

## Why have a Fairness and Well-being Commission?

- 1.1 Life for some people in Doncaster is a real struggle, where people cannot easily access some of the things in life we take for granted such as food or heating, or spend lots of their time alone and feel isolated. This has been highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and then exacerbated by high inflationary pressure putting a real squeeze on household bills, that make real, the decisions people and families should not have to make between energy, food and the fundamentals many of us take for granted.
- 1.2 Our **Poverty Position Statement (annex d)** sets out some of the latest information, the work already completed and things planned to support people to better deal with the impacts of poverty in the here and now. This covers three categories of preventing poverty happening, supporting people in poverty and helping people to exit poverty.
- 1.3 Poverty in all its forms affect people's well-being and through Doncaster Delivering Together, our new borough plan, we have set out a series of wellbeing essentials that we believe all people in Doncaster should be able to access and enjoy. Inspired by the emerging economic approach "Doughnut Economies", Doncaster's Wellbeing Wheel acknowledges that for our residents to thrive, we need to ensure that all people have the essentials of life, and that no one is left behind.
- 1.4 We want people and places in Doncaster to thrive but at the same time recognise less money may be available for public services. If we don't respond collectively the needs of a changing population may not be met and we risk more people, especially vulnerable people, being left further behind. Perceptions of unfairness are also important because they can fuel tensions, distrust and conflict, even if the perception is not an accurate reflection of real inequalities.
- 1.5 A Fairness and Well-being Commission will be formed to receive evidence and the real life experiences of people who live and work here to better understand the reality of people's lives. This will inform the things we can in the medium and long term to make the most difference and improve well-being across the borough. The Commission will help drive real action from across Team Doncaster and beyond, to shape a borough of reduced inequalities, increased capabilities and social mobility that supports residents to achieve their full potential.

## What will the Commission do?

- 1.6 The Commission will be an independent body tasked by the Health and Well-Being Board in Doncaster. It will work to produce a report with some clear areas of focus that will improve well-being for residents.
- 1.7 Using the Well-being essentials in Doncaster Delivering Together as a framework, the Commission will:
  - Examine existing data, best practice, engage with subject matter experts and the lived experiences of people across the borough
  - Make an assessment as to the completeness and appropriateness of the list of well-being essentials proposed in the Borough Strategy (See Annex A), as well as developing a priority order and considering the current situation of each, including identifying any gaps

- Produce a public ‘Commission Report’ which makes specific, practical and interconnected recommendations based on the findings of the process. This will inform a new Health and Well-Being Strategy and wider equalities objectives for the Borough.
- Produce ways of checking and measuring the impact of addressing poverty and inequality, including a headline 2030 target and a suggested review period.
- Provide a lobbying voice to advocate for the borough at a Regional and National level.

### **Who would be part of the Commission?**

- 1.8 The Commission will have up to 15 permanent members including a Chair and two Deputy Chairs.
- 1.9 The Chair will be an independent person who will provide strong leadership around the agenda and set the strategic direction of the Commission.
- 1.10 In addition, the Chair of the Health and Well Being Board and Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will act as observers on the Commission.
- 1.11 Professional specialisms of members will include (but are not restricted to) the community, voluntary and faith sector, community safety and cohesion, early years’ provision, employment and skills, financial inclusion, health inequality, housing affordability, homelessness and transport.
- 1.12 Guest attendees will be invited to individual meetings as appropriate, for example if they are a subject matter expert on the topic being discussed at that specific meeting.

### **What will the role of members be?**

- 1.13 All members of the Commission will be asked to fully participate in all of the Commission meetings and activities, which include:
- shaping and promoting the work programme of the Commission
  - listening to and representing the views of people who experience inequality and poverty
  - reviewing and constructively debating the evidence and views presented to the commission
  - identifying practical ways to make Doncaster a fairer place, working collaboratively across different sectors to reduce inequality
  - considering ways to foster greater cohesion in communities and greater trust and collaboration between citizens and public sector organisations
  - shaping, agreeing and publicising the findings and the recommendations of the commission
- 1.14 The Chair will preside over proceedings at Commission meetings and supervise progress in between meetings on a planned and ad hoc basis.
- 1.15 A Deputy Chair will oversee proceedings in the event that the Chair is unavailable. A Young Advisor (s) and the Director of Public Health will be approached initially to be Deputy Chairs of the Commission.
- 1.16 Annex B gives some suggested representation for inclusion in the Commission.

### **How will the Commission conduct its work?**

- 1.17 The main principles of the Commission and how it will conduct its work will;
- a) Engage local people to better understand the reality of living and working in Doncaster
  - b) Be independent from any single or collective organisation
  - c) Focus on what works and draw upon best practice from across the UK and beyond.

## **What will the Commission look at?**

- 1.18 To make this process manageable within the set timeframe, given the potential breadth of the subject, the Commission will need to theme its work and focus on particular areas for enquiry. This focus could be drawn from the Well-being Essentials or the Well-being Goals from Doncaster Delivering Together (Annex A) as well as aligning to the national levelling up missions contained within the white paper. The work programme for the Commission will be confirmed by its members in the inaugural meeting but a draft is provided for comment (Annex C)
- 1.19 Key lines of enquiry will be consistently applied for each of the sessions. These could include:-
- Context and Background
    - What do we know – What is the current lived experience as we understand it?
    - What are we already doing?
  - What do we want to do?
    - Where can we make the biggest impact?
    - What are the key things the Commission agree should be taken forward in Doncaster

## **How much will the Commission cost?**

- 1.20 Members of the Commission will give their time within their professional remit or voluntarily. Where appropriate, they will be reimbursed for any basic costs associated with travel or subsistence associated with the Commission. Resources from Team Doncaster, to support the work of the Commission, will be met within existing capacity and resources.

