

[Front Cover]

Tackling Inequality in Stockton on Tees

March 2018

DRAFT

[Ambitious, Effective and Proud to Serve Council footer]

[Inside Front cover]

Now more than ever, the Council has to take difficult decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered with the limited resources available. In doing this we have to take account of a number of factors such as reduced funding, changing demographics, increasing demand for services and new legislation and national policy direction. Whilst we continue to balance all these factors we are clear that under-pinning all our decisions are our four policy principles and wherever possible we will:



This report is the first in a series of reports looking at how we are delivering against our four policy principles. It looks at how we are addressing the third policy principle and specifically how we are tackling inequality across the borough through our work to support :

- Health
- Job opportunities, skills and training
- Education
- Housing
- Poverty Alleviation

This report will show that, whilst there is still a long way to go, we are making some significant advances and we remain committed to ensuring that our policies and services will continue to be developed and delivered to tackle inequality across the borough.

Bob Cook,
Leader, Stockton on Tees Borough Council

March 2018

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Inequality in Stockton on Tees – the challenge

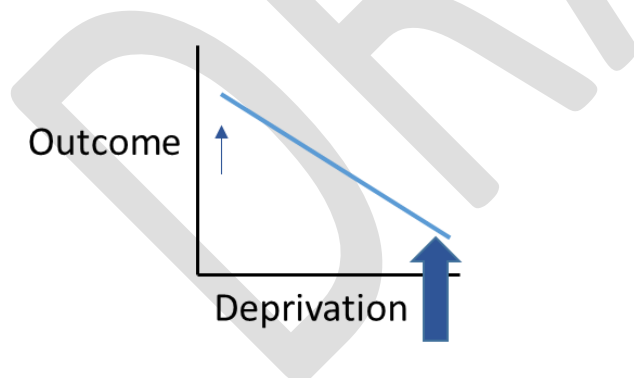
The Borough has a unique social and economic mix with areas of affluence existing alongside more disadvantaged communities. Therefore it is not uncommon to find significant variances in life opportunities between neighbouring communities across the Borough.

The inequalities that we consider in this report are the unjust and avoidable differences that arise across the population and between specific populations because of the wide socio-economic spread of populations across the borough. The differences in conditions, infrastructure and opportunity shape the day to day lives of our communities; the resourcefulness of individuals throughout their lives; their health status and their life expectancy.

The wide variance across communities is a particular challenge in the borough, but it is encouraging to note that we are beginning to see some positive movement in the measure of deprivation in the most deprived areas in the borough. In 2010, the Index of Multiple Deprivation identified that 29.1% of neighbourhoods (LSOAs) in Stockton-on- Tees were in the most deprived 20% in the country and 24.8% of neighbourhoods were in the least deprived 20%. But, in the 2015 IMD the proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 20% in the country had reduced by 1.6% pts to 27.5%, this improvement is to be celebrated but it also highlights that there is still a long way to go.

Robust evidence shows that outcomes are often shown across a gradient – from ‘worst’ to ‘best’, often associated with socio-economic position. The evidence shows that to effectively address inequality, action must be taken to reduce the gradient of inequality by providing services for all, but with an increased resource targeting those in greatest need.

The size of the arrows in the figure below show that there needs to be greater ‘effort’ where need is greatest, to level the gradient across the population.



To be effective, action to address inequality needs to be systematic and at-scale, based on the best available evidence of what works and on the intelligence about our local needs in the borough. Due to the complex and deep-seated nature of inequality, some outcomes will be delivered in the medium or longer-term but in the meantime short-term outputs can be measured as a strong indication that longer-term inequality will be reduced. This report will show how we are successfully targeting a number of our services to focus our resources to those in greatest need.

