

## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>Report Subject</b>	Food Poverty Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Well-Being Objective in the Council plan theme for Poverty is defined as “Protecting people from poverty but supporting them to meet their basic needs”.

The areas contributing to achieving objective this is contained within five priority areas:

- Income poverty
- Child poverty
- Food poverty
- Fuel poverty
- Digital poverty

The focus of this report is food poverty.

Food poverty is best defined as ‘*people not having access to good fresh food by choice*’ and in reference to this definition ‘*if you feed people well, they are more likely to get out of their crisis*’.

The report provides an update on the current and planned work in response to the food poverty priority area. It also highlights the positive role Flintshire has played in developing partnerships, supporting other organisations, and facilitating action.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	To support progress of the work in relation to addressing food poverty in Flintshire.
2.	To endorse the use of the earmarked reserve to continue to deliver the food poverty programme to March 2026

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING FOOD POVERTY</b>
1.01	Food poverty is best defined as ‘people not having access to good fresh food by choice’ and in reference to this definition ‘if you feed people well, they are more likely to get out of their crisis’.
1.02	It is a public health crisis that has serious implications for children’s learning, wellbeing, and life chances; hinders parents’ ability to alleviate the crisis, because they themselves fall hungry, with their ability to make the decisions necessary to improve their circumstances seriously impaired.
1.03	Our responses and actions during the pandemic highlighted what was possible if everyone worked together towards a common aim. Community spirit and action was very positive; services and organisations created new and renewed working relationships. It has been important to ensure that this momentum has not been lost and those relationships and partnerships created and / or strengthened continue to thrive.
1.04	Building on this foundation has proved critical to continue to support and work with residents through pandemic recovery and moving forward in the current cost of living crisis.
1.05	This report provides an overview of the work Flintshire County Council, in partnership with others, has delivered in 2024 predominantly around food poverty, but as the report shows, it has not been limited to this and wherever possible wider issues and support needs are addressed.
<b>Good Food Flintshire Movement Relaunch</b>	
1.06	<p>The Good Food Flintshire Movement was relaunched this year. The group have established four key themes to help tackle food poverty / insecurities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flintshire Child Poverty and Nutrition,</li><li>• Sustainability,</li><li>• Food and Insecurities, and</li><li>• Education.</li></ul> <p>Three groups have been established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic group – with representatives from the Local Authority, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, housing associations,</li><li>• Operational group with representatives from the Local Authority, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations,</li><li>• Working Group with representatives from foodbanks, food pantries and community led hubs.</li></ul> <p>We continuously map activity against these themes and identify gaps in current provision. This supports the development of an action plan to carry activity forward into the future.</p>

<b>Working in Communities</b>	
1.07	<p>Working in and around our communities and collaboratively with other departments, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector agencies and food banks / pantries etc., is key to the success of Good Food Flintshire plan.</p> <p>Below are some examples of the work being undertaken.</p>
<b>Free Fruit for High Schools</b>	
1.08	<p>In 2019 we were alerted to an issue that had been raised by a group in Wrexham around high school pupils who receive a free school meal allowance.</p> <p>It appeared that some of the Wrexham pupils were using some of their Free School Meal allowance when they arrive at school to buy breakfast, meaning they then did not have enough left on their account to buy a proper meal at lunchtime.</p> <p>When we canvassed our high schools, this situation did not appear to be as prevalent in Flintshire due to the availability of breakfast facilities.</p> <p>However, our discussions with schools and colleagues identified that the take up of the breakfasts was not as high as they would expect and there could still be a risk of some young people missing breakfast.</p>
1.09	<p>Working with the healthy school coordinators, we identified that it would be beneficial for pupils to have access to free fruit during their school day. This provides access to a healthy snack for all high school pupils which goes some way to reduce the risk to those who miss breakfast.</p> <p>This programme of work ensures fruit is delivered to the school on a weekly basis to be made available in form rooms and after PE lessons for all students.</p>
1.10	<p>This programme of work is possible due to the social value funding the Council receive from our managed stores partner, Travis Perkins Managed Service.</p>
1.11	<p>We have received some positive feedback from the students including:</p> <p><i>'If for some reason I haven't had breakfast, the fruit is great to have in form'.</i></p> <p><i>'It's great but a bit more variety would be nice like kiwis'.</i></p> <p><i>'Great way to start the day'.</i></p> <p><i>'Love that it's free'.</i></p> <p><i>'Thank you for the fruit, it's lovely to have in class'.</i></p>