## **How long will the Commission take?**

- 1.21 Final agreement for the establishment of the Commission and its terms of reference will be given at the Health and Well-being Board meeting September 2022. The Commission will meet on several occasions and report its findings and final report by May 2023. The breadth of issues the Commission agrees to look at will determine how many times the Commission comes together and frequency of any other events or evidence gathering sessions they may require.

## Annex A – Doncaster Delivering Together Well Being Goals and Essentials

GOAL	VISION
Greener and Cleaner	All residents, communities and organisations working together to protect and enhance the local and global environment to improve wellbeing.
Fair and Inclusive	A borough with reduced inequalities and improved access to social and economic opportunities for all.
Prosperous and Connected	A stronger, greener and fairer economy that provides good, well paid jobs and is supported by improved transport and active travel infrastructure and access to good broadband.
Safe and Resilient	Residents feel safe and communities are more resilient to challenges and emergencies.
Healthy and Compassionate	A compassionate borough where collectively everyone is supported to add life to years and years to life.
Skilled and Creative	Residents have improved skills and a creative culture supports wellbeing, business success and solutions to the borough's challenges.

The Well-being essentials are agreed as part of the Doncaster Delivering Together and were sourced from a series of external work and then tested with our citizen's panel engagement. They were mainly drawn from the Doughnut Economic work by Kate Raworth which included the following as social foundations;

Energy | Water | Food | Health | Education | Income & Work | Peace & Justice | Political Voice | Social Equity | Gender Equality | Housing | Networks

We applied them to Doncaster and they were found to be a good match, but some alterations have been made to make it work for Doncaster. For example, we have split out income and employment and re-named some elements for clarity e.g. feelings of safety.

In addition, we have included access to greenspace as this was some of the local feedback about what was considered important to their wellbeing.

Wellbeing Essentials	Why?
Homes	So everyone has an appropriate home that is decent (e.g. clean and warm with good facilities), secure and affordable - and are therefore free from fuel poverty.
Food	So everyone has access to the nutrition they need.
Income	So everyone can secure the income they need for at least a decent minimum living standard. Also ensuring residents can access debt advice and support if needed.
Digital Capabilities	So everyone has access to the digital connections and skills needed in the home, at work and when out and about.

<b>Education</b>	So everyone has access to the education and training that will allow them to achieve their goals in life.
<b>Employment</b>	So everyone has opportunities and support to access meaningful employment.
<b>Social Contact</b>	So everyone has access to social opportunities and support.
<b>Greenspace</b>	So everyone has access to quality greenspace (e.g. parks).
<b>Influence</b>	So everyone has the opportunity to influence positive change and has a voice in the decisions that affect them.
<b>Safety</b>	So everyone feels safe.
<b>Health Services</b>	So everyone has access to essential health services.
<b>Social Equity</b>	So everyone is free from discrimination and treated fairly.
<b>Transport</b>	So everyone has access to affordable, reliable transport.

Table 1 Well Being Essentials - Doncaster Delivering Together

With regard to coverage there will be some essentials that are already being discussed at length across Team Doncaster so we would expect the Commission to concentrate on those areas where the maturity of discussion and understanding is in need of greater focus and attention. We also would like to link to the 'Levelling Up Missions' in the governments white paper which are listed below.

<b>Well-being Essential</b>	<b>Commission Scope</b>	<b>National Levelling Up Mission</b>
Homes	Direct	By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas. <sup>1</sup>
Food	Direct	*
Income	Direct	*
Digital Capabilities	Indirect	By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.
Education	Indirect	By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.  By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people

		successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas
Employment	Direct	<p>By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing</p> <p>By 2030, domestic public investment in R&amp;D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.</p>
Social Contact	Indirect	By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
Greenspace	Indirect	Picked up in Environment & Sustainability work
Influence	Indirect	*
Safety	Indirect	By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.
Health Services	Indirect	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years
Social Equity	Direct	*
Transport	Direct	By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

## Annex B DRAFT Potential Representation of the Commission

Organisation	Role	Why?	Other
<b>Local Team Doncaster</b>			
Doncaster Council	Senior Leader	Key role in Team Doncaster	
Public Health	DPH / Deputy DPH	Key role in Team Doncaster	Take on role of Deputy Chair
SLHD or Housing Provider	Chief Exec or Leadership Role within the organisation	Housing a key theme / line of enquiry	
DWP	South Yorkshire Service Leader/District Manager	Key social security anchor and key line of enquiry re accessing employment	
NHS South Yorkshire	Chief Medical Officer NHS South Yorkshire	Health a key theme / line of enquiry	
VAD Doncaster	Chief Exec	General VCF sector representation	
<b>Local VCF / Frontline Services Representation</b>			
Faith Lead		Faith leaders as a convenor in the well-being / poverty space	All could be part of the commission or be part of specific sessions to give their views and input
Doncaster Inclusion & Fairness Forum	Co-chairs of IFF	Chairs of a key forum in the delivery/accountability of Fair & Inclusive Goal	
MP or Political Representation		Community Representation / leadership role	
Minorities Partnership		Perspectives from an Ethnic Minority Representation	
Local Food Bank		Food a key theme / line of enquiry	
Youth Council / Young Advisor		Youth voice	
Disability Representative		Perspective from people who have a disability	
Schools		School and Family Perspective	
Older Peoples Representative		Older Peoples Voice	
CAB		Local trends on advice	
Age UK Doncaster		Perspectives from Older People	
Local Credit Union		Key social security anchor	
<b>External Independent Advisors</b>			
The Equality Trust			
Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (SHU)			
The Health Foundation		Leading health think tank with extensive experience in health inequalities and covid-19	
What Works Wellbeing		Leading wellbeing think tank	

