where donations made to the supermarkets go to the distribution centre of Fareshare and foodbanks have to pay for the distribution costs to receive the donations.
 - Restore offers a wide variety of services in addition to being a foodbank – including: Tuesdays – "Growbaby" - family services and attendees can pick up clothes, food, toys and baby equipment. It is for children 0-5

years. CAB are present during each session as are Health Visitors, Homestart. This is the only centre in the town that also provides for families and is not just a foodbank.

- Dental hygiene is a problem with children with a number having to have their milk teeth extracted due to decay. A dental hygienist attends the family sessions.
- Tuesdays and Wednesdays are dedicated to family days. Around 50-60 come in. Music is played, children play and can have a snack. In the school holiday period more is offered for older children too and on a Wednesday a free school dinner is offered; around 20 attend but the centre could accommodate 60.
- 25% of people are living in poverty in Northampton.
- The organisation – Inspire, supports people to reach their maximum potential, providing mentoring and supporting people into volunteering. An example was provided whereby a woman had come in for a food parcel five years ago and now runs the Inspire Project.
- Individuals are referred to restore from specialist Agencies, schools, GPs, Children's services, Money Advice etc.
- Restore receives very little help for donations from the main food outlets
- The Support Worker reported that zero hours contracts can create poverty. For example a Warehouse operative, on zero hour's contract, works nights and also volunteers at the Foodbank. Should he have no work at any given period, he still has the regular bills to be paid and does not receive benefits whilst working. He often gets ready for work, arrives at the depot to be told there is no work available that night
- The Support Worker advised that often individuals and families do not have a network to turn to should they have financial difficulties and pressures. They often then turn to high interest loan companies and pay day loans which can re-inforce the spiral of poverty.
- General referrals come mainly from CAB, Jesus Centre, and One stop shop. Individuals must meet generic criteria to be referred. People can access food parcels five times a year. Each food parcel is aimed to last three days. Should a repeat referral be required, there needs to be a new referral. Once referred, individuals can access foodbanks at different locations and times, which best suits them – for example Duston or Eastfield. The food voucher is valid for one week and it then expires.
- When individuals come for a food parcel from this Foodbank they fill out a tick list of the types of food and supplies they require. Whilst the pack is being made up they are directed to the café for a drink and a pastry. An example was given of client B who was seven months pregnant but had not told anyone. Restore helped her and got equipment for her such as a pram, mosses basket, baby clothes etc.
- In May 2019, 936 items were given out and £70,000 of food is given out each year, all of which is provided via donations. Restore does not spend over £800-£1,000 per year on extra supplies.
- From April to the end of the summer is the period when supplies are at their lowest and it would be useful if schools could be contacted regarding

potential donations. Most needed food supplies are tinned meat, tinned vegetable and UHT milk. A local allotment will donate excess produce to the foodbank and this is delivered on a Wednesday ready for the foodbank opening on Thursday. There is a need to wider promote this to other allotments. Any leftover fresh produce is given to the homeless.



Food being sorted



A typical family food parcel for three days



A typical single person's food parcel for three days



Supplies

Seventh Day Adventist Church, 74 Highlands Ave, Spinney Hill, NN3 6BQ

2.3 On Monday 2 September 2019, Councillor Catherine Russell, together with Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager, visited the foodbank, met with key volunteers and visitors. This was a hands on visit where we greeted and supported visitors which gave us a great insight into how the bank operated.

2.4 Key information gathered from the site visit:

- Seventh Day Adventist Church are one of the six food banks and are part of RESTORE. Restore are a charity that support vulnerable people in Northampton through practical means. Below are the Restore food banks:

DISTRIBUTION POINTS:

MONDAY

12pm - 2pm

**Seventh Day
Adventist
Church**
74 Highlands Ave
Spinney Hill, NN3
6BQ
**Closed on Bank
Holidays**

WEDNESDAY

11am - 1pm

Here 4 You Shop
2 Park Square
Kings Heath
NN5 7LQ

THURSDAY

10am - 12pm

Central Vineyard
42 Sheep Street
Northampton
NN1 2LZ

FRIDAY

10am - 12pm

Duston URC
Main Road
Duston NN5 6JF

FRIDAY

9am - 12pm

**St Alban the
Martyr**
Broadmead
Avenue
Northampton NN3
2RA

SATURDAY

10am - 12pm

Duston URC
Main Road
Duston NN5 6JF

- All foodbanks have access to RESTORE data base. Visitors will already have a voucher number and the volunteers will access the system and record those who have used the voucher.
- On Monday 2nd there were 65 open vouchers awaiting for people to visit a bank within Northampton.
- We saw 11 visitors on Monday, of which 5 families (3 with 2 Children and 2 with 1) and 6 individuals.
- Vouchers are valid for 7 days but discretion can be used allowing an expired voucher to be used.

- We met a lovely community of volunteers who regularly support Seventh Day Adventist Church foodbank. It is a huge commitment as the food bank needs setting up the Sunday evening in readiness for Monday.
- This particular food bank have 5 regular volunteers who attend most Monday's, a further 3 who attend occasionally.
- Setting up on a Sunday is done by the same four regular volunteers. This is due to the physical nature of moving boxes etc.
- Storage within premises is not ideal as storage is upstairs.
- Each week approximately £100.00 a week is spent to replenish (this food bank only).
- Good relationships are formed with some supermarkets but there are discrepancies between what some supermarkets will and will not donate.
- There is an additional cost for the large plastic storage boxes.
- Bread is collected from Tesco on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon, from 2 local Tesco stores. This is strongly reliant on two volunteers.
- Monday AM fresh goods are collected from four Aldi and one Lidl stores. This can include more bread, fruit, veg, flowers etc. This is strongly reliant on two volunteers driving around to collect this produce before the food bank opens.
- The products in the greatest demand include:
 - Long life milk, cereals, beans, pasta, rice, pasta sauce, drinks and toiletries, especially wet-wipes, shampoo and deodorant.

Actions/concerns to consider:

- Form relationships with companies who would donate boxes.
- Obtain premises within this area that would accommodate a permanent food bank,
- One thing that would help tremendously is if premises were provided to allow the Foodbank to be setup all through the week and thus enable to doors to open on other days or evenings. It would also help to have it in a location in another part of town where there might be a greater concentration of people who require help from a Foodbank.
- Complete research on local supermarkets to identify what they do with food that is close to the expiry date and what additional support is available.
- Increase communication to encourage donations and support. NBC are part of the Northants Chambers networking group who meet regularly. Could we arrange for a presentation on food poverty and support from these business and provide contact details for RESTORE to make arrangements.



3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 From the evidence gathered a potential recommendation for the final report could be around promoting the work of foodbanks to schools in the borough and how they can encourage parents to donate during the year; not just at harvest festival.
- 3.2 From the evidence gathered a potential recommendation for the final report could be around promoting how allotment holders can donate excess fresh produce to the foodbanks.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Review.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, on behalf of Councillor Dennis Meredith, Chair of Scrutiny Panel 1

23 August 2019

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