	<p><i>'The fruit is a very nice addition to our morning registration. It's good to know there is always a healthy eating option available'.</i></p> <p><i>'The fruit is easy to get and helps me if I am late and not had breakfast'.</i></p>
<b>Hospital To Home Safety Boxes</b>	
1.12	<p>Coming out of hospital is a challenging experience and for some people this can also be a lonely and difficult period. In Flintshire we are working towards a hospital to home safety box programme in conjunction with Well Fed and our community hospitals in Mold and Deeside.</p> <p>The safety box contains meals for three days as well as fresh provisions such as bread and milk to support the resident to eat well as they recuperate at home.</p>
1.13	<p>We have made great contacts within Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and, in particular, the discharge teams in Mold and Deeside Community Hospitals who are all on board with the initiative.</p> <p>Their view is that it is a fantastic way to support discharged residents who don't have family and friends close by so they can continue to eat well and reduce the risk of returning to hospital.</p>
1.14	<p>This is a pilot programme and the boxes are provided free of charge at this time, however, as we build momentum and grow, this will become a chargeable service.</p>
1.15	<p>We have received positive feedback from residents who have been discharged and received the service:</p> <p><i>'Thank you so much for the meals, they were delicious and lovely to come home to from hospital'.</i></p> <p><i>'I don't know what I would have done without this service when I left hospital, delivering my food parcel direct to my door, thank you'.</i></p> <p><i>'Lovely friendly staff, the meals with all the other food in the box was a real surprise and just what I needed on my return home after my stay in hospital'.</i></p>
<b>Fit Fed &amp; Read</b>	
1.16	<p>We worked with Leisure Services to provide funding for the food element of the successful Fit, Fed and Read summer holiday programme. All children who attended received a lunch over the six-week summer holidays.</p>
<b>Well Fed Mobile Shop</b>	
1.17	<p>The Well-Fed mobile shop is now well established in Flintshire and provides over 40 communities with access to affordable meals, slow</p>

	cooker bags and staple items in order to support residents to eat well if they are not able to get to the shops.
1.18	<p>The team at Well-Fed have received positive feedback about the service:</p> <p><i>'My mum is 87 and lives alone, I buy her 7 meals each week &amp; feel so good knowing you is eating fresh food'.</i></p> <p><i>'I love this van so much. I look forward to it every week and I save so much money by shopping here &amp; I know I'm eating well'.</i></p> <p><i>'I am a working mum of 3 children and the recipe bags are a life saver for me. I buy six each week and it really does take the pressure off me having to plan meals'.</i></p> <p>Details of the mobile shop times and locations can be found on their Facebook page – Can Cook / Well-Fed.</p>
<b>Haywire Play – How to Feed a Town</b>	
1.19	<p>In collaboration with Well Fed we worked with a fledgling Flintshire theatre production company, Haywire.</p> <p>The team at Haywire did an extensive piece of community research with Flintshire residents to understand some of the key issues that are causing difficulties at present.</p> <p>The finished production was performed on stage at Theatr Clwyd in July followed by a short tour around some Flintshire community hubs during September.</p>
<b>Christmas</b>	
1.20	Over the Christmas period vulnerable residents and families will be provided with food hampers containing fresh healthy meals, along with fresh provisions, milk, eggs, bread, ham, cheese and some Christmas treats.
<b>Eat Well, Cook Easy Classes</b>	
1.21	Well Fed will deliver three Eat Well, Cook Easy Classes over the winter months. Residents will attend a 4-week course where they will learn about different foods and how to cook them. They will receive a free slow cooker along with a slow cooker meal they can take home with them so they can continue to eat well.
<b>Community Support Hub, Shotton</b>	
1.22	The hub was initially opened in conjunction with, and funded by, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board for three mornings a week in July 2021 as a Covid Support Hub. Agencies attend to support residents in 5 key areas - income, food, fuel, mental health and digital exclusion.

	We have been able to successfully continue to fund the hub, which is now known as the Community Support Hub, supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis.
1.23	Our aim is to open more community led hubs across Flintshire in collaboration with local communities, 3rd sector agencies and local GP's. In conjunction with the Inverse Care Law, this will give families and individuals the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life.
<b>Period Poverty</b>	
1.24	Working with the education department we have successfully provided free sanitary products via the community support hubs and on the Well-Fed mobile shop to help to alleviate period poverty in our communities.
<b>Warm Welcome / Croeso Cynnes</b>	
1.26	As the cost of living crisis was starting to deepen at the end of the Summer 2022 and we looked to be in or heading for what was described as the 'worst cost of living crisis in a generation', we were concerned that many people, particularly our older residents may have to choose between heating and eating.
1.27	In conjunction with the 2025 movement and Well Fed, we developed the Croeso Cynnes / Warm Welcome project over the winter of 2022, to support groups and organisations to open any available space they may have.  The project aim was to support our residents through this difficult time and help to alleviate loneliness and isolation within our communities.
1.28	We have just received Welsh Government Funding to support safe and warm spaces within our local community this winter. The funding will be used to establish / re-establish spaces and add value to those that are already in place supporting the economic, social and wellbeing of our residents.  Community centres within our sheltered accommodation schemes will also be open every day from November to March 2025 so our sheltered residents can meet up with friends and neighbours to take part in social activities, as well as receive help and support. Refreshments, soup and a roll will be available daily.
1.29	The cost of living page on our website will be updated to provide a one-stop type approach to ensure residents have easy access to information about the types of support available and the location of their local warm space.
1.30	Working with partners, organisations and Town and Community Councils, we have identified community activity enabling us to produce an interactive map to show where the warm spaces are operating in the county which is updated daily.

