Report for: Cabinet - 10 November, 2026

Item number: 18

Title: Decision to consult on a strategy to reduce poverty in Haringey.

Report authorised by: Barry Francis Corporate Director of Environment & Resident Experience

Lead Officer: Elliot Sinnhuber, Policy and Equalities Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/ Non-Key Decision: Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. The draft Anti-Poverty Strategy, a component of the Councils' wider efforts to tackle inequality is attached as Appendix 1, it sets out the Council's proposed approach to reducing poverty and strengthening systemic financial resilience across the borough. The strategy is presented as the basis for formal public consultation.

1.2. This report sets out the process by which the draft strategy has been produced and summarises its proposed vision and priorities. The report seeks Cabinet approval to undertake public consultation on the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1 This report requests approval to go out to public consultation on the draft *Anti-Poverty Strategy: tackling inequality and combatting austerity.*

2.2 This strategy will guide how we spend the Crisis and Resilience Fund, which replaced the Household Support Fund in April 2026.

2.3 More than 15 years of austerity measures have brought public services to their knees and left much of the welfare safety net in tatters.

2.4 The figures are startling. We are the third most deprived borough in London, and home to the capital's most deprived ward, Northumberland Park. Healthy life expectancy is falling faster in Haringey than anywhere in England. More than one in ten households can't afford to heat their homes properly, and over a quarter of adult residents live below the poverty line. For children it's worse still: 39% of our children live in poverty, against a London average of 31%. This should shame us all.

2.5 Poverty isn't a personal failing. It is the result of deliberate economic and political choices about work, wages, housing, public services, energy, taxes, welfare, and business regulation.

2.6 We have seen some recent progress, such as scrapping the two-child limit in Universal Credit, and limited measures like one-off payments for energy bills; but these cannot undo the damage caused by years of cuts. We need fundamental change across the board. That means action on the climate crisis, proper funding for public services and the welfare safety net, from disability benefits to help for young people and a transformative plan for social care.

2.7 Haringey can't change national policy on poverty or climate on its own. But we can choose how to respond locally. The council has a vital role in helping residents access the support available, improving coordination between services, and stepping in early to stop financial hardship becoming entrenched.

2.8 Through joined-up support, the Anti-Poverty Strategy seeks to help residents in crisis, raise incomes, bring down the cost of essentials such as energy, and tackle the root causes of poverty. We're committed to standing up to austerity and fighting inequality in all its forms: health, income, and in bridging the divide between the east and west of the borough. That's why the strategy sits alongside our Inclusive Economy Strategy, the Food Action Plan, our place-based work in Northumberland Park and the refreshed Welcome Strategy, as well as our ambitions, with the Popular Assets Commission, to build a cooperative economy.

2.9 For too long, people have only got help once they've reached breaking point: the most painful and most expensive way to provide support. This strategy sets out how we want to change that. Its actions come from extensive engagement with residents and partners, including our Community Voices Project, which trained local people to research experiences from within their communities. We're now taking it to public consultation, to hear whether we've identified the right actions. If they're not, we want to know.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet

3.1. Approves the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy attached at Appendix 1 as the basis for consultation.

3.2. Approves the consultation arrangements set out in this report in paragraph 6.9.

3.3. Notes, that following consultation, officers will present a revised draft of the strategy for consideration and adoption.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1. In Haringey, Poverty affects a significant proportion of Haringey residents and drives demand across almost every Council service. An estimated 26% of residents live below the poverty line, in line with the London average. However, child poverty remains particularly acute, with 39% of children living in poverty compared with the London average of 31%.

4.2. The national Household Support Fund transitioned to the Crisis and Resilience Fund ('CRF') in April 2026. The new fund covers a three-year period and requires an increased focus on strategic spending to reduce poverty and build long term resilience, moving away from the short-term crisis payments of the original Fund. Considering this, it is important that the council has a strong evidence base and strategic direction to guide effective allocation of the fund.

4.3. The strategy also aims to go beyond the three-year cycle of the Crisis and Resilience Fund by setting key priorities, outcomes and activities for the council and its commissioned services and partners. It aims to strengthen coordination, align resources, and improve outcomes for residents experiencing poverty.

4.4. Consultation and engagement are necessary at this stage to ensure that the strategy accurately reflects the challenges faced by residents experiencing poverty, as well as the priorities of the Council and its partners. This will help ensure that the strategy delivers the greatest possible impact.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1. As the Anti-Poverty Strategy is not a statutory requirement, Cabinet could choose not to consult on, or adopt, the strategy. However, this is not recommended. Addressing poverty and improving the financial resilience of Haringey residents is a complex challenge that requires a strategic and coordinated approach across the Council and with partners across the borough as part of our wider efforts to tackle inequality.

