

REPORT TO CABINET

14 May 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans

Anti-Poverty Action Plan Update 2026

Summary

This report, along with **Appendix A** outlines the progress made by the Council and partners since the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan were adopted by Cabinet in July 2024. It highlights the work undertaken across the Council during this time to address poverty in the Borough and gives examples of achievements across the four key areas identified in the Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The Council's [Anti-Poverty Strategy 2024-2027](#) confirms the Council's commitment to addressing and alleviating poverty. The Anti-Poverty Strategy is integral to the aims of the [Stockton-on-Tees Plan](#), specifically the priority to create 'Healthy and resilient communities.' Powering our Future has a strong commitment to reducing inequalities and prioritising prevention, putting our communities at the heart of what we do, enabling them to thrive and support each other.

At the time of its introduction, it was agreed that an update on the Anti-Poverty action plan would be presented back to Cabinet after 18 months.

Recommendations

1. This report is for information only. Cabinet is asked to note the report and actions taken to address and alleviate poverty during the 18-month period from July 2024.

Detail

Background

2. The Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan was co-produced with local partner organisations and residents with lived experience; it sets out the Council's commitment to reducing inequality and poverty in the Borough. Over the last 18 months, the Anti-Poverty Strategy Delivery Group has met regularly to coordinate actions undertaken by both internal and external partners. The Positive Living Forum, previously named the Anti-Poverty Lived Experience Group, continues to meet six-weekly to feed in residents' experiences and to evaluate the work being carried out by the Council and its partners.

Examples of key achievements

3. **Appendix A** provides examples of highlights from each of the four priority areas. A notable achievement for each area is summarised below, with further detail, testimonies and photographs provided in Appendix A.
 - **Household Poverty:** The Bread-and-Butter Thing (TBBT) supports residents at five volunteer run hubs across the Borough. During 2025, residents saved over £339,738 by shopping with TBBT and there has been a significant decrease in the number of emergency food parcels since the scheme's introduction.
 - **Child Poverty:** The Free School Meals Auto-Enrolment Project has resulted in almost 400 pupils being auto-enrolled for free school meals in 2025, with an increase in almost £500,000 in pupil premium for schools across the Borough.
 - **Participation and Voice:** As previously noted the Positive Living Forum meets every six weeks. Their experiences have guided new initiatives and helped the Council shape services.
 - **Health and Wellbeing:** 68 Community Spaces and 10 Warm Welcome venues provide welcoming places across the Borough for residents to connect with each other, try new things and access advice and support. This is helping to reduce social isolation and loneliness, supporting residents to stay well for longer.

Consultation and engagement

4. As previously noted, (para 2 and above) the Council engages on an ongoing basis with residents and stakeholders to inform its anti-poverty approach.

Next Steps

5. Further detail on our ongoing approach is detailed within **Appendix A** (section 3). In summary key actions will include:
 - Co-production of an updated action plan (for the remaining 18 months of the strategy). Any outstanding objectives will be carried forward onto the updated plan.
 - Continued engagement with our partners, including the Positive Living Forum and the Anti-Poverty Delivery Group, alongside our wider network of Community Partnerships and organisations to identify and agree these renewed actions.
 - A further progress report will be presented back to Cabinet at the end of the next 18-month period.

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