1.31	<p>We have created an application form for community led hubs to apply for grant funding to support their hub to remain open, providing a warm welcome as well as food and drink over the winter months.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by a weekly grants panel and approved in line with funding eligibility criteria.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Healthy Weight Healthy Wales – Whole Systems Approach</b></p>	
1.32	<p>All of the work we carry out is in conjunction with Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales (HWHW). This is the Welsh Government’s long-term strategy to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales through a whole system approach (WSA). Launched in 2019, this 10-year strategy has a core focus of leadership and enabling change through a systems-based approach that will focus on local leadership, collaboration and involvement and enabling local action.</p>
1.33	<p>The Leadership and Enabling Change theme within the HWHW strategy is led by the seven health boards across Wales through Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight Teams. The Betsi Cadwaladr University Team were recruited in the autumn of 2021 and have worked in partnership with Public Health Wales since then to follow the Public Health Wales Nine Step Whole System Approach.</p>
1.34	<p>Six system mapping workshops were carried out with system actors from across North Wales. This process identified 94 causes of unhealthy weight across five priority sub-systems.</p>
1.35	<p><b>Priority sub-systems</b></p> <p>Following the system mapping partners prioritised the following sub-systems for actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Healthy and Affordable Food</li> <li>• Eating Well and Being Active in Schools</li> <li>• Eating Well and Being Active in Workplaces</li> </ul> <p>Three working groups were established to oversee the priority sub-system action plans.</p>
1.36	<p><b>Strategic Delivery Plan</b></p> <p>In May 2023, a launch event was held for the Healthy Weight Whole System Strategic Delivery Plan. This event titled ‘Taking a whole system approach to eating well and being active across North Wales’ was held at Venue Cymru in Llandudno. This was a joint event with Actif North Wales who also launched their 10-year strategy at the event.</p> <p>The event was well attended with excellent feedback from the 80 partners and stakeholders in attendance. The launch, including two promotional films about the work, featured in the Healthy Weight Strategy Stakeholder update delivered by the Welsh Government’s Healthy Weight Healthy Wales team.</p>

	The Strategic Delivery Plan has recently undergone a refresh for 2024 – 2026 and is due to be launched in Autumn 2024.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	All of these initiatives are subject to funding risk; however, we currently have funding to continue the work as part of our forward work plan to the end of 2025/2026. We will continue to seek further funding beyond this period.
2.02	<p><u>Welsh Government Direct Food Support Funding – round 1</u> We received capital funding from Welsh Government to support groups to access, store and distribute supplies of food, including food surplus, boosting their capacity to provide good quality nutritious food for their residents. It can be used in a variety of ways to meet the requirements such as purchasing fridges, freezers and cooking equipment.</p> <p>The value of Capital Grant was £28,775. At December 2024, we have issued funding of just under £13,000 across six groups.</p>
2.03	<p><u>Welsh Government Direct Food Support Funding – round 2</u> We have now received round 2 of the Direct Food Support funding, this is both revenue and capital funding to be awarded to community led hubs to purchase fridges etc., as well as revenue funding to develop or strengthen projects such as social supermarkets, community cafes, lunch clubs and community cookery classes etc.</p> <p>A process has been established for community led hubs to apply for grant funding to support residents with activities and purchase equipment to help tackle the root causes of food poverty.</p> <p>All applications are considered in a weekly grants panel and approved in line with funding eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The value of the Capital Grant is £43,598 and the value of the Revenue Grant £43,451.</p> <p>Flintshire Local Voluntary Council are actively working to identify groups in the area that may benefit from this funding.</p> <p>To apply for funding interested groups can email the team: <a href="mailto:CommunityDevelopmentTeam@flintshire.gov.uk">CommunityDevelopmentTeam@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>At December 2024, £7,000 revenue and £2,000 capital funds have been allocated to five groups.</p>
2.04	In December 2024 notification was received of a further three funding streams. Applications for these funding streams are being prepared.
2.05	Currently there is no core council budget to deliver food poverty work. To deliver the work highlighted within this report we utilise a small reserve



and apply for external funding in-year to offset expenditure to protect the reserve.

The availability of the reserve enables us to forward plan work.

The reserve is c.£125,000. The table below outlines how this reserve will be utilised to the end of March 2026.

<b>Programme of Work</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>	<b>2025/2026</b>
<b>Free Fruit for high schools</b>	£37,000	£38,000
<b>Hospital to Home safety boxes</b>	£5,000	£5,000
<b>Fit, Fed &amp; Read Summer Holiday Programme</b>	£7,000	£7,000
<b>Christmas Food Support</b>	£6,000	£6,000
<b>Cooking Classes</b>	£4,500	£4,500
<b>Good Food Flintshire Events</b>	£2,500	£2,500

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	None.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	None.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01.	None.
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	<a href="https://www.2025movement.org/">https://www.2025movement.org/</a>
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6.02	<a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Cost-of-Living-Hub/Home.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Cost-of-Living-Hub/Home.aspx</a>
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6.03	<a href="#">Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales</a>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and Communities Telephone: 01352 702929 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a>