

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 20 October 2020
Title of report: Tackling Inequalities

Purpose of report:

To put forward the proposals for Kirklees Council's initial actions to tackle the inequalities that the coronavirus pandemic has cast a significant light upon. The proposals include establishing a member-led Inequalities Commission supported by initial actions to address immediate priorities.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes Spending likely to exceed £250k
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u>?	Key Decision – Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Strategic Director for Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health: 12 October 2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Eamonn Croston, Service Director – Finance: 7 October 2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning: 8 October 2020
Cabinet member portfolio	Leader of the Council

Electoral wards affected: All.

Ward councillors consulted: Members have been consulted on the creation of a member-led Inequalities Commission via the Chief Executive's meeting with political Group Leaders (Leading Members).

Public or private: Public

Tackling Inequalities

1. Summary

Inequalities have always existed in Kirklees. COVID-19 has highlighted these anew in many cases and demonstrated the imperative for action.

This report puts forwards proposals for an Inequalities Commission that will work closely with partners and communities to direct and instigate action, focus on better understanding of the issues faced, and take forward clear actions to advance equality in Kirklees.

This work will build on recent activity to tackle immediate inequalities that people have faced as a direct impact of the coronavirus pandemic and will also include initial actions to address immediate priorities.

2. Information required to take a decision

Kirklees is a diverse place with 440,000 different people. The people of Kirklees should be able to freely define themselves by characteristics and communities that are important to them, rather than the labels others put on them. However, we know that the definitions people chose for themselves, and the definitions others impose on them, affect how they are able to live their lives.

Pro-active and proportionate action is required to enable everyone in Kirklees to live healthy lives, achieve their aspirations, and live independently, whatever characteristics they may have, and however they might have been treated in generations gone by. In Kirklees we have consistently gone beyond minimum legal compliance on equality and in the work of the Inequalities Commission we will be actively addressing issues relating to economic status and class alongside protected characteristic groups.

Local and national evidence clearly demonstrates the various structural and social inequalities that exist in many communities and populations. Inequalities are felt across people's full life course. They may be experienced in different ways, but they all lead to significant impacts on economic status, education, good quality employment and safe and secure housing, as well as physical and mental health and people's ability to feel included and valued. These inequalities also place costs across the system, and thus reducing inequalities should result in reduced costs, as well as improving outcomes and the lived experience of people.

Those living with lower socio-economic status/class are less likely to attain positive educational outcomes. In Kirklees pupils who have free school meals have significantly lower school readiness at age 5, and educational attainment at age 11. Other consequences of socioeconomic status/class such as fuel poverty can have further indirect negative impacts on educational attainment, compounding these issues.

Recent events such as COVID-19 have bluntly exposed these pre-existing inequalities. Nationally, we know that some people may be more at risk of transmission of COVID-19, at risk of poorer outcomes from infection, and at risk of greater impact from control measures. Public Health England (PHE) have found older people, males, those living in deprived areas, and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities (BAME) are at increased risk of poor outcomes. For example:

- Intensive Care Unit admission rates and death rates are higher in males.
- People from different BAME groups are more likely to die from COVID-19 than White people.
- People working in jobs such as security, healthcare, retail, hospitality, transport and social care are more likely to die from COVID-19.
- Those in deprived areas are twice as likely to die from COVID-19 once they have been diagnosed.
- Mortality is higher for people born outside UK/Ireland, especially people from Central and Western Africa
- Age is one of the strongest predictors of a poor outcome from COVID-19, further to this, there have been 2.3 times more deaths in care homes than expected (at the time of the PHE report).

People who belong to more than one of these groups are at greater risk still, a significant problem given the fact that characteristics such as age, ethnicity, employment, health status, place of birth, institutionalisation and gender are often linked.

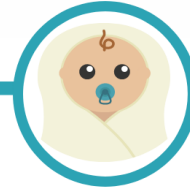
It is important to note that inequalities are also experienced and exacerbated in how people are treated – in the assumptions that are made; the language that is used; the way we communicate; and how services are designed and accessed. This is not always something that can be ‘seen’ but is something which is felt. The graphic below provides an example of how inequalities impact people across the life-course in Kirklees.