JRF / Resolution Foundation		key anti-poverty organisation	
<b>Observers</b>			
Cllr Rachael Blake	Labour Cllr and Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities	Portfolio Holder for Equalities  Chair of HWBB	
Cllr Jane Kidd	Labour Cllr Wheatley Hills and Intake	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	



## Annex C – Draft Programme

<b>Session</b>	<b>Questions to Answer</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
<p>Session 1: Setting the Scene and understanding the baseline in Doncaster</p> <p>(September)</p>	<p>What is the Current level of Deprivation and Poverty in Doncaster?</p> <p>What is the outlook?</p> <p>What people in Doncaster will be most affected?</p> <p>Collectively happy with the programme outline?</p>	<p>Chair Team Doncaster</p>
<p>Session 2: Maximising Income and Relief</p> <p>(October)</p>	<p>How can we best maximise incomes?</p> <p>What is the lived experience of people in unsustainable debt? What does that experience tell us?</p>	<p>CAB Benefits (Council) SLH Community</p>
<p>Session 3: Employment and Barriers to work</p> <p>(November)</p>	<p>How well is our current employment support offer tailored to those people who need it most?</p> <p>What is the lived experience of people using these services?</p> <p>What is the biggest barrier to work?</p>	<p>DWP Advance? Youth Hub? Community Business Rep</p>
<p>Session 4: Homes</p> <p>(December)</p>	<p>What is the biggest housing pressure currently for residents in Doncaster?</p> <p>What more can be done on Fuel?</p> <p>What is It like to rent in the private sector in Doncaster?</p>	<p>SLH Landlords Forum Rep Community</p>
<p>Session 5: Food Security</p> <p>(January 23)</p>	<p>What is the current experience of people working in food banks now?</p> <p>How well can people access them?</p> <p>What is the next evolution of food banks in Doncaster?</p>	<p>Food Banks Community Family Hubs?</p>
<p>Session 6: Engaging with groups likely to suffer greater effects of poverty...</p> <p>(February 23)</p>	<p>What is the lived experience of these groups?</p> <p>How can services changes to make it fairer for all?</p>	<p>Age UK Carers Minorities Partnership DIAL Family Hubs IFF</p>
<p>Session 7: Draft Report Discussion</p> <p>(March/April 23)</p>	<p>Is the draft report acceptable to the commission?</p>	<p>Team Doncaster</p>

## **Annex D – Poverty Position Statement April 22**

### **1. Introduction**

In January 2021, evidence was emerging on the economic impacts of the pandemic across the UK:

- The number of adults that were financially vulnerable had increased by 15% (between March and October 2020), with the largest increases being in those aged 18-34 and the self-employed
- Containment and lockdown measures were disproportionately affecting low income families with young children, including the extra costs involved in having children at home for longer
- More people were behind on essential bills and 13% of all adults (6.7m) felt that it was likely they would need debt advice in the next six months

A group was established to assess whether enough was being done to support the people in Doncaster facing such difficulties, and whether Team Doncaster was doing enough to address the underlying causes of poverty. Many issues we face are systemic in nature, but have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The group has focused on issues such as skills and jobs, using our resources and changing our ways of operating in partnership. It has also implemented a series of actions to address current problems, the issues that are affecting our residents on a daily basis.

This document outlines the current context, the approach taken by the group (subsequently called the Poverty Renewal Group) and potential future areas of focus. Work by the Poverty Renewal Group aligns to the Wellbeing Essentials outlined in the new borough strategy, Doncaster Delivering Together.

### **2. Context**

Doncaster has faced numerous challenges over the last few years. In addition to the ongoing effects of the COVID pandemic, we saw devastating floods in November 2019 and the Hatfield Moor Wildfire in 2020. These pressures have placed unprecedented stress on the borough and worsened inequalities in society, for example for vulnerable people with underlying health conditions and other risk factors. Now, more than ever, all of our efforts need to be underpinned by a vigorous, relentless approach to equalities and tackling deprivation to create a fair and inclusive borough. During these emergencies partners have come together to provide necessary support and recovery arrangements for both residents and businesses.

We are now firmly focused on recovery and renewal, with a new Borough Strategy 'Doncaster Delivering Together' (DDT), setting out our long terms ambitions as well as what needs to be done 'here and now'.

We have ensured Doncaster benefits from the Government's 'levelling up' agenda by securing investment of over £60million for priority projects through two successful bids for Town Deals (one for Town Centre and one for Stainforth), a successful Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid, as well as receiving most of its Community Renewal Fund (CRF) ask. The borough has also benefited from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). Wherever funding opportunities present themselves, we are using these to support community based initiatives, those that need it the most and a strong, effective voluntary sector.