Tackling inequality in health

Stockton-On-Tees has some of the highest health inequalities in the country, where residents from the most deprived areas have a life expectancy that is approximately 15 years (males) and 13 years (females) lower than those from the least deprived areas. The extent of the inequality in health continues to be one of the biggest challenges to the health and wellbeing of our Borough. Improving health is a key priority of the Council and the Health and Wellbeing Board - our approach is set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The challenge is to reduce the difference in mortality and morbidity (disease) rates between rich and poor and to increase the quality of life and sense of wellbeing of the whole local community. Evidence-based Public Health is rooted in clinical epidemiology (patterns of illness over time) and evidence based medicine, drawing on principles of effective practice, integrating sound professional judgments with a body of appropriate, systematic research. Local data and local trends analysis assists in the judgment made to translate the evidence base for appropriateness for a specific population. We use the evidence-base to:

- a. **Reduce** the gradient of health inequality by providing services for all but with increased resource targeting those in greatest need
- b. **Prevent** inequalities by providing the *Best Start in Life*
- c. **Mitigate** health inequalities by designing our services and interventions to meet the needs of our populations experiencing the greatest disadvantage: those who are most likely to experience inequality

A programme which have been particularly successful in preventing inequalities is “**A Fairer Start**” where we are working with Hartlepool and Stockton CCG, Catalyst, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Big Life Families Group in piloting an early years programme within Stockton Town Centre ward. This is a ward with a diverse range of health inequalities, deprivation and societal complexities and the programme is delivering better life chances for 0-3 year olds through culture change, awareness raising, knowledge building and empowering communities to raise children in a healthy and happy environment. Evidence shows that this programme will improve school readiness, increase breastfeeding rates, improve participation in health and development reviews and reduce childhood obesity. Progress so far is positive as 50 community champions are actively involved.

Programmes and interventions which mitigate health inequalities include:

Family weight management – we commission an evidenced-based family weight management service, with a specific focus on targeting and engaging families that live in wards that are within the most deprived areas in Stockton-on-Tees. The evidence shows that this will contribute to a reduction in child obesity rates across the borough, but with a particular focus on reducing rates in most deprived areas where obesity rates are highest. In 2016/17, 703 families in Stockton-on-Tees completed the weight management programme.

Fluoride varnish scheme – this is an intervention aiming to reduce health inequalities by applying fluoride varnish to children’s teeth from the schools which had the highest number of decayed missing and filled tooth surfaces. Evidence shows that the application of fluoride varnish to children’s teeth twice yearly reduces dental decay in children. A number of systematic reviews conclude that applications two or more times a year produce a mean

reduction in caries increment (decay) of 37% in the primary dentition (milk teeth) and 43% in the permanent (adult) teeth. In Stockton-on-Tees, there are 10 schools engaged with the programme, and as of July 2017, 2,336 fluoride varnish applications had taken place within these schools.

NHS health checks - in 2013, a higher proportion of eligible residents from the most affluent areas in the Borough (13.7%) received an NHS health check than those from the most deprived areas of the Borough (10.6%). In 2016, the situation had reversed. A higher proportion of eligible residents from the most deprived areas of the Borough (11.2%, equal to a 2.5% point reduction) received an NHS health check than those from the most affluent areas of the Borough (10.8%, equal to 0.2% point increase). This was achieved by changing the invitation method and payment structure used for the health checks; the change ensured that the eligible population from the most deprived areas were invited & assessed as a priority.

Stop Smoking Services (SSS) - in 2012, the 5 most affluent wards contributed 19% of the total number of people accessing SSS across the Borough whilst the 5 most deprived wards contributed 15% of the same. In 2016, the situation had reversed. The 5 most affluent wards contributed 11% (a reduction of 8% points on 2012) of the total number of people accessing SSS across the Borough whilst the 5 most deprived wards contributed 32% (an increase of 17% points on 2012) of the same. This was achieved by locating all of the SBC stop smoking services in the most deprived areas in Stockton-on-Tees. There were also six areas in the Borough identified as having high smoking rates and low uptake of stop smoking services. The stop smoking services in these areas were required to offer an enhanced service for these residents.

There is evidence that our sustained efforts to tackle inequalities in health are beginning to have an impact. In 2011-13 the male life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived areas in the borough was 17.1 years, by 2013- 15 it had shrunk by 12% to 15.1 years. Whilst this still presents a huge challenge it does indicate that the direction of travel has been reversed and that the actions taken to tackle inequality are having an impact.