INEQUALITIES *Through a Life-course Lens*



Maternity

Infant mortality is three times higher in Dewsbury and Mirfield than in Kirklees Rural



First Years

Birth Weight - an important predictor of future health outcomes - is significantly lower for BAME groups



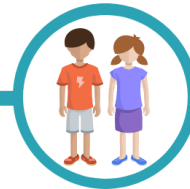
Employment

People who are young, disabled, or have a long term condition are less likely to find employment



Education

Free School Meal pupils have significantly lowered educational achievement (aged 11) than other pupils



Childhood

18% of children live in poverty
LGBT+, mixed ethnicities, and girls have significantly lower well-being at 14



Representation

The proportion of disabled, BAME, and young (16-35) people within the Council's managerial workforce is significantly lower than in the wider Kirklees population



Enjoying Life

BAME and Disabled people have significantly lower life satisfaction



Home

84.6% of disabled people have suitable housing, compared to 91.8% of non-disabled people



End of Life

Certain faith groups, gypsies and travellers, people identifying as LGBT, prisoners, and people who are homeless or vulnerably housed experience poorer quality care at the end of life.



Healthy Aging

Those living in Kirkburton can expect to live around 13 healthy years more than those living in West Dewsbury.



Living Well

People of South Asian ethnicity are up to 6 times more likely to develop Type 2 Diabetes than White people

Existing Work

Throughout the pandemic, Council staff and councillors, community organisations and wider partners have been working together to ensure that communities and individuals at greater risk are supported:

- Working closely with the three main foodbanks to support their continuity of service. This has included the critical work of many councillors in their own communities and beyond.
- Mapping and facilitating access to food provision for vulnerable groups.
- Working with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and local mutual aid groups to support a place-based community response to need – including access to food, medication, social isolation, financial hardship and mental health support.
- Facilitation of a Food Network for organisations providing food to vulnerable people.
- Working closely with the Local Welfare Provision team who have been helping services and partners to understand the changing financial support needs of our residents.
- Working to ensure families who are eligible have been able to access free school meals (FSMs) and are supported with broader financial assessment and assistance.
- The Kirklees Community Protection Plan has driven engagement with, and support for, communities on COVID-19 at a local level, with a focus on at risk communities.
- Tailored health messaging for BAME communities has been produced, recognising the higher risk in terms of exposure and outcomes faced.

Alongside this ongoing activity to support people affected by the immediate impacts of the pandemic, there is a clear commitment from the Council to ensure that tackling inequalities is central to all that we do moving forwards. Although inequalities are complex, and we do not yet fully comprehend how some characteristics translate into inequalities, gathering further quantitative and qualitative intelligence to drive our approaches needs to occur in combination with more immediate and iterative action.

In recognising the multiple factors that contribute to systemic inequalities, we are clear that this piece of work will have a very broad span and require long-term commitment across the organisation.

The Inequalities Commission

In order to gain insight and understanding, bring together buy in and support, and drive action, the proposal is to establish an Inequalities Commission.

This will draw on national good practice, particularly in the field of Fairness Commissions, for example in Sheffield and Haringey, as well as Kirklees's own Democracy Commission, which gained interest across and beyond the borough. Cross-party leadership enabled the Democracy Commission to draw on the widest range of views and beliefs as well as the credibility of its recommendations. Cross-party leadership for our inequalities work will help to maximise its sustainability, efficiency and impact.

