



## East Suffolk Community Partnership Board

### Report from the Tackling Inequalities Task and Finish Group

December 13, 2023

#### Introduction and Background

1. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, a new, fourth, 'Tackling Inequalities' priority was identified for the Community Partnership Board. The pandemic shone a spotlight on existing and new inequalities within and between communities and data available through both Integrated Care Systems that cover East Suffolk (including new Population Health Management data) and the Suffolk Office of Data Analytics, as well as the East Suffolk Data Dashboard, reinforces this.
2. The Board agreed that the initial focus of the Tackling Inequalities programme would be on helping to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in East Suffolk and allocated £100,000 towards the Ease the Squeeze programme in June 2022. This funding has been used to support 12 key projects including Community Pantries, Uniform Banks, Warm Rooms/Welcomes and 'Cooking on a Budget' classes. For an update on Ease the Squeeze see [Ease the Squeeze on cost of living » East Suffolk Council](#)
3. Following the East Suffolk Council elections in May 2023, the refreshed Board met in June and an overview of the current priorities and projects was presented to the meeting. The Board agreed that Tackling Inequalities was still a clear priority but that they would like to broaden the focus out from (whilst still including) cost of living to consider other types of inequality.
4. At the September 2023 Board meeting, the Board received a presentation of key data on Inequalities in East Suffolk (see: [CPB September 2023 Tackling Inequalities Presentation](#)) and heard about what was already happening in East Suffolk to address a range of inequalities. Through a workshop in the second half of their meeting, the Board identified priorities against four key themes highlighted by the data:
  - Population Inequalities
  - Health Deprivation and Inequalities
  - Financial Inequalities and Deprivation
  - Education, Skills and Economic Deprivation
5. Following table discussions, Board members voted to identify the top priorities for action across the 22 priorities within the four themes, with the five areas receiving the most votes being:

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing – higher levels of both depression and self-harm in East Suffolk**
  - **Poverty, particularly families living in absolute poverty - more than 40% of children in some areas of East Suffolk are on Free School Meals**
  - **Young People’s Health outcomes – social, emotional and mental health needs, high levels of obesity in some area, hospital admissions and dental problems**
  - Access to Services – this was the lowest score in the ONS Health Index for East Suffolk
  - Disabilities and Long-term Health conditions
6. At the meeting, it was also agreed that a Task and Finish Group would be formed to consider the priorities identified by the Board and develop a programme for consideration at the December Board meeting.

### **Tackling Inequalities Task and Finish Group**

7. This group, which included the Cabinet Member for Communities, representatives from Suffolk County Council and individual Community Partnerships and the ESC Head of Communities, met on November 1<sup>st</sup>. At the meeting the Group considered what is already happening against each of the five priorities and action planned in order to fill the gaps identified.
8. The group proposed that the focus should be on the first three themes – Mental Wellbeing, Poverty and Young People. However they also agreed that a focus on Disabilities (identified in the fifth priority) should be included. Disability runs through the first three priorities - mental health and wellbeing, families living in absolute poverty and children’s health and wellbeing - as a causation factor. When things get bad it is worse for the less well-off and worst of all for those who are disabled or living with someone who is – see the DAS [research article](#), "The disabled and poverty go hand-in-hand".
9. The Task and Finish Group felt that many aspects of both Access to Services and Long-Term Health Conditions were being picked up by other groups – including the CP Board Transport and Travel Task and Finish Group, the Waveney Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the three Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) in the south of the district.
10. It is important to note that Mental Health and Wellbeing was the top priority in the prioritisation exercise at the Board meeting under the Tackling Inequalities theme but is another of the Board’s four priorities in its own right. This outcome proposal therefore covers two of the four Board priorities – Tackling Inequalities and Mental Health and Wellbeing and is a funding request to deliver against both priorities.

### **Outcome Proposal – Tackling the Rising Cost of Living in East Suffolk**

11. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is the Stage 1 Outcome Proposal developed on the basis of the discussion at the Task and Finish Group meeting, and the mapping attached as Appendix 2. The voting on Inequality priorities from the September Board meeting is attached as Appendix 3. The outcome proposal sets out an emerging diverse programme

of activity that addresses both the Mental Health and Wellbeing and Tackling Inequalities priorities.

12. The proposal to the Board is therefore that £146,000 be approved towards the programme, to be allocated by the Task and Finish Group against the three priority themes identified in 5. above. This approach will provide the flexibility to allocate the funding where it will achieve greatest impact. A Stage 2 Outcome Proposal will be developed for consideration and sign off by the Board Chair.

13. The Task and Finish Group will continue to meet – additional Board members would be very welcome to join the group – and will report back to the March Board meeting.

## **Recommendations**

**It is recommended that the Board:**

- 1) Consider and approve the outcome proposal attached as Appendix 1 to this report which requests the allocation of £146,000 from the CP Board 2023/24 budget to the emerging Tackling Inequalities (including Mental Health and Wellbeing) programme**
- 2) Receive a report on progress at the meeting to be held in March 2023.**

Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities

East Suffolk Council, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group