[insert range of photographs to illustrate the programmes to fit double page spread on health]

Tackling inequality in job opportunities, skills and training

Improving job opportunities, skills and training is a key priority in the Council's Economic Growth Plan. The development of our economy is critical to boosting competitiveness and diversification, improving economic resilience, and ultimately providing the range of jobs we need to ensure that growth is both widespread and inclusive for Stockton-on-Tees' residents.

The number of residents in Stockton-on-Tees that are economically active is high and the proportion of those in employment is only marginally behind the national comparison and well ahead of the regional figure. However employment levels need to continue to increase and particularly among those groups that are currently under-represented in the labour market. So alongside the over-arching objective of supporting job creation we are, in line with our policy principle to tackle inequality, working to ensure that we support access to the growing jobs market for residents with no qualifications, residents experiencing work-limiting disabilities and health conditions and for the young unemployed, especially for our Looked After Children and the vulnerable young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).

We have put in place a wide range of programmes and activities to assist those out of work to find employment and therefore improve income and employment equality. Our support for:

Directions' courses (offered for free across three sites in the Borough) continue to provide Jobcentre Plus clients claiming out of work benefits with the valuable tools they need to help find work, including CV writing, interview preparation and careers advice. Job outcomes from Directions courses last year were 37%.

We have established **Sector Based Work Academies (SBWAs)** that work directly with employers who have 'live' vacancies to fill. This programme supports employers with their recruitment needs as well as bringing job seekers closer to the labour market. In 2015/16, 247 enrolments were made to SBWAs increasing to 563 in 2016/17. Working directly with the employers and bringing their vacancies directly to the learners, has assisted those who struggle with basic skills and jobsearching ability. Job outcome rates are currently running at 37% and 15 employers have engaged in this new model of working, which has become a preferred model for Jobcentreplus.

Since 2014, our **Stockton Youth Employment Fund** has helped to create 425 apprenticeship opportunities for young people aged 16-25 years. One third of these young people were previously in receipt of a government benefit. All of these young people have been working towards a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification related to their employment. In 2017, the Council secured additional funding to create 16 apprenticeships specifically for young people who are in the care of the Local Authority (Looked After Children).

We have a comprehensive programme of work aimed at supporting **NEETs**. Working in partnership with local colleges, the Council has worked to better understand why young people become NEET. Findings have helped shape new interventions. For example, open discussions with Principals have led to the introduction of extended Level 1 and Level 2 courses and more time and support is given to students needing these to advance successfully. In turn, this, and recent changes to the school leaver age, has contributed to increased retention rates at local Sixth Form and FE Colleges.

Working with the Council's Learning and Skills Service we launched the **Youth Employment Initiative** in 2016/17, with the aim of reducing the number of young people who are NEET. To date 158 participants have been engaged, 55 of whom have moved into employment and/or further learning.

We are using an intensive bespoke re-engagement course for 10 NEET young people from various backgrounds including LAC. Three young people who completed the course were successfully placed in to employment.

We provided an in house Enterprise course 'Ignite' at Stockton Sparkles. This gave young people the opportunity to develop their marketing, production and selling skills whilst also receiving an ASDAN award in Enterprise which is endorsed by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE). 15 NEET young people completed the Enterprise course.

To support this NEET work we have developed the RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) as a means of better understanding which young people are at risk of becoming NEET and our own NEET assessment tool – PAT (Participation Assessment Tool). Together, use of RONI and PAT have helped us to work in more effective ways and achieve the following improvements in NEET levels between Spring 2013 and Spring 2017:

2.30% reduction for Year 12s

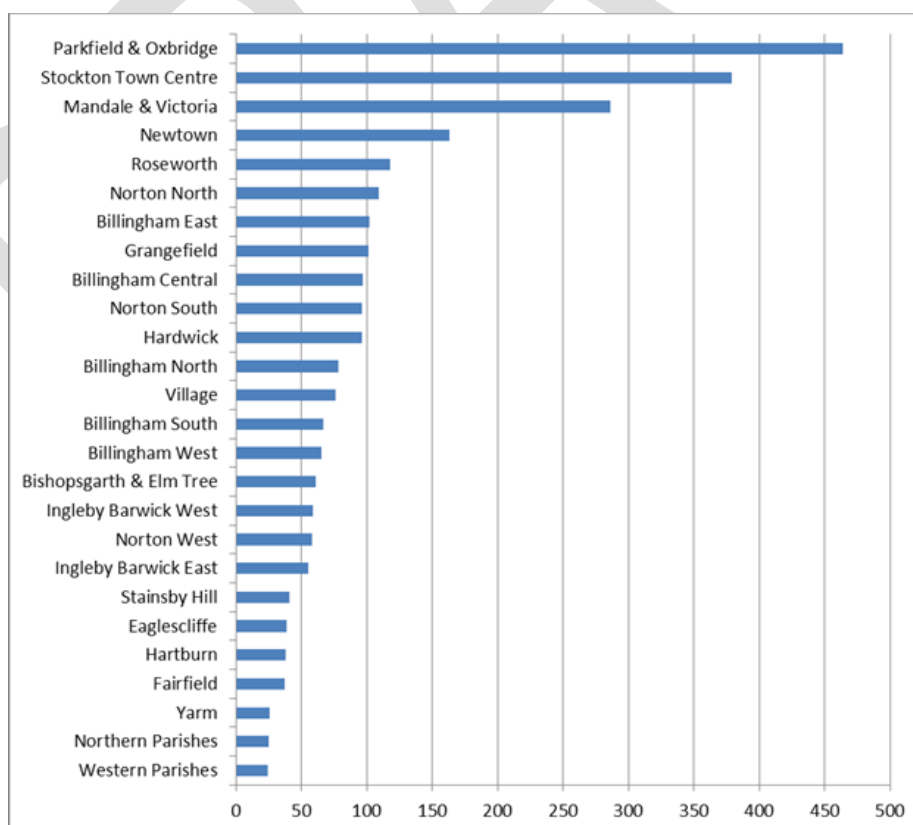
2.6% reduction for Year 13s

6.6% reduction for Year 14s

To improve access to education, employment and/or training, we provide targeted, incidental support and assistance to every young person who knocks on our door at our **One Stop Shop** in Stockton Town Centre. The following case study illustrates how much difference such provision can make for individuals.

We are also active in ensuring that our Adult Education Budget is well used to support learners from the most disadvantaged wards across the Stockton Borough, we are confident that this will have a long term positive effect on tackling inequality in level of skills and training.

Number of enrolments by ward (2016/17)



Tackling inequality in education

Improving educational attainment for all is a key priority in the Council's Children's Services Strategy 2017-20. However ensuring that all of our children have the opportunity to achieve throughout their education means that we need to provide additional targeted support and intervention for our more disadvantaged children.

A broad range of Early Years Foundation Stage targeted support and intervention has been made. The Council has provided training and targeted support to improve the quality of Early Years settings and child-minder provision has positively impacted children's school readiness, enabling faster progress once pupils start school. A transition guarantee (Moving Forward 0-5) has been introduced to ensure that the needs of all children, especially the most vulnerable, are met. And the development of effective partnerships between schools, settings and other key partners (e.g. Health, Social Care, Early Help) remains key, with a particular focus on monitoring the impact of the provision of 30 hours free childcare across the Early Years sector. Early Years Foundation Stage attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the first performance measure of early years improved between 2015 and 2017. The within Borough gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils continued to close. There has also been an upward trend for disadvantaged pupil attainment and a more rapid increase in that versus 'other' pupils during the same period

Improvements at Key Stage 1 have been made possible through a focus on tracking attainment across the curriculum to ensure that individual pupils attain more consistently.

Key Stage 1 attainment at the expected standard or above for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has improved in writing and mathematics. Across 2016-17, disadvantaged pupils' attainment figures for expected standard have risen more rapidly than those for 'other' pupils in reading and maths. Additionally, in 2017, outcomes for disadvantaged children showed that the proportion reaching the expected standard in all three areas (reading, writing and mathematics) had increased by 4%.