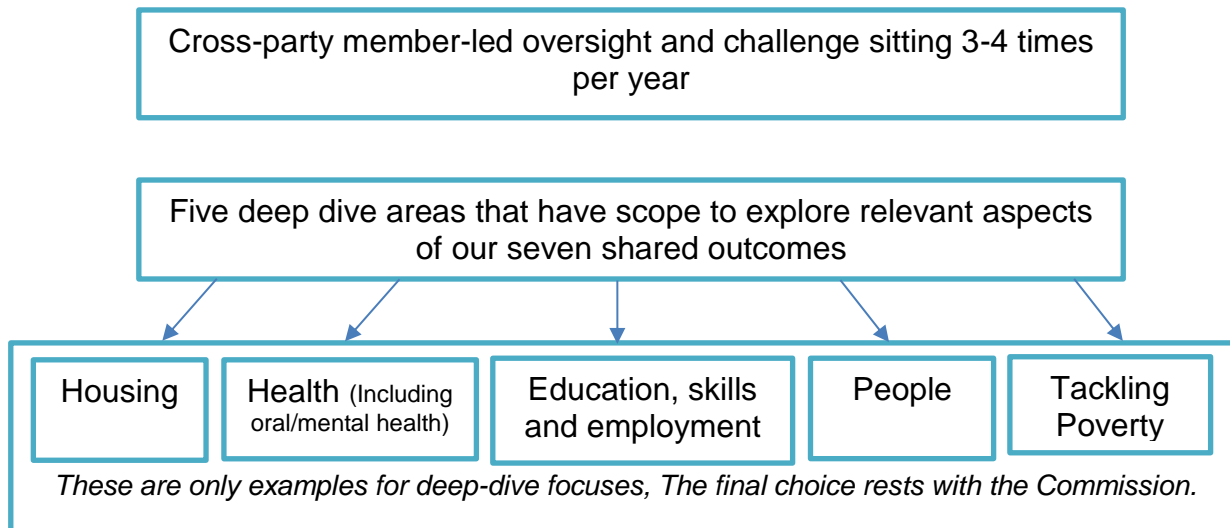
The Commission will:

- Hear the voices of those with lived experience of inequalities and those in positions of power locally
- Hear progress reports at the quarterly meetings and make recommendations for action
- Hold the system to account
- Influence at a local, regional and national level to address issues outside of the Local Authority's direct control.

The proposed model will be cross-party and member-led, with members meeting 3-4 times per year to provide oversight and challenge to findings and actions produced by the various strands of enquiry across the Commission.

This model would allow cross-party members to enrich the understanding and learning brought by the various strands of the Commission (see below) with their place-based experience as elected representatives. The democratic position held by members will allow them to act as a conduit for communication and change-making in council procedure, policy and strategy, while recognising that there will be actions and recommendations spanning the partnership across Kirklees.

Proposed Model:



It is proposed that the Commission be action-oriented from start to end. The Commission would call for the views of subject matter experts, people in power, and people with lived experience of inequalities to identify risks, issues and opportunities. This process would identify actions on inequalities.

Some potential areas for a deep-dive focus are included in the proposed model (housing, health, education, skills and employment, people, and tackling poverty). Under each of these themes, the Commission would consider the impact of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Health
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic status and/or class

How the Commission works is fundamentally important. We suggest adapting the principles from the Poverty and Inequality Commission of Scotland. This would give us the following seven principles:

- Courageous and honest
- Evidence-based
- Restorative
- Promoting dignity and respect
- Vocal
- Person-centred
- Intersectional

The Commission will operate against a number of timeframes, recognising the need for urgent action, the opportunity for long-term systemic change, and the sensitivity of the subject-matter and so the importance of listening and relationship building.

Subject to approval, it is proposed that work to form the Commission commences at the end of October 2020, with a view to a first meeting in January 2021; work is now progressing to gather the evidence needed to inform the Commission's deep dives. We would align this with the proposed timescales for the priority actions described below, which would allow time for engagement with local stakeholders. While there are enduring

issues to address, it is recommended that the initial timeframe for the Inequalities Commission is 12 months, with an evaluation of progress against identified actions after 18 months.

Priority actions

In parallel to the Inequalities Commission, three priority actions have been identified based on intelligence and aligned to our seven shared outcomes. The rationale for selecting these areas can be seen in part on the previous life-course infographic, and in part from existing knowledge and work that has gone on around inequalities in Kirklees (e.g. the Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment overview).

These actions are aimed at groups we know are affected by inequalities, but this is not a conclusive list. Through intelligence, consultation and engagement it is planned that the Commission will complement these initial key actions with a greater breadth of work tackling inequality in Kirklees.

Specific metrics have been suggested for each action, however further work is planned to establish how action on inequalities can be best measured at a more overarching level and help shape how ongoing action around inequalities should look.