Doncaster is bidding for 'City Status', with the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and local businesses leading and supporting the bid. They see it as an opportunity for economic growth, development and creating a positive profile for the Borough that will help to attract inward investment and maintain more balanced local demographics by retaining young people in the area.

National studies<sup>1</sup> have highlighted the increasing financial difficulties facing people across the country, particularly those on low incomes. The UK as a whole is facing strain from rising inflation rates and a shrinking labour market, and inequalities will only exacerbate this strain. People have reported feeling worried about their mortgage payments and rent arrears during the pandemic and ongoing economic crisis. The latest report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: UK Poverty 2022<sup>2</sup> reinforces this message. Although for some people finances seem to be improving, for others poverty is proving deep and persistent. The prospect of increasing prices, which will not be uniform, will further impact on low income households that do not have a financial 'buffer'.

High rates of Universal Credit claims and furloughed employees initially caused concern for the borough. During the summer of 2020, the claimant count reached 7.6%<sup>3</sup>, almost double the baseline rate from 2019-20. A total of 51,100 employments went on to furlough throughout the time of the Job Retention Scheme. However, the success of the scheme has meant that across a range of indicators the labour market is performing more strongly than expected. Despite furlough ending, redundancy and unemployment rates are lower than expected, pay and job vacancies are at a record high. Investment and property enquiries are below target but increased recently and there has been an uptake in manufacturing/industrial-type requirements enquiries and new jobs being created. However, some businesses are reporting recruitment difficulties.

Various grants have been made available to help economies across the country:

- Economic Recovery Grant to businesses
  - 363 expressions of interest
  - 266 are currently being processed
  - £1.17 million had been allocated of the £1.27 million overall budget
  - Final call for expressions of interest in February
- ARG capex grant
  - Delivered on behalf of the SYMCA to Doncaster companies
  - Round 2 - 14 companies applied for project grants support totalling £1.2 million
  - Creative and culture ARG has just opened up to a second round of applications
- Productivity programme
  - Engaged with 34 Doncaster companies with projects totalling £728,000
  - £364,000 allocated in grant funding
- South Yorkshire low carbon grant for businesses
  - Soft launched December 2021 and is taking applications
  - CRF Decarbonising Doncaster grant will go live January 2022
- Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant
  - Open for applications with grants of up to £6000 available
- COVID Additional Relief Funding
  - Doncaster allocation of £5.3m scheme in development and can support broader range of businesses to those that have received business support grants during 2020-22

During the Pandemic, as part of the Mayor's 10 Point Response Plan:

- The DN Community Hub supported almost 7,000 residents in various ways, including providing almost 2,900 food parcels and collecting 3,200 prescriptions
- Contacted more than 14,000 shielding residents – those people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to Covid19 – to offer support and assistance

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<sup>1</sup> [Joseph Rowntree Foundation study on debt crisis](#)

<sup>2</sup> [JRF UK Poverty 2022](#)

<sup>3</sup> Claimant Count (% of WA Population) (LRF)

- Provided over 3,500 residents with council tax holidays and paid out £244,540 in grants to 40 projects by voluntary groups who are supporting our communities, 20% of which has gone to BAME groups
- Supported businesses, with £53.3m being paid out to over 4,700 businesses - so far an additional 89 awards have been made to a value of £588,000 to businesses eligible for the discretionary grants scheme

### Doncaster Delivering Together

The revised Borough Strategy (2030) Doncaster Delivering Together<sup>4</sup>, was launched in Autumn 2021. It builds on the successes of the Doncaster Growing Together Plan to transform the well-being of Doncaster people and places over the next 10 years. The Strategy includes 6 interconnected Wellbeing Goals which contribute to one overall Mission: Thriving People, Places and Planet.

The Fair and Inclusive Goal recognises that we all need to have our basic needs met before we can have the chance to thrive and society cannot flourish when there are inequalities between people and between communities. Through the engagement undertaken to develop the new borough strategy, a number of potential Wellbeing Essentials have been identified to ensure no one is left behind, six of which relate directly to the poverty renewal agenda (1-5 and 7). All the Wellbeing Essentials will be a key part of a relentless partnership effort to reduce inequalities and ensure everyone has the opportunities and capabilities to thrive:

Wellbeing Essentials	Why?
1. <b>Homes</b>	So everyone has an appropriate home that is decent (e.g. clean and warm with good facilities), secure and affordable - and are therefore free from fuel poverty.
2. <b>Food</b>	So everyone has access to the nutrition they need.
3. <b>Income</b>	So everyone can secure the income they need for at least a decent minimum living standard. Also ensuring residents can access debt advice and support if needed.
4. <b>Digital Capabilities</b>	So everyone has access to the digital connections and skills needed in the home, at work and when out and about.
5. <b>Education</b>	So everyone has access to the education and training that will allow them to achieve their goals in life.
6. <b>Employment</b>	So everyone has opportunities and support to access meaningful employment.
7. <b>Social Contact</b>	So everyone has access to social opportunities and support.
8. <b>Greenspace</b>	So everyone has access to quality greenspace (e.g. parks).
9. <b>Influence</b>	So everyone has the opportunity to influence positive change and has a voice in the decisions that affect them.
10. <b>Safety</b>	So everyone feels safe.
11. <b>Health Services</b>	So everyone has access to essential health services.
12. <b>Social Equity</b>	So everyone is free from discrimination and treated fairly.
13. <b>Transport</b>	So everyone has access to affordable, reliable transport.

