



Subject:	Belfast Poverty Commission
Date:	17th December 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Claire Patterson, Inclusive Growth Policy and Programme Officer Geoff Dickson, Strategic Policy Lead Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This report outlines the proposed next steps in establishing a Poverty Commission to support the Council's work on Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty action planning.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. note the initial steps to engage with the Poverty Truth Network; andii. nominate representatives to engage with Poverty Truth Network during a series of exploratory meetings during 13th and 14th January, 2022.

3.0	Main Report
	<u>Poverty Truth Network</u>
3.1	The Poverty Truth Network helps cities to determine whether a Poverty Truth Commission would be right for their local area. Poverty Truth Network will accompany cities at every stage of their journey from asking ' <i>whether a Poverty Truth Commission could happen here</i> ' through to the establishment of a commission.
3.2	The Poverty Truth Network is a registered charity that supports Poverty Truth Commissions and encourages them to work together. Poverty Truth Network trustees have all been commissioners of local Poverty Truth Commissions and they aim to have at least 50% of their board made up of trustees who have had a direct experience of the struggle against poverty.
3.3	Every Poverty Truth Commission is invited to become part of the Poverty Truth Network after their opening event. A commission does this by proposing two of its commissioners to become members of the network.
	<u>Approach to establishing a Poverty Commission</u>
3.4	The attached appendix provides a short introduction to the approach and principles of the Poverty Truth Network. The key phases of the Poverty Truth Network framework for establishing a Poverty Commission are outlined below. This approach has been applied in a number of locations since first used in Scotland in 2009, including Dundee, Leeds, Birmingham, Northampton, Salford and Swansea.
	Phase 1
3.5	Organisations and individuals who are interested in establishing a local commission work with the Network to determine whether setting one up is right for the area. A key factor within this process is whether there is sufficient interest and commitment by people with a direct experience of poverty as well as organisations and institutions in the local area for a Poverty Truth Commission. A start up group is established of interested parties to help set up the commission.
	Phase 2
3.6	Commissioners are recruited who have a direct experience of poverty. They meet regularly for a sustained period of time (about 6 to 8 months) to get to know each other. They explore their experiences and decide what they would like to communicate about poverty to their area. Civic and business commissioners are recruited to form the other half of the

	<p>commission. Phase 2 ends with a public event in which the first group of commissioners share their experiences of poverty.</p>
3.7	<p>Phase 3</p> <p>All the commissioners start meeting regularly for full commission conversations to build relationships with each other and identify issues that they would like to address. Issue groups are formed to explore the issues the commission wants to address. One-to-One meetings enable commissioners to encounter and understand each other's world.</p>
3.8	<p>Phase 4</p> <p>A closing event is held to communicate the findings of the commission with the wider public. This will include the work done in issue groups and the effect that the process has had on commissioners. Work continues to help commissioners to embed what they have learnt into their communities, organisations and institutions.</p>
3.9	<p>A short video providing further information on the Poverty Truth Network's approach is available at: https://povertytruthnetwork.org/commissions/what-is-a-poverty-truth-commission/</p>
3.10	<p><u>The proposed role of Poverty Truth Network in a Belfast Poverty Commission</u></p> <p>The Poverty Truth Network is offering to help Belfast determine whether a Poverty Truth Commission would be right for the city at this time. Poverty Truth Network has offered to support Belfast at each stage of the journey from asking '<i>whether a Poverty Truth Commission could happen here</i>' through to the establishment of a commission.</p>
3.11	<p>By drawing upon the experience of the different commissions, Poverty Truth Network proposes to help Belfast understand what a Poverty Truth Commission looks like. Poverty Truth Network has offered to explain how they operate and what resources are needed to make one happen. The Poverty Truth Network team is proposing to visit Belfast to communicate about Poverty Truth with key stakeholders and be available for regular online meetings. The Belfast Poverty Commission, if established, would be responsible for their own work.</p>
3.12	<p>The Poverty Truth Network supports commissions in a number of different ways. They hold an annual gathering for commissioners from all of the different Poverty Truth Commissions. They also have developed peer support for facilitators of local Poverty Truth Commissions.</p>

	<p>Regularly facilitators meet online to discuss issues that they are facing and share insights with one another. They also get together in small groups and as a wider team of facilitators to support and encourage one another as well as to identify and develop useful resources.</p> <p><u>Proposed next steps</u></p>
3.13	<p>It is proposed that the initial work to explore the approach to a Belfast Poverty Commission commences in parallel with ongoing recruitment of the Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty, and the work of the Council and Community Planning Partnership to adopt an urgent approach to food poverty and minimising the impacts of fuel poverty in the city this winter.</p>
3.14	<p>The Poverty Truth Network has offered to attend a series of exploratory meetings in Belfast with Elected Members, CMT, Community and Voluntary Sector representatives, Businesses, Anti-poverty organisations, people who are struggling with poverty and other key stakeholders during the period 13-14 January 2022.</p>
3.15	<p>The committee is asked to note these initial steps to engage with the Poverty Truth Network and nominate representatives to engage with the network during this visit.</p>
	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p>
3.16	<p>There are no financial implications to this report. The work of this initial visit on 13th and 14th January 2022 will be funded by the Poverty Truth Network.</p>
3.17	<p>If approval is given to proceed, a further report will be brought back to the Committee outlining the proposed approach and associated costs of the commission.</p>
	<p>Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications</p>
3.18	<p>Corporate policies will be followed during the development of the Poverty Commission's approach and appropriate screening and mitigating actions delivered where necessary</p>
4.0	<p>Document Attached</p>
	<p>Poverty Truth Network Introduction</p>