Kirklees Shared Outcomes:



Children have the **best start** in life



People in Kirklees are as **well** as possible for as long as possible



People in Kirklees **live independently** and have control over their lives



People in Kirklees live in **safe, cohesive communities** and are protected from harm



People in Kirklees have aspiration and **achieve their ambitions** through education, training, employment and lifelong learning



Kirklees has **sustainable economic growth** and provides good employment for and with communities and businesses



People in Kirklees experience a high quality, **clean, and green environment**

Action Key as used for Priority Actions:

Direct Contribution:



Indirect Contribution:



1: Inequalities and Health Checks



*Health inequalities, especially around life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, oral health, and long-term conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and kidney disease have a significant impact on communities in Kirklees. We will work with our partners in the NHS to reframe **health-checks** to more directly address inequalities in the prevention and identification of long-term conditions. We will also work to improve access to checks in communities, delivered via the Kirklees Wellness Service approach of person-centred care delivered through motivational interviewing and coaching models. This will help reduce inequalities in the prevention, diagnosis and management of long-term conditions. We will work with delivery partners to make sure that there is dual emphasis within the health checks – on the identification of and response to health issues.*

Intended Outcome: Improved overall prevention, identification and management of long-term conditions covered by NHS health-checks, and specifically, a reduction in inequalities in the prevention, diagnosis and management of long-term conditions. Further to this, the pilot and subsequent work should develop a partnership approach to tackling priorities with PCNs, GPs, the University, Wellness, and other partners.

Timescale: Aim for pilot roll out Quarter 4 2020/21

Measuring Outcome: Dedicated work needed to assess the effectiveness of models in engaging groups experiencing inequalities with health-checks, and with subsequent wellness/community services.

2: The Council as an Inclusive Employer



*A diverse workforce brings a range of experiences and perspectives that will strengthen our performance and impact as a Council. A workforce upskilled to understand how inequalities can be addressed will develop services that better meet the needs of residents and visitors to the area. That is why we will continue to work to help the Council to be an **Inclusive Employer** – using feedback and insight from Council colleagues and others to develop our organisation to be a progressive organisation and to attract, develop and retain employees. This will include providing appropriate inclusion/inequalities themed learning and development support for different groups and levels of employees.*

Intended Outcome: A diverse workforce brings a range of experiences and perspectives that will strengthen our performance and impact as a Council. A workforce upskilled to understand how inequalities can be addressed will develop services that better meet the needs of residents and visitors to the area.

Timescale: Aim for programme of actions to commence Autumn 2020

Measuring Outcome: Pay gap reporting (potential to include ethnicity and disability), Council employee makeup, disciplinary/grievance monitoring, recruitment journey monitoring and employee pulse surveys.

3: Breaking Barriers project



*Education-related inequalities have a defining impact over a person's lifetime, not just in childhood. And we recognise that civic appointments are not representative of our society in terms of Black and BAME representation. Permanent school exclusion for Black African/Black Caribbean/Black British children in England is around three times the exclusion rate for all pupils. The **Breaking Barriers project** will focus on delivering meaningful engagement and positive youth-led activities, to help tackle this – including by working with Black and BAME young adults aged 16-30 to design a leadership programme; delivering a campaign to listen to and involve Black young people in social action and opportunities to explore issues of heritage and identity in Black History Month. The project will support BAME young people to develop the skills, knowledge, resources and confidence to engage and aspire in education, learning and leadership.*

Intended Outcomes: Young people of Kirklees feel they have power equality.

Timescale: Commence Autumn 2020

Measuring Outcomes: Year 9 youth survey, Number of civic appointment applications from Black and BAME young people. Reduction in schools exclusions.

3. Implications for the Council

Working with People

The Inequalities Commission will establish a high challenge, high support approach. The Council is clear that in order to instigate change we need to 'work with not do to' people. The Inequalities Commission will work with our communities to co-produce plans, policies and interventions, not make decisions for or about them without including them.

Specific evidence-based actions have been identified to engage with groups who experience inequalities. Further engagement with communities will be critical to both these priority actions and the ongoing work of the Inequalities Commission.

Working with Partners

Covid-19 has highlighted the strength and capacity held in our communities and voluntary and community sector organisations and the importance of their relationships with citizens. Due to the deep and systemic root causes of inequality, making meaningful progress will be contingent on a strong, open and trusting partnership approach. The Council is collaborating with partners on the priority actions, will work closely with partners via the Inequalities Commission deep dives and is also working with partners to identify actions that can be best delivered when collaborating across the entire system.

