

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 2 October 2018

Edinburgh Poverty Commission

Item number	7.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
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Executive Summary

City of Edinburgh Council approved proposals for an Edinburgh Poverty Commission on 28 June 2018. This report provides an update on progress to date in establishing the commission, including proposals for appointment of an independent chair, and proposals to ensure the commission process is driven by and responds to the voice of citizens with experience of living on low incomes in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Poverty Commission

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

- 1.1 Agree the appointment of Dr Jim McCormick as Chair of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, and the Depute Leader of the Council as vice chair;
- 1.2 Agree the criteria set out for recruitment of other commission members, and that the commission chair leads the recruitment and appointment of commission members subject to those criteria with a view to a first meeting of the commission by end October 2018;
- 1.3 Agree that a report on progress and a work programme for the commission is brought to the next meeting of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee;
- 1.4 Note planned actions to ensure that commission process responds directly to the experience of citizens living on low incomes in Edinburgh;
- 1.5 Note proposals submitted to Scottish Government and Edinburgh Partnership Board seeking financial contributions to the support the project; and
- 1.6 Note plans to establish a cross party elected member grouping to support the work of the commission.

2. Background

2.1 On 28 June 2018 City of Edinburgh Council approved proposals for the establishment of an independent Edinburgh Poverty Commission. Council agreed that the purpose of the commission will be to define the long-term actions and responses needed to reduce poverty and inequality in Edinburgh. In doing so, the Commission will:

- 2.1.1 Take a strategic overview of the scale, scope, and nature of poverty in Edinburgh and the effectiveness of activity currently undertaken to address such poverty;

- 2.1.2 Identify key strategic themes for the Commission to focus on at each of their meetings;
 - 2.1.3 Hear and respond directly to the experiences of citizens who live on low incomes in Edinburgh;
 - 2.1.4 Build on existing research, and the learning achieved by other commissions across the UK to find best practice examples of interventions and approaches to be adopted in Edinburgh; and
 - 2.1.5 Make recommendations to the Edinburgh Partnership and City of Edinburgh Council on a programme of actions and activities needed to reduce, prevent, and mitigate the effects of poverty and inequality in Edinburgh.
- 2.2 This report provides a recommendation to committee for the appointment of a commission chair, and provides an update on work underway to support establishment of the commission.

3. Main report

Appointment of the independent chair of the commission

- 3.1 A key first step in the project has been the identification of an independent chair for the commission. This chair will lead the work of the commission, working closely with the Depute Leader of the Council as vice-chair. Core criteria used to identify a chair were that the individual should:
- 3.1.1 Be credible and committed, with nationally recognised experience and expertise in designing approaches to tackling poverty in the UK;
 - 3.1.2 Have experience of participating in poverty or fairness commissions conducted in other local authorities across the UK;
 - 3.1.3 Have experience and commitment to developing place-based solutions to tackling poverty, and
 - 3.1.4 Have the capacity and time to actively lead poverty commission sessions, and lead on specific workstreams identified by the commission process.
- 3.2 Following these criteria, it is proposed that Dr Jim McCormick is appointed as the independent chair of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission.
- 3.3 As the Associate Director for Scotland with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), an independent organisation working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice, Dr McCormick is widely recognised as one of the most prominent and well-respected independent policy researchers working to address poverty in the UK. He has a strong track record of working with Government, public sector agencies and the voluntary sector on research, policy advice, and the design of practical solutions to reduce, prevent, and mitigate the effects of poverty in the UK.

- 3.4 Dr McCormick is chair of the independent Disability and Carers Benefits advisory group reporting to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security in the Scottish Government. He is member of the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) advising the UK Department for Work and Pensions and is an advisory board member of Business in the Community Scotland. He is also a Churchill Fellow looking at the impact of mentoring programmes for young people facing disadvantage, in the USA, Canada and New Zealand.
- 3.5 He provides a strong record of work to support poverty and fairness commissions in Scotland and was an active participant in recent commissions held in Fife, Perth and Kinross, and Renfrewshire. In addition to this, Dr McCormick was part of a UK wide panel facilitated by the Carnegie Trust in 2017 to assess the potential for fairness and poverty commission approaches to drive and enable change in local areas.