Key Stage 2 improvements have been made possible through ongoing Council support to strengthen school leadership and management so that we know what the issues are and how to address them. Resources used to support this include the Excellence in Inclusion, Pupil Premium Toolkit and Pupil Premium Audit. The **Excellence in Inclusion resource** has specific reference to emotional health and wellbeing, this resource supports school self-evaluation; celebrates inclusive practice; supports school leaders in their school improvement planning; and supports coherent and systematic change. The **Pupil Premium Guide** has been evaluated as a model of good practice by Sir John Dunford, former National Pupil Premium Champion. Training is also provided via **Closing the Gap Clusters** to disseminate effective practice, resources and national/regional guidance. We have increased Council and school capacity to evaluate the use and impact of pupil premium funding via the National College for Teaching and Learning '**Pupil Premium Reviews**'. We systematically prioritise and determine our targeted support and interventions in our half termly Education Improvement Service '**School Strategy Meetings**'

Key Stage 2, attainment at the expected standard or above for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has improved in reading, writing and mathematics and disadvantaged pupil progress figures have all increased. Most significantly progress gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at Year 11 have narrowed

Targeted support and interventions at Key Stage 4 include ongoing support to strengthen school leadership and management to know what the issues are and how to address them. Pupil Premium Reviews were commissioned from the Council by Thornaby Academy, St Patrick's College and Northfield School

We provide support to address inequalities in all key phases, across primary and secondary maintained, academy and free schools across the whole of the Borough.

[insert photographs to complete double page spread on Education]

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Tackling inequality in housing

The supply of sufficient good quality affordable housing is a key factor in ensuring that the right conditions exist for reducing inequality in the borough. Where necessary, we will intervene with our partners where there are locations that suffer from low demand housing and imbalance to re-model neighbourhoods through demolition, rebuild and refurbishment options to create sustainable communities with a high quality housing offer. We will also intervene where necessary to do all we can to ensure that conditions in the privately rented market are maintained to the highest standards possible.

The Council undertook a large scale voluntary stock transfer in December 2010 and is a non-stock holding local authority. We therefore work in collaboration with both our Registered Provider (RP) and private sector partners to ensure that residents in our borough have access to good quality, affordable housing. We are a partner in the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system alongside the other Tees Valley Local Authorities and those RP's with the largest stock holding in the sub-region. The CBL system provides one system for those seeking access to affordable housing to register and 'bid' on vacant properties as they become available.

We work with a range of Registered Providers to secure new affordable housing in the Borough, often this is on land released for the Council for this specific purpose. Recent examples include Acorn House in Thornaby (a 15 unit apartment scheme providing bespoke accommodation to enable residents with a learning disability to live independently), West End Gardens in central Stockton (a new build development of 65 units which have provided a range of accommodation for families and older residents of our borough) and Churchland Gardens (a new build development providing 12 family and bungalow units).

We work closely with our partners to support them secure funding from the Homes and Communities Agency to support the delivery of new build, affordable housing (recent example includes the Alma Street site in central Stockton, a vacant, town centre brownfield development site purchased by Thirteen specifically for the provision of new build affordable housing).

We negotiate with private sector housing developers to ensure the inclusion of affordable new build housing (for both affordable rent and sale) on all new build private sector housing developments over 15 units (through a S106 affordable housing planning obligations). This option enables the Council to ensure the delivery of new affordable housing in areas where traditionally access to affordable housing may not have been possible or is limited. Recent examples include sites at Carlton, Eaglescliffe, Yarm and Kirklevington.

We actively seek out funding opportunities, the Council recently secured £202k capital funding secured through the Department of Health's Housing and Technology Fund, to improve access to affordable housing for residents with a learning disability who wish to live independently, with support.

The Council has big plans for its borough and central to this ambition are a range of large scale housing led regeneration schemes. We have demolished poor quality, low demand housing, replacing with new quality accommodation which has included the provision of both affordable rented and intermediate housing options. Whilst the multi-million regeneration schemes at Mandale Park and Meadow Rise are nearing completion and Norton Park is well-developed, at Victoria we are at an exciting stage as site clearance is nearing completion and an architect has been commissioned to draft proposals for the sites future development.

In addition to our work with RP housing providers we also work with a range of private sector landlords to ensure access to good quality, affordable private properties. For example we encourage and support landlords to join our Voluntary Landlord Accreditations Scheme (at the end of September 2017 165 landlords were accredited / 1050 properties). To both secure and maintain access to good quality private rented accommodation the Housing Solutions Team

provides 'rent bond' and 'rent in advance support' as well as were appropriate 'Discretionary Housing' support.