Place Based Working

Place-based working is an essential element of this work. People's experiences of inequalities will vary depending on their local places and it is important that this work reflects the diversity and identity of distinct communities across Kirklees. Integrating approaches that address inequalities into any place-based engagement will help us to ensure flow through the system. We will also work with elected members who are valued for the insight and intelligence they hold about the strengths, aspirations and challenges of the towns, villages and communities within their wards in order to better understand inequality related local issues.

Climate Change and Air Quality

We know that climate change and poor air quality is more likely to be experienced by people who are living in deprived areas. This demonstrates the cross over between inequalities and other environmental factors and the wider determinants of health. The focus the seven shared outcomes give to sustainability will be reflected in the future identification of actions; these two issues are best tackled together.

Improving outcomes for children

A life-course approach to tackling inequalities highlights the fact that what happens at the start of life has a great impact on what happens later in life. The importance of improving outcomes for children is reflected in the priority actions identified.

Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

It is intended to set aside resources from existing earmarked reserves to support the Inequalities Commission and the priority actions set out in this report for the remainder of this financial year, as well as re-orientating existing funding. Consideration of future year resource requirements will be factored into the 2021/22 budget process.

Inequalities are being fully embedded in the People Strategy refresh. Plus, the new Council Plan will set out a clear organisational commitment to tackling inequalities. A communications campaign approach to our inequalities work is being developed around the life course aspect and a communications plan will need to be constructed for the Inequalities Commission.

Administrative and project management support will be delivered by an internal officer working group, ensuring the Commission is resourced with the right skills and expertise to deliver progress at pace and build meaningful relationships and engagement.

4. Consultees and their opinions

The proposal around the Inequalities Commission has been discussed and supported at the Chief Executive's meeting with political Group Leaders (Leading Members). The proposal around the Inequalities Commission and Priority Actions has been discussed at Informal Corporate Scrutiny, with the following points of feedback received and noted for further action within the work that will arise from this report:

- Definitions – A shared understanding and use of language is important to this work, for example what do we mean by poverty, inequality and deprivation? We will identify the common definitions for all relevant terms and ensure these are clear and accepted as a part of the work of the Commission.
- Emphasising the full range of 'characteristics'. In identifying and prioritising areas for action, Members expressed the importance of considering the full range of characteristics and where multiple characteristics may combine to have a further effect. For example, the need to consider the experiences of white, working class boys within the 'Socio-economic status and/or class' characteristic, and to consider the impact of 'community' as a whole/the place in which people live.
- Data – clear data and evidence relating to inequalities is acknowledged as critically important to the work of the Inequalities Commission and will be prioritised. This includes considering sources of quantitative data as well as accounts of 'lived experiences'.

5. Next steps and timelines

Subject to decisions at Cabinet on 20 October 2020 the following timescales will apply.

Inequalities Commission

Establishing the commission (now–January)

- Pre-engagement (now–January)
- Intelligence and evidence gathering (now–January)
- Commission established (January)

Operation of the Commission (January onwards)

- Evidence heard on inequalities locally (ongoing from January)
- Actions identified to address risks, issues and opportunities
- Create task and finish groups to complete actions
- Meet quarterly to hear progress on these actions
- Influence at a local, regional and national level to address issues outside of the Local Authority's direct control

Evaluation of progress and operation of the commission (June 2022)

- After 18 months, an evaluation of progress against identified risks, issues and opportunities

The timescales for each individual action have been included in the aforementioned descriptions. Further engagement and development of actions would begin immediately following confirmation of the three priority actions in October, guided by the Inequalities Commission.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That Cabinet approve the three priority actions and that Cabinet recommends that Council notes the report and endorses the establishment of the Inequalities Commission.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

That Cabinet approve the three priority actions and that Cabinet recommends that Council notes the report and endorses the establishment of the Inequalities Commission.

8. Contact officer

Kate McNicholas (Kate.McNicholas@kirklees.gov.uk), Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

None

10. Service Director responsible

Naz Parkar, Service Director for Growth and Housing
Andy Simcox, Service Director for Strategy and Innovation