<sup>4</sup> [Doncaster Delivering Together](#)

### 3. Latest Data

We know that some of our residents are more likely to suffer from the effects of poverty than others. We have used a range of data to help us identify these groups of residents and used national research to help us understand their circumstances.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Essential Guide to Understanding Poverty in the UK<sup>5</sup> identified several cohorts in the UK population who are more likely to be in poverty than others:

- **Part-time workers and those who are self-employed** (*in Doncaster: nearly 30k part-time employees and 11k self-employed in 2020-21*)
- **Families: particularly lone parents; larger families; those with younger children or with a disabled family member** (*in Doncaster: families – couples and lone parents – with children under 18 accounted for 20% of households across the borough in 2019, while 48% of households contained at least one person with an illness/disability*)
- **Single pensioners: particularly women** (*in Doncaster: there are over 32.5k men and nearly 28k women over 65 years old, 15.9% of older people in deprivation*)
- **Social rented accommodation tenants** (*in the 2018 Doncaster Household Survey, 16% of respondents rent from the council and 2% rent from a social housing provider*)
- **Ethnic minorities** (*in the 2018 Doncaster Household Survey, 6.6% of respondents described themselves as having ethnicities other than White British*)
- **Disabled people: with men more likely to be in poverty than women** (*in the 2018 Doncaster Household Survey, 27% of residents in the borough reported having an illness/disability*)
- **Informal carers: those of working age; men more likely to be in poverty than women** (*approximately 33k in Doncaster*)

Citizens Advice Doncaster supported over 9.5k clients in 2021-22 (45% more than the previous year). This support resulted in nearly £1m income gained, as well as over £2m in debts written off and repayments rescheduled. Most clients were 30-44 years old, while 58% were female, 60% were not disabled/no health problems and 91% were white.

**Appendix A** sets out a range of indicators and benchmarks that give an overview of information linked to poverty and associated key factors.

Of the 316 local authorities in England, Doncaster is ranked 48th most income deprived. In 2019, 17% of Doncaster's population was income-deprived. In the least deprived neighbourhood in Doncaster, 2% of people are estimated to be income deprived. In the most deprived neighbourhood, 43% of people are estimated to be income deprived. Of the 194 neighbourhoods in Doncaster, 68 were among the 20% most income-deprived in England, while 13 were in the 20% least income-deprived.

The University of Sheffield's COVID-19 Places Economic Recovery Index (CoPERI)<sup>6</sup> identifies the pattern of various metrics across different areas of the borough and has allowed identification of levels of financial resilience risk by area.

Key indicators include:

- Percentage change in actual hours worked between 2019 and 2020:

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<sup>5</sup> [UK Poverty 2022: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | JRF](#)

<sup>6</sup> [CoPERI](#)

- Doncaster residents experienced a 13.5% decrease in hours worked in 2020 relative to 2019 (equivalent to approximately 18,000 FTE jobs lost)
  - Elementary admin and service: -23%
  - Leisure and travel: -59%
  - Skilled construction: -34%
  - Health professionals: -5%
  - Science, engineering and tech (IT)= +3%
- Approximately 30% of the UK work force is working from home - residents of more deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to be able to work from home

A recent report by Citizens Advice predicts that, between the rising energy prices and increasing inflation, 5 million people across the UK will be unable to afford their energy bill after the price rise in April, while 14.5 million will be unable to afford their bill from October.

People on low incomes are most likely to be unable to afford price rises from April. A single person on benefits will still be spending a quarter (25%) of their standard allowance - the basic rate of Universal Credit - on energy bills. From October, this could increase to 39-47% of the standard allowance. Polling commissioned by Citizens Advice shows that nearly half (47%) of people on low incomes predict that they will fall behind on their essential bills, or cut back on essential spending.

Households on prepayment meters are already at a greater risk of fuel poverty. According to the most recent government figures, more than a quarter of households (31%) who pay for their electricity via prepayment are fuel poor. This is compared to 1 in 9 households (11%) who pay for their gas via direct debit. From April, more than half (52%) of prepayment customers expect to be unable to afford their energy, or to have to cut back on essentials or fall behind on other essential bills. This is compared to under 1 in 3 (27%) of people who pay by direct debit.

## 4. Our Approach

### Poverty Renewal Group

To assess the coverage and gaps in provision across Doncaster, the Group developed a matrix tool which was used by locality groups, community teams and Public Health.