Our energy efficiency work, undertaken with partners, is one of the UK's largest area based schemes, tackling energy efficiency on a whole street by street basis. The programme, worth £14.8 million, has delivered energy efficiency measures to almost 5,000 homes, regardless of tenure. In just six years, as a result of this work, there has been a 48% reduction (from 16,463 to 8,585) in the number of households in the Borough that are blighted by **fuel poverty**. This has been achieved through a diverse range of targeted actions across the Borough and has resulted in a £6.2 million reduction in domestic energy bills since 2012 and an improvement in the average SAP rating for housing stock from 61 to 63.

[insert pictures to complete the double page spread on housing]

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Tackling inequality by tackling poverty

Tackling poverty and thereby directly addressing inequality in the borough is the aim of the Borough's 'A Brighter Borough for All – Tackling Family Poverty' framework. 'A Brighter Borough for All' recognises that individually public sector organisations and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector are doing a lot to support those experiencing poverty and to tackle the root causes. The framework brings the detail of this work together and provides a focus through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) around two key objectives of 'maximising family income' and 'giving every child the best start in life'.

The LSP is made up of four geographically based locality forums. These locality forums bring together the community, voluntary sector, public sector and are uniquely placed to deliver focussed, task-based action to support this agenda within their communities. The locality forums are supported by two thematic forums – The Infinity Partnership and the Housing and Affordable Warmth Partnership which work across the borough.

The Infinity Partnership is a forum of organisations in the borough that are committed to promoting and progressing financial inclusion. The partnership aims to ensure that everyone in the borough has the opportunity to access and use the financial services they need to avoid or overcome disadvantage or poverty caused by financial exclusion.

The Housing and Affordable Warmth Partnership oversees projects such as Warm Homes Healthy People (WHHP) provide help and support to some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents at a time when it is most needed with a package of on-going support to tackle poor health and cold homes. WHHP was launched in October 2016 and has delivered help such as a handy person services; slips, trips and falls surveys; income maximisation support; and boiler repairs to over 800 homes. The partnership also promotes the 'The Big Community Switch' which has promoted and secured best value for money energy tariffs for residents, saving over £150,000.

The Council also has a long term partnership with Stockton District Advice and Information Services (SDAIS) – the local Citizens Advice Bureau. Together we are working to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit. SDAIS is providing Locality Forum members with briefing sessions, delivered across a range of groups and organisations throughout the borough to raise awareness of the changes.

The Council's Welfare Rights team also work closely alongside SDAIS provided a joined-up process. The team are producing some excellent results, with over £2.6m in additional benefits paid in 2016-17 to some of the borough's most vulnerable people. In addition over 1,300 households containing an over 85 year old have been identified and supported with successful claims totalling over £500k were made last year for combinations of Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit and Carer's Allowance.

This income maximisation work is supported by Council funded projects such as the Better Health Better Wealth project which is delivered by Age UK Teesside and provides targeted and sustained interventions for those aged over 65. The programme delivers health and wellbeing assessments, home energy assessment and income maximisation support. The Close 2 Home project is also working with vulnerable and isolated older clients to achieve income maximisation.

The council also provides direct support to the Tees Credit Union which provides financial support and loans as well as an income maximisation support. Adult membership of the credit union has grown to nearly 3,000 people with junior membership also growing to over 500 members. Tees Credit Union has benefitted from a prominent town centre presence for the past year. However the building is too large for the current needs of the business, so more suitable and affordable accommodation has been sourced within the town centre. Earlier this year Tees Credit Union negotiated with Moneywise Credit Union (Newcastle) to amalgamate

and create a stronger and more financially robust credit union that could offer better products and services to local people. This transfer makes the credit union the largest in the North East.

The Council has a close partnership with Catalyst, the support organisation for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector in the borough. Catalyst work hard to provide a voice, co-ordination, support and development to the sector and thereby support many organisations who are working to tackle disadvantage, poverty and inequality across the borough.

[insert pictures to complete the double page spread on tackling poverty]

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