

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 October 2024

Scrutiny Task Group - Tackling Multiple Deprivation

Progress report

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 [In June 2023](#), Overview and Scrutiny Committee met to consider and approve the final report of the Scrutiny Task Group that had considered the issue of multiple deprivation. The report included 21 recommendations under 5 themed areas. The Committee agreed that a report on progress will be brought back to O&S in a year's time.

1.2 This report summarises the progress to date made against the 21 recommendations.

2. Summary of the Issue

2.1 While Cheltenham is predominantly an affluent town, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England show that there are several areas that have high levels of multiple deprivation. Two areas (St Mark's 1 and St Paul's 2) have consistently been in the 10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the 2010, 2015 and 2019 IMDs.

2.2 In the scrutiny request for the subject of tackling multiple deprivation, agreed by the committee in February 2022, it was noted that Cheltenham Borough Council cannot on its own tackle the issue of multiple deprivation, but it should look to ensure that its policies and service delivery is targeted at working with communities to help them address the causal factors of multiple deprivation that it can influence and it should be working with other stakeholders to ensure that their efforts are similarly targeted.

2.3 The request set out what the review would hope to achieve:

- Identify the areas that Cheltenham Borough Council can directly influence to help tackle multiple deprivation.
- Identify the other stakeholders that have the ability to help tackle multiple deprivation.

- Identify the outcomes that we would like to achieve, and what indicators show whether our work is having the desired effect.
- Hold scrutiny sessions with those stakeholders to ensure that we understand their aspirations and what they are able to contribute.
- Perform a needs assessment for the each of the areas looking at any LSOA that is in the most deprived quintile (20%) for any of the IMD domains.
- Make recommendations to Council, Cabinet, CBC representatives on outside bodies, to the LGA, the MHCLG, etc. on the resources, policies, powers and funding that are needed to help tackle multiple deprivation.
- Provide an over-arching co-ordination role with the various other stakeholders to ensure that organisations' local delivery in Cheltenham are all directed towards the same outcomes and objectives.

2.4 The Scrutiny Task Group was duly set up and met several times to consider various topics relating to deprivation. At each of the meetings, relevant partners were invited to provide context.

2.5 The final report was presented to the Committee in [June 2023](#) that included 21 recommendations under 5 themed areas:

- Cost of living
- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Cross-cutting

3. Summary of progress

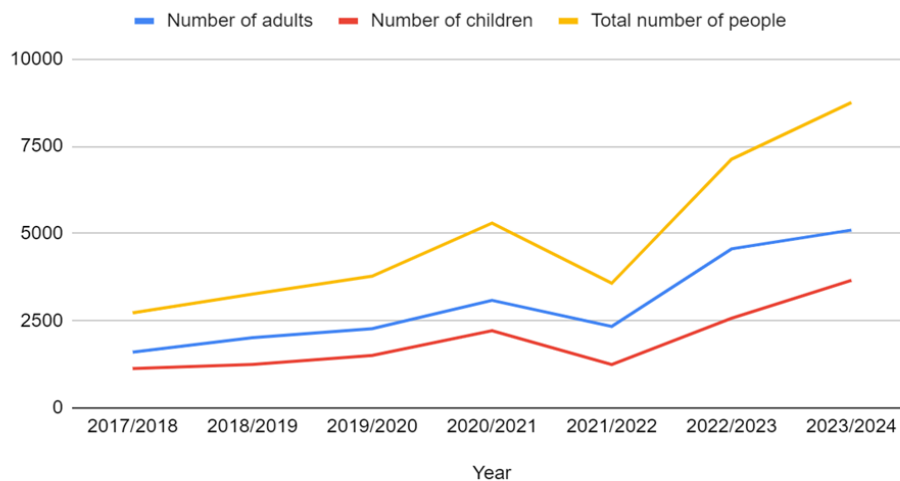
3.1 The recommendations were put into an action plan that has been updated to show progress. This is attached as appendix A.

3.2 In addition, some additional contextual information under three of the themed areas is included below for the committee's information.

3.3 Cost of living

3.4 The cost of living crisis remains a real issue for many of our local families. We know that Cheltenham's food banks and food pantries are still supporting around 550 households per week that are experiencing food poverty. 47% of people accessing the Cheltenham Food Bank's services are doing so due to the rising cost of essentials and 1,068 households were referred to the Food Bank for the first time in 2023/2024. The table below illustrates how the numbers accessing the food bank have increased since 2021/22.