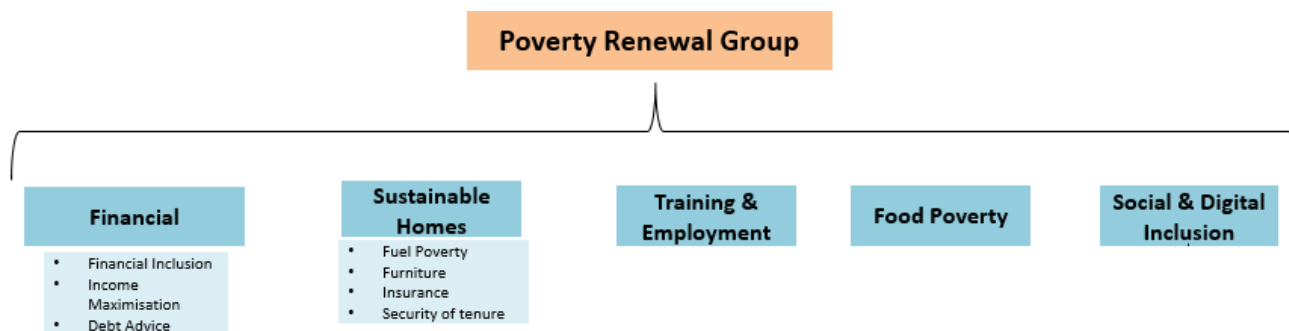
This considered:

- Purpose of initiative
  - **Prevention** of poverty & inequalities
  - **Mitigation** of the effects of poverty & inequalities
  - **Exit** from poverty
- Method of delivery, geographic coverage
- Theme or poverty issue, target group, general or specialised provision
- Effectiveness, reach & contribution to other objectives
- Current status & future plans

A large number of local VCFS groups provide support to mitigate or prevent poverty, often across multiple themes including financial exclusion, debt and food poverty. There is a mixture of universal services and those targeted at low income, older people or people with disabilities. Few services assisted with an 'Exit' from poverty – those in place were mainly providing financial advice and employment support.

Sub groups were established for a series of poverty themes, whilst acknowledging the crossover between many issues. With agreed leads, the sub-groups assessed current and future need, current provision,

potential interventions and measures. The sub-groups' have been intelligence led, with informed approaches and actions changing as required. Much has been achieved but there is a lack of progress in some areas – there is much more to do.



### **Targeted support**

Although our approach to tackling poverty is generally borough-wide, we also target support to residents more likely to be experiencing difficulties. For example

- During the post-Christmas debt and money advice campaign, targeted information was sent to households subject to a 'benefit cap' and in rent arrears. This is more likely to be households with larger numbers of children.
- St Leger Homes of Doncaster provides tenancy support and 'Moneywise' services to their social housing tenants
- Additional funding, from the Local Solutions Community Hub Grant, has been provided to Citizens Advice and Age UK Doncaster to provide a collaborative information, advice and guidance service

### **Financial**

- Assessed range and capacity of advice provision across the borough. Arrangements assessed as adequate with good coverage, collaborative arrangements between Voluntary organisations, and no backlogs (at the time)
- Initial messaging campaign to highlight advice and support available - social media, Covid newsletter to residents and VCFS newsletter. Feedback on style and content provided by CAB and their users. This was used to inform future communications and improve provision of information, advice and guidance.
- Joint Information and Advice campaigns via resident newsletters, social media & targeted communications
  - Involving DMBC, Citizens Advice, SLHD, DWP, Money & Pensions Service
  - Talk Money Week
  - Post-Christmas debt and money advice
  - Household support Fund
- Citizens Advice Doncaster provided with additional funding for advice 'pods' and outreach sessions within communities. Office accommodation provided in Civic Building
- Local organisations have established a Doncaster Advice Network. Information and training provided between organisations, including Personal Independence Payments and Debt advice

### **Training and Employment**

Successful applications to the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) to:

- Address skills challenges via the 'Doncaster Progress' project. It uses an integrated 'skills accelerator' approach to address skills challenges across the borough exacerbated by Covid-19 and provide short flexible training and development interventions. The project further challenges businesses to innovate and invest in higher level skills.

- Stimulate large scale community innovation and enterprise activity via the 'Doncaster Thrive' project. It will support businesses to thrive, increasing their capacity to support higher-paid and higher-skilled employment.

The projects funded by the CRF will enhance work already underway to support training and employment opportunities such as targeted employment support from Advance, In-work Progression team, youth employment hubs and Launchpad.

Current training and employment provision includes:

- **Doncaster Employment Hub** – launched in 2020 as a single gateway to provide employment and careers support, self-employment and start-up business support and recruitment or redundancy support for employers.
- Key employment support programmes put in place or continued/reshaped:
  - **Youth Hubs** – local venues to address rising Youth Unemployment.
  - **National Careers Service** - careers information, advice and guidance, to help with decisions on learning, training and work at all career stages.
  - **Launchpad** – fully funded support to individuals and business related to self-employment, new business start-up and business growth.
  - **Advance** – employment advancement service to help people progress in their chosen career.
  - **Doncaster Employment Academies** at iPort and Gateway East – supporting residents to find out about and connect with available opportunities.
  - **Ambition** – support for unemployed and economically in active adults (18+) with multiple, significant and often complex barriers to enable them to move towards, or into suitable learning, training or employment.
  - **Community Wealth Building** - provides non-financial support to new and existing social enterprises offering business development packages, training programme, and networking opportunities that will increase the likelihood of survival and growth.
- New DWP provision:
  - **Kickstart** – DWP programme started in 2020 to support 18-24 year olds who had been impacted heavily during COVID in finding employment.
  - **Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)** - Available to customers who have been unemployed and in receipt of UC or New Style Jobseekers Allowance for at least 13 weeks, and who must be motivated to find work and require light touch support.
  - **Positive Thinking** - provides a supported pathway, work through specific barriers and produce personalised Action Plan for customers that are furthest away from work due to Mental Health needs.
  - **Youth Work Preparation** - 2 week course for 18 – 24 year olds which focused on post lockdown confidence, motivation, communication skills and jobs searing for better interaction.
  - **Way to Work** - partnership between government and employers to get 500,000 jobseekers into work by the end of June 2022.
  - **Work and Health Programme** – provides targeted support for disabled people and other groups who need extra tailored support to find employment. For customers who want to work and with support they could move into work within 12 months.
  - **Intensive Personalise Employment Support (IPES)** – support in the form of work related skills, job search, access to volunteering and job taster sessions for people with a disability. For customers who want to work but are a bit more than 12 months away from being ready for work.
  - **Restart** – national programme introduced in 2021 to support customers who have been unemployed for a minimum of 9 months. Includes a dedicated employment advisor.