Commission members

- 3.6 As noted by Council on 28 June, following appointment, the commission chair will, working with the Depute leader of the Council as Vice Chair, lead on recruitment of other commission members.
- 3.7 Building on experience from other Fairness and Poverty Commissions across Scotland, it is proposed that there will be up to eleven commission members. These commissioners will be selected to provide a strong cross-section of expertise and experience, including business, the third sector, public sector agencies, local and national government. The membership will include commissioners who bring UK-wide learning and experience, those with Edinburgh specific expertise, as well as an appropriate representation of commission members across age, gender, and ethnic backgrounds.
- 3.8 Decisions on commission membership will be made by the chair and the Depute Leader of the Council and be appointed subject to their ability to commit time to actively participate in commission discussions, and to lead or participate on specific workstreams identified by the commission process. Final selection of commissioners will be shared with Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee members ahead of formal public announcements.

Citizen's voice

- 3.9 A key priority of the project is to ensure that the work of the commission is led by a clear understanding of the experience of living in poverty in Edinburgh, and to ensure that the voice of citizens in poverty is embedded throughout the recommendations made by the commission.
- 3.10 Towards aim, the commission process will incorporate:
- 3.10.1 Work to engage with communities across the city to ensure that people with experience of poverty have their voices heard by the commission and by policy makers; and
 - 3.10.2 A programme of action research carried out within a selected area of the city. This programme of work will seek to adopt good practice learned from

the experience of Poverty Truth Commission approaches followed in Glasgow and other areas and will invite local citizens living in poverty in an area of the city to work with locality service providers in the co-design and piloting of potential coordinated place based solutions.

- 3.11 The results of this research will be reported back to the commission for recommendations on next steps and on further issues for research and testing. This process will ensure that the commission and its findings are directly informed by the views of citizens with lived experience of poverty in the city and that the actions and recommendations made by the commission can be implemented quickly and with the co-operation of the communities on which they aim to have an impact.
- 3.12 Over recent months, officers from the Council's Strategy & Insight team have been working with Government and partner organisation to identify resources and capacity to support these programmes of work. Proposals have been submitted seeking financial contribution to the project from the Scottish Government, and a request submitted for consideration by Edinburgh Partnership board seeking financial contributions from community planning partners was agreed on the 24 September. In addition, engagement with Locality Leadership Teams has been undertaken to identify an appropriate community or area of the city for focus during the action research process.
- 3.13 Engagement work carried out to date suggests that in order to be successful, it is important that:
- 3.13.1 Engagement and research activity undertaken will be designed to add value to, and capture the voices of communities not already captured by existing planned activity;
 - 3.13.2 All community based research and engagement activity will be carried out with the support and involvement of Locality Leadership Teams and be designed to complement work underway to implement Locality Improvement Plans;
 - 3.13.3 The action research programme should be undertaken in an area or community in Edinburgh which meets clear criteria needed for the project. These criteria include:
 - (a) Clear evidence of need and a high concentration of citizens living in low incomes;
 - (b) Opportunity to complement or support the meeting of small area objectives and outcomes set out in Locality Improvement Plans, and
 - (c) In comparison to other areas, historically low capacity for, or investment focused on tackling poverty.
- 3.14 Final decisions on the targeting and scope of activity undertaken as part of the action research element of the project, including selection of an action research site, will be made by the Commission at its first meeting.

Timeline and next steps

- 3.15 As set out to Council in June 2018, the outline timeline for the Edinburgh Poverty Commission Project incorporates:
- 3.15.1 An inception meeting of the commission to be held in late Autumn 2018;
 - 3.15.2 Four full day meetings of the commission to be held between January 2019 and December 2019;
 - 3.15.3 Final publication of recommendations and actions to be agreed and published by December 2019; and
 - 3.15.4 Community research, including action research work noted above, to be carried out in parallel with commission meetings over the period December 2018 to December 2019.
- 3.16 Key next steps needed to meet this timeline include:
- 3.16.1 Appointment of members by the independent chair of the commission;
 - 3.16.2 Establishment of a cross party sounding board of elected members to support the work of the commission;
 - 3.16.3 Continue engagement with public and third sector partners in evidence gathering and development of the commission process; and
 - 3.16.4 Continue engagement with academic and research community to establish a robust evidence base for commission discussion.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 A key output for this programme of work will be the development of a monitoring framework including measures of success.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 No additional costs to the Council are associated with this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 No adverse risks or policy impacts have been identified as associated with this report. Outputs from the programme of work outlined in this report will be used to identify and mitigate potential risks to the Council.

7. Equalities impact

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- 7.1 Equalities impacts arising from the commission will be considered as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Sustainability impacts arising from the commission will be considered as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The commission is a collaborative process involving elected members, public sector partners, third sector organisations, and local communities. This commitment to partnership working, consultation and engagement will continue throughout the programme of work.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Edinburgh Poverty Commission, City of Edinburgh Council, 28 June 2018](#)

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11. Appendices

None