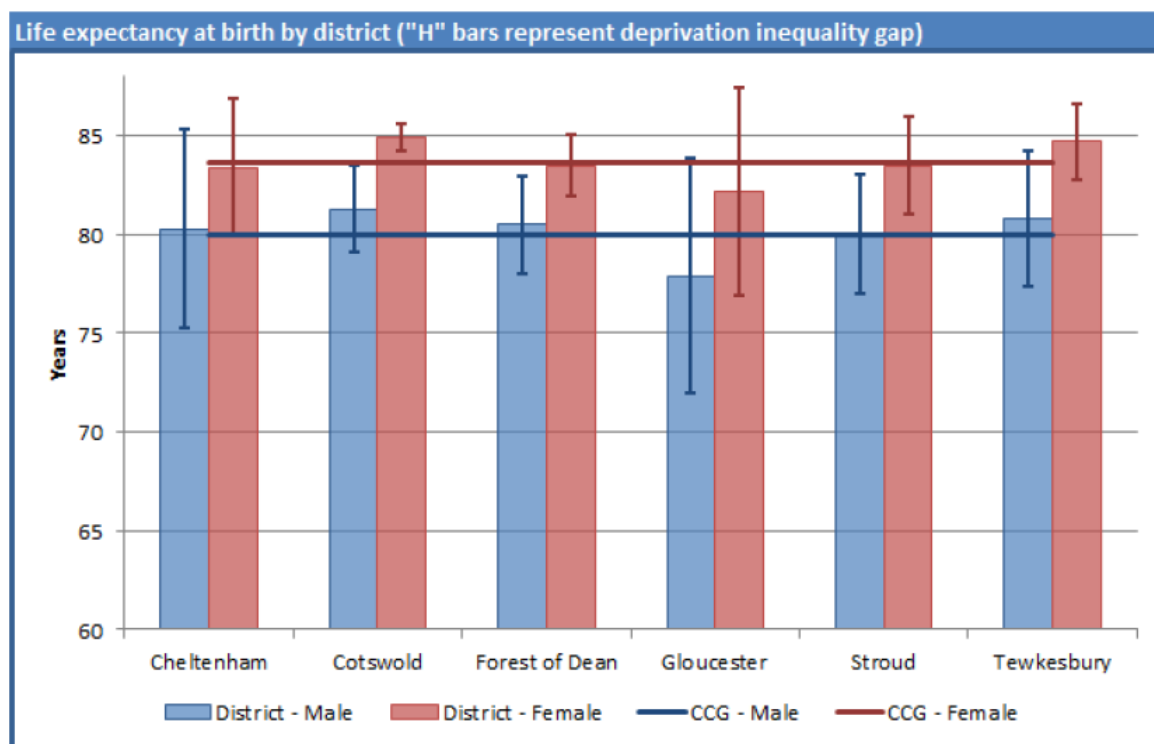
Number of people receiving food parcels in Cheltenham



source: Cheltenham Food Bank

- 3.5** National Citizens Advice data suggests 5 million people, including 1.5 million children, are in a household with a negative budget. The problem is deepening with the average monthly deficit for a negative budget household going from minus £270 in 2019/20 to minus £365 in 2023/24. (source Citizens Advice - The National Red Index – Feb 2024)
- 3.6** Locally, Citizens Advice are dealing with up to 400 calls per week, with highest areas of concern relating to debt, welfare benefits and housing (source: North and West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice)
- 3.7** Last year Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre provided advice to 140 clients which represented an increase of 22% on the previous year. 38% of their clients are in receipt of disability benefits which represents an increase of 8.5% on the previous year. (source: Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre)
- 3.8** In addition, the Council has continued to work with the Gloucestershire County Council to allocate the household support fund grants. The Household Support Fund (HSF), first introduced in 2021/22, is funding that is made available via Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living.
- 3.9** The Council's approach is to channel grants to a number of community-based organisations that are working closely with those made vulnerable due to the cost of living crisis. These delivery partners include Citizens Advice, Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre, our community food network, Aspire Trust (running Cheltenham's family hubs), CCP and Cheltenham Household Essentials Project.
- 3.10** On 23 July, [Cabinet agreed](#) how to allocate £147k to cover the period from 1 April to 30 Sept 2024.
- 3.11** **Health Inequalities**
- 3.12** Health inequalities continue to be a concern for health partners in Cheltenham. The

diagram below shows that whilst Cheltenham has a close to county average life expectancy for males and females, there is significant inequality in life expectancy between most and least deprived residents (shown by the H bars). Whilst Cheltenham has a close to county average life expectancy there are significant inequality in life expectancy between the most and least deprived residents.



(source: One Gloucestershire data pack – February 2022)

- 3.13 Further data from One Gloucestershire shows that health inequalities are most acutely seen in West Cheltenham, in the wards of Hesters Way, St Marks and St Peters. These areas have a higher prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity, smoking and depression. In addition, there is a higher proportion of individuals using accident and emergency services as their default health service choice, instead of primary care or other elective services.
- 3.14 The Cheltenham Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP), which has representation from community, social care, health, voluntary sector, housing and the council, agreed to develop a project to support West Cheltenham community build on its strengths and make a measurable difference to health equality and the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
- 3.15 The West Cheltenham health equity project has been running for over 12 months now, and as part of the project, Springbank Community Group employ a Health and Wellbeing Coordinator. The coordinator has been active within the community, and provides one to one support, information mornings, training and educational opportunities, plus help for individuals to access activities and social opportunities either being delivered from Springbank or from elsewhere.
- 3.16 To support our understanding of health inequalities, GCC Public Health have recently

shared a Cheltenham Health Profile with up-to-date data. Key issues emerging from the data include:

- 10.4% of the population of Cheltenham (across 8 lower super output areas) live in the most deprived 20% nationally
- There has been a significant increase since 2021/22 of children in relative low-income families
- Whilst the proportion of physically inactive people (16.3%) is comparable to the county average it is significantly lower than the national average of 22.6%.
- Cheltenham has the highest rate of alcohol specific conditions hospital admissions in the county and is the only district higher than the national rate.
- In 2022/23 the average rate of obesity among Year 6 children in Cheltenham is 17.9%, better than the national average. But there are parts of Cheltenham where the rate is over 30% - inc LSOAs in St. Peters, St. Pauls, Hesters Way and Oakley – which has the highest prevalence of obesity at 36.7%.
- Cheltenham has the highest rate of year 6 children with tooth decay (16%) in the county, which is much higher than the county average of 11.6% though comparable to the national average of 16.2%.
- Rates of pupils reporting low mental wellbeing are comparable to the county average, although this has significantly increased since 2018.

3.17 The Public Health data will help shape the criteria for the next round of health and wellbeing grants.

3.18 No Child Left Behind

3.19 Through No Child Left Behind, there has been a continued focus on highlighting the issue of children growing up in poverty and taking steps to address the inequality gap. Recent work has included:

- Delivering the holiday activity and food programme scheme over the Easter and Summer school holidays with 2,100 children attended events and accessed free food;
- Hosted Party in the Park event on 2 August to which over 2,200 children attend with over 400 free meals given out to children on free school meals;
- Led a campaign in June 2024 to raise awareness of the impact of air pollution on children in our town, to coincide with clean air day.

3.20 In terms of up to date data, NCLB recently commissioned an up to date needs analysis. Key findings include:

3.21 In Cheltenham 15.1% of children under 16 live in relative low-income families, but this increases to over 30% of children in Oakley and Hesters Way. Over the last five years the percentage of primary school pupils eligible for free school meals has increased year on year in Cheltenham to 18.7% of pupils. Hester's Way Primary

school had the highest percentage of eligible children, 56.8%, and Leckhampton C of E Primary School had the lowest percentage of eligible children, 2.6%.

- 3.22** In terms of suspensions from school, since 2020/21 the rate of suspensions has increased and is now above pre-covid levels in all areas. The rate of total suspensions in Cheltenham has generally been in line with or higher than the county average. It is noted that some of the schools with the highest rates of suspensions also have high proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- 3.23** In January 2023, 864 people aged 0-25 living in Cheltenham had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement, this has increased in the last 5 years. Children in Cheltenham with an EHCP are much more likely to live in a deprived area than the general population aged 0-24. There is also a strong correlation between the proportion of children receiving SEN support in primary schools (but who don't have an EHCP) and the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals in Cheltenham primary schools.
- 3.24** More recently, No Child Left Behind has worked with the St. Giles Trust to undertake a programme of engagement with local young people as part of a project to reduce the risks to children vulnerable to criminal exploitation.
- 3.25** The survey had 578 responses, with respondents representing a wide range of Cheltenham neighbourhoods, including Hesters Way, St. Pauls, Whaddon/Oakley, Prestbury, Town Centre, Pittville, and Springbank. Key take-aways include:
- 3.26** Only 18% of young people felt their opinions were valued by adults and professionals. Many expressed a desire for more direct communication platforms and greater action taken on their feedback.
- 3.27** Many young people (42%) are worried about their future, 39% are worried about their education and 39% worried about not fitting in.
- 3.28** Many young people reported feeling unsafe in specific areas of Cheltenham, particularly at night. The town centre, Hesters Way, St. Paul's, and Whaddon were frequently cited as unsafe. Dark alleyways and parks, such as Pittville Park and Spring bank Park, were also areas of concern.
- 3.29** Online, 47% of respondents had seen disturbing content, but only 18% felt comfortable reporting this to adults.
- 3.30** Hanging out with friends in parks (32%) and the town centre (23%) were the most popular free-time activities. However, a significant number of young people cited a lack of affordable and accessible recreational spaces. Sports, music, and creative arts were important to young people, but many felt there were not enough safe, well-maintained facilities for these activities.
- 3.31** The results of the survey were presented to the No Child Left Behind Board on 23 September and the board has recommending undertaking a year of youth action that will amplify young peoples' voices, encourage young people-led social action and capacity building within partners so that we get better at hearing young people's voices.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

- 4.1** The committee is invited to review the progress being made against the action plan as agreed by this committee in June 2023 and to consider the additional information supplied in section 3.

Background Papers	Overview & Scrutiny – 5th June 2023. Report of the Scrutiny Task Group Tackling Multiple Deprivation
Contact Officer	Richard Gibson Head of communities, wellbeing & partnerships
Accountability	Cllr Victoria Atherstone, Cabinet Member Safety & Communities

DRAFT