## **Food Poverty**

- £5k grants to 21 food banks to support families and report data on provision – 6 foodbanks have reported seeing an increasing in people accessing provision (reasons given – rise of energy bills, cost of living and fuel costs; changes in benefits; or outstanding debts). Some foodbanks have seen a reduction in people accessing provision – the reasons for this are unknown.
- Winter Food Plan: Winter Plan and welfare support resources established for call centre staff and partners - can be used with Track & Trace.
- Community food providers to contribute to Delicious Doncaster food festival and showcase 'grow, cook, eat' approach.
- Food Network:
  - Food Educator recruited
  - Healthy Eating Sessions with Citizens Advice outreach
  - Six week food education courses, with links with food banks, Hubs & schools
- Household Support Fund for eligible people, providing:
  - Free School Meals in school holidays
  - £100 fuel payments
  - Support to food & hygiene banks
  - Any underspend to be redirected to Welfare Support Fund
  - Potential recipients identified from Revenues & Benefits records & targeted

## **Social and Digital Inclusion**

- Superfast broadband is expected to be close to 99% coverage across South Yorkshire by June 2022. The current rollout is addressing rural areas and the government's Project Gigabit is just starting and includes parts of Doncaster.
- Issues around skills, broadband costs and equipment have not yet been looked at.

## **Sustainable Homes**

### **Fuel poverty**

- To reach the most vulnerable, we have created and updated new information, advice and guidance:
  - Created new posters and Healthy Homes videos:
    - How to keep your home warm in the short and medium term
    - How to keep children safe in the home
  - Shared information with our newly formed stakeholder group
  - Supported on winter communications, ensuring that appropriate information is shared in the winter booklet and on social media
  - Updated DMBC website content so residents can find appropriate information easier:
    - Tips to keep their home warm
    - Grants that apply to them
    - Urgent information, particularly in regards to the energy price crisis
    - Links and resources for other useful and trusted websites
    - Contact information for local support
- Embedded a variety of local and central government schemes such as the Boiler on Prescription (BOP) and Warm Home Discount and more.
- Energy Officers in the Sustainability Unit now offer advice to residents in regards to affordable warmth, working in a strengths based way to assess how people may be able to make their homes more comfortable.
- Hosted multiple training events to show staff how to spot the signs of a cold home and what they can do to help if they do spot a cold home. The largest event was attended by over 60 staff and partners.
- The Affordable Warmth Programme has provided boilers and/or radiators in 100+ households over a five-year period.
- The 2021/22 Boiler on Prescription scheme has 35 applications proceeding, costing just over £58k. Over £43k of ECO funding has been secured. Other support has included:

- 56 visits/interventions to help residents save money and keep their homes warm and safe.
- Over 100 Winter Warmth activities delivered to ensure residents and workers are aware of actions and support to keep homes warm and safe.
- Nearly 160 NHS, housing, communities and social care workers trained to raise awareness of the health impacts of cold homes and fuel poverty, as well as to outline effective action and support that can be provided to the people they work with.
- Review of Home Improvement Services to identify if there is a better way for residents to access services, improving their homes and lives in a strengths-based way.
- St Leger Homes of Doncaster:
  - Risk-based approach to new and existing tenants to support those most in need, with over 10,200 assessed so far
  - Targeted focus on disability benefits and pension credit claims
  - Length of time in support increased to almost double
  - Cross-service led Eviction Panel
  - Set up a partnership with Yorkshire Water to reduce historic debts and reduce monthly bills
  - Developing a partnership with Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)
  - Developing approaches for Mental Health and Substance misuse part of the Tenancy Sustainability offer
  - Continue to provide support to Foodbanks
  - Supporting Breathing Space tenants
- Well Doncaster work on budgeting, IAG, debt support, money management and energy support.
- Citizen's Advice Doncaster issuing Fuel Bank Vouchers (a top up voucher that provides approximately two weeks' worth of fuel to clients who use a prepayment meter to heat their home and to cook with) to support people who have been deemed as in 'crisis need' by an independent referrer – 17 vouchers issued by 11 April 22 since the scheme launched at the end of March 22.