5.2. Adopting an Anti-Poverty Strategy will provide a clear framework for collective action, helping to align priorities, coordinate activity maximise impact for residents, and inform the strategic allocation of the Crisis and Resilience Fund over the next three years.

5.3. A longer consultation period, more than six weeks, has been considered but is not recommended, considering the importance of aligning the Strategy with the Council's corporate planning and budget setting process and funding decisions for CRF. The risk of a shorter period will be mitigated through giving advance notice to key stakeholders and organisations about when the consultation will open and utilising a variety of engagement methods to support participation by those who might otherwise struggle to participate. It is also important to recognise that the strategy itself has been developed based on significant community outreach and engagement (see 6.5)

6. Background information

6.1. Unemployment has risen from 4.5% to 7.2% in a year based on July 2026 figures compared with a London average of 5.6% and Haringey has the 4th lowest job density in London. Around half of residents in poverty are already in work; low pay, insecure hours and high housing costs are the main drivers.

6.2. Mean private rent reached £2,214/month (April 2026), up 25% since March 2021; 2,660 households are in temporary accommodation, the 10th highest rate in London.

6.3. Haringey has the highest proportion of neighbourhoods (19%) in the most deprived 10% nationally of any London borough. Northumberland Park is London's most deprived ward.

6.4. The national Household Support Fund transitioned to the Crisis and Resilience Fund in April 2026. The new fund covers a three-year period and requires an increased focus on strategic spending to reduce poverty and build long term resilience, moving away from the short-term crisis payments of the original Fund. Considering this, it is important that the council has a strong evidence base and strategic direction to guide effective allocation of the fund.

6.5. Initial engagement to inform the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy included face-to-face workshops and one-to-one discussions with council officers, key partners and community stakeholders. Resident and lived experience perspectives were incorporated through evidence gathered from previous cost of living case studies, alongside findings from a community research project in which residents were trained and supported to undertake research on the impact of the cost of living within their communities.

6.6. Haringey's residents, council officers and strategic partners told us that:

- Demand for support is increasing and changing, with more residents needing support around disability, health, housing and navigating welfare systems.
- Support that exists is often reactive, hard to navigate and heavily reliant on digital access, residents "fall through the cracks" and the system feels fragmented and confusing.
- Trusted, empathetic, culturally aware relationships matter most; local, in-person support remains important, and community organisations play a vital role but are not fully integrated into the formal support system.
- People in need are often reluctant or afraid to ask for help until a crisis is reached and capacity pressures limit prevention and early intervention.
- Partners want stronger shared leadership, better data and a clearer focus on opportunity, employment, skills, ESOL and social value through procurement.

6.7. The strategy is organised around one foundation and three priorities, tested against whether an action increases residents' incomes, reduces the costs they face, or helps build their longer-term resilience. Under each priority area is a set of intended outcomes and the types of activity that would contribute to achieving them.

Priority area	What it means
Foundation: Coordinate and connect anti-poverty support across the borough	Join up the anti-poverty support that already exists across the Council and partners, so it functions as one connected system rather than fragmented services, as part of the councils wider efforts to tackle inequality across the borough. Underpins all three priorities below.
Priority 1: Supporting people in poverty and increasing their incomes	Help residents claim the financial support they are entitled to, access joined-up advice, and receive crisis support with dignity and choice (cash-first), reaching

Priority area	What it means
	people proactively rather than waiting for them to present.
Priority 2: Reducing the cost of essentials for low-income residents	Work to lower what residents pay for things they cannot avoid, energy, water, childcare, housing, mainly by tackling low take-up of existing discounts and entitlements and using Council powers over housing standards.
Priority 3: Preventing people falling into poverty, addressing root causes and building community and systems resilience	Act early on the drivers of poverty – work, health and skills – while addressing structural causes of concentrated deprivation and strengthening the community and voluntary organisations that reach residents formal services sometimes miss.

6.8. The Council is developing an Inclusive Growth Plan in parallel with the Anti-Poverty Strategy. While the Anti-Poverty Strategy focuses on tackling the immediate causes and impacts of poverty, the Inclusive Growth Plan will set out a longer-term approach to improving and promoting Haringey's economy, creating more and better local opportunities, and ensuring residents are the primary beneficiaries of the borough's growth. Developing both strategies alongside one another helps ensure a coordinated approach as part of our efforts to reduce inequality and improve prosperity across Haringey.

6.9. If Cabinet approves the strategy for consultation, it is proposed to carry out consultation on this draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for six weeks including:

- A survey on the Digital Engagement Hub, called Commonplace, and hard copies in community settings where relevant.
- Face to Face workshops with Council officers and key partners.
- Contacting VCS organisations who work with specific communities to ask them to promote and signpost the consultation survey
- Where possible revisiting residents who have participated in previous cost of living research conducted by the Council.