### Grants and support funds

- Household Support Fund:
 

A total of £2,986,255 was allocated to Doncaster Council. The period of the scheme is 06/10/21 to 31/03/22 so the scheme has nearly come to an end and the funding will be spent. As at 07/03/22, there was a total spend of £2,282,432 as follows:

  - £790,304 spent on schools issuing 44,085 shopping vouchers to parents of Free School Meals children for the school holidays (Oct/Dec/Feb half terms)
  - £197,430 spent by the Benefits Team issuing 2273 cash awards (direct into bank account) for food for children not on FSM but where the parent is receiving an eligible benefit
  - £1,025,400 spent by the Benefits Team issuing 10,254 cash awards (direct into bank account) of £100 each to those receiving an eligible benefit
  - £100,000 allocated to Doncaster Foodbanks
  - £15,000 allocated to the Hygiene bank
  - £154,298 Admin costs
- Discretionary Housing Payments:
 

This is an ongoing scheme where Doncaster Council are allocated Government funding every year, with top-up from SLH where necessary. The Government contribution in 2021/22 was £702,075. As at the end of February 22, £748,693 has been spent on 1483 awards.
- Local Assistance Scheme:
 

This is an ongoing Scheme and the budget in previous years was £300,000.

However, since the pandemic there has been increased demand and we had funding of £750,000 for this financial year. As at the end of January 22, £705,987 has been spent on 1866 awards.

### Security of Tenure

- SLHD Tenancy Sustainability Scheme.
- Vulnerable Renters Fund (administered by SLHD) – available for private rented sector tenants in rent arrears at risk of losing their home.

## Furniture

Tenants and social landlords consistently underline how the provision of furniture has a considerable positive impact on mental health, financial security and social wellbeing. It can also improve tenancy sustainability but there is a patchwork of provision in many areas.

- Providing new or nearly new furniture: SLHD will undertake a business case analysis of the feasibility to establish a furnished Homes scheme in Doncaster. This will be aimed at Doncaster Council social housing tenants in the borough but consideration will also be given to whether such a service could be offered to other social housing and proven landlords. This business case will be developed after April 2022.
- Recycling used furniture: SLHD intends to re-establish and expand Garage 32, a furniture recycling project. This was initially set up, as a pilot in the West area and was successful in supporting new or struggling tenants by storing and re-using furniture acquired from void properties. Following a joint pilot with Public Health to evaluate effectiveness, it was agreed to roll out the Garage 32 venture to all four housing management areas. Housing management areas in West, Central and East areas have set up with premises for storage of furniture and the North area are in the final stages of agreeing a lease with DMBC for the adjoining storage building. Stock levels from void properties have been slow to build up during the pandemic, due to practical and resource issues, however this position is expected to improve as resource levels begin to return to normal.

## Insurance

We have not yet looked at this issue, but it is possible that opportunities for intervention may be limited.

## **5. Future planning**

We will continue with an intelligence led approach, using a range of data sources to inform our work and targeted approaches across our communities.

One example is a study of the characteristics of people accessing the Citizen's Advice Bureau for advice about debt. Postcode data was used with Acorn geodemographic tools to increase our understanding and to help us target other, similar households that may also need advice. Most frequent categories of CAB debt advice users included:

- Lone parents
- Households with 3 or more children
- Social rented housing tenants
- Household with an income of less than £20k per annum
- Unemployed
- No access to a car

Results from the study also suggested a need for financial management support, advice and guidance for CAB debt advice users.

Similar analysis was done of the postcodes of those using the outreach community based IAG support from CAB. This will inform a business case for Better Care Fund support to expand and continue the community based model. The results of the analysis have been sent to CAB for use in other wider, general offers.

The proposed Doncaster Fairness and Wellbeing Commission will review the work of the Poverty Renewal Group, as well as the wider Renewal Board. It will develop potential solutions to help us build on this work and make a step change to address unfairness and poor wellbeing.

## 6. Actions for 2022

Wellbeing Essentials	Suggested Future Poverty Renewal Group Actions
1. Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options and business case development planned for Furnished Tenancy scheme</li> <li>• Re-establish and expand furniture recycling project, Garage 32</li> <li>• Continue to deliver Affordable Warmth Programme, including delivery of Better Care Fund</li> <li>• Continue review of Home Improvement services to ensure they are supporting residents to live well in their homes, by ensuring appropriate adaptations according to need</li> <li>• Private Sector Stock Condition Survey - reflect on findings and explore ways to understand where to focus our efforts in order to reduce inequality across this sector</li> <li>• Explore ways to develop a preventative approach in the Private Rented Sector</li> <li>• Expand Healthy Homes videos - providing up to date and relevant information, advice and guidance to residents</li> </ul>
2. Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Network developing local actions to meet National Food Strategy recommendations</li> </ul>
3. Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Financial Inclusion Plan for 2022-23 by Well Doncaster</li> <li>• Future campaigns based on Talk Money Week Partnership with DMBC, MaPS, CAB, DWP – targeting those most in need</li> </ul>
4. Digital Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet developed, although within the scope of the Social and Digital Inclusion sub-group</li> </ul>
5. Education	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group
6. Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the reasons for high rates of UC when Doncaster has high levels of job vacancies</li> <li>• Using Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund to support job creation</li> </ul>
7. Social Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet developed, although within the scope of the Social and Digital Inclusion sub-group</li> </ul>
8. Greenspace	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group
9. Influence	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group
10. Safety	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group
11. Health Services	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group
12. Social Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of Acorn population profile data to identify likely need &amp; inform targeted solutions</li> <li>• Delivery of Community Renewal Fund projects</li> <li>• Assessment of the range of communication methods available in communities</li> <li>• Your Life Doncaster website transition &amp; revision of content</li> </ul>
13. Transport	Outside the scope of the Poverty Renewal Group