It is anticipated that the consultation activities set out above can be delivered within existing resources, except for (i) hard copies in community settings and (ii) direct follow up with residents who participated in the previous cost of living research.

The indicative budget for providing up to 100 hard copies is estimated to be between £300-£500 (for a consultation pack of approximately 35-40 pages).

In the previous research, resident participation was funded at £25 per interview; depending on resident appetite for follow up participation, the cost is estimated to be approximately £300.

Total cost of consultation is therefore estimated at an upper limit £800. There is no corporate budget for this expenditure and would fall to the commissioning service area to fund.

6.10. The Council is under enormous financial pressure, and this strategy is not yet accompanied by a delivery plan. Thus, the scale and pace of change that can be delivered remains unclear. Developing a robust delivery plan is a first priority after consultation and cabinets approval of the final strategy.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan High Level Strategic Outcomes

7.1. The strategy will support outcomes across a range of priority areas for the council, including resident experience, children and adults. These align with many of the high-level strategic outcomes maintained by the Haringey 2035 borough vision and the corporate delivery plan.

- Tackling inequalities in health and wellbeing
- Supporting children and young people
- Making council services more accessible and responsive to residents
- Sharing power with residents
- Build financial resilience in our communities

8. Carbon and Climate Change

8.1. While the strategy does reference how activity to better insulate homes also reduces costs to households, retrofitting is led by other plans and strategies. It is therefore not anticipated that this strategy will have a significant impact on reducing carbon emissions in Haringey.

9. Statutory Officers comments Finance, Procurement, Legal and Equalities

9.1. Finance

9.1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval of the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy as the basis for a six-week consultation.

9.1.2 Appendix 1 sets out the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy, which outlines the Council's proposed approach to reducing poverty and strengthening financial resilience across the borough. The outcomes of the consultation will be considered before the final strategy is presented for Cabinet approval.

9.1.3 The cost of undertaking the consultation and associated engagement activities is estimated at approximately £800 as set out in paragraph 6.9. These costs will be met from existing service budgets that have been allocated for this purpose. There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report at this stage. However, as noted in paragraph 6.10, the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy is not yet accompanied by a delivery plan which will be developed after the consultation. At that point, any financial implications arising from the delivery plan will need to be assessed before the Council commits to any additional actions.

9.2. **Procurement**

9.2.1 Strategic Procurement has been consulted on the preparation of this report and note the contents herein. There are no immediate procurement implications

9.3. **Legal and Governance**

9.3.1 There is no specific statutory requirement for the Council to prepare or consult upon an Anti -Poverty Strategy. However, the Council has the power to develop, consult on and adopt such a strategy as part of its wider functions. The proposed strategy is consistent with and supports delivery of a range of the Council's statutory functions and duties, including preventative duties under the Care Act 2014.

9.3.2 In undertaking the proposed consultation, the Council must ensure that it is conducted lawfully and in accordance with the common law principles governing consultation. In particular, consultation must take place when proposals are still at a formative stage; sufficient information must be provided to enable consultees to give informed responses; adequate time must be allowed for consideration and response; and the outcome of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account before any final decision is made.

9.3.3 In considering the recommendations in this report, Cabinet must also have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) accompanying this report.

9.4. **Equality**

9.4.1 The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

9.4.2 The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

9.4.3 Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

9.4.4 The decision in question is regarding permission to begin public consultation and engagement on Haringey's Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy.

9.4.5 A full EQIA has been conducted to understand the equality impacts of the strategy on each protected characteristic, and this can be found in Appendix 2.

9.4.6 The EQIA has identified that the strategy will have a particularly positive impact on younger and older people, disabled people, Black, Bangladeshi and Muslim communities and those from a lower socioeconomic background because of overrepresentation of these characteristics among those living in poverty. No negative impacts have currently been identified.

9.4.7 Consultation will be conducted in a way that reaches those with protected characteristics and ensures their voices are heard. This will highlight any currently unidentified impacts and allow mitigations to be developed where necessary.

9.4.8 This decision is therefore expected to have a positive impact on equalities in Haringey, as it helps progress the Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy to final publication and adoption.

9.4.9 It should be noted that the strategy is a coordinating document with priorities, outcomes and suggested activity. Any activity or action that arises from this strategy will be subject to individual equalities review.

10. Use of Appendices

10.1. Appendix 1: London Borough of Haringey Anti-Poverty Strategy

10.2. Appendix 2: Anti-Poverty Strategy Equality Impact Assessment

11. Background papers

11.1. Haringey State of the Borough 2026

11.2. Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029) - GOV.UK