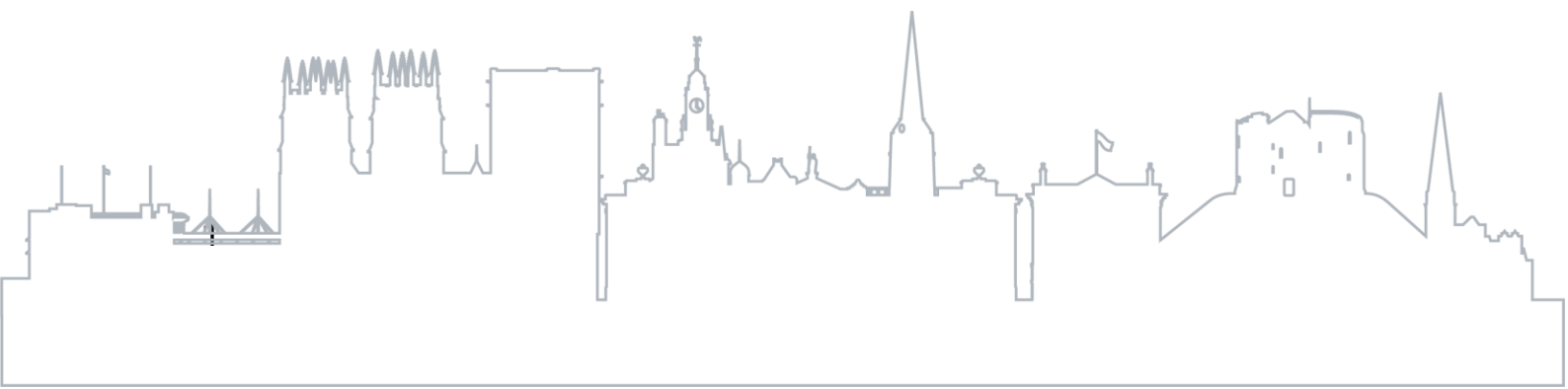




**Tackling Poverty Today and Turning the Tide to
Create Lasting Change**

**A Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for
addressing Poverty in York**

2025-2035



A note on York Poverty Truth Commission's Organisational Standards

This strategy is informed by and embeds the York Poverty Truth Commission's Organisational Standards, which were approved by the Council Executive in March 2025. These standards are:

- We listen
- We are understanding
- We are respectful and friendly
- We are responsive, honest, and care about getting you the right support

A note on the role of councils

Local authorities, also known as councils, provide essential public services within a specific area. They are responsible for a wide range of functions, including social care, schools, housing, planning, environmental protection, waste management, and local infrastructure, like local roads and footpaths.

Whilst they are not responsible for setting national policy and cannot change housing market conditions, the cost of products or essential services like energy or the welfare or benefits system, local authorities can play an active role in seeking to change the conditions that lead people from falling into poverty and remaining in poverty and for working with partners to lobby for change.

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Foreword

In York, people in poverty are hit in several ways. Firstly, and most importantly, they are experiencing poverty, and their choices and chances are limited by this.

Secondly, as a City, York is one of the worst funded areas in the country when you look at health, education, local authorities and other public services funding, therefore there isn't the support out there for those who need it.

Thirdly, York is a small, very unequal City; so, people experiencing poverty see affluence on their doorstep, and others assume that poverty does not exist in the city.

Fourthly York has a high proportion of low-wage and precarious jobs as a city.

And finally, York is one of the most expensive places to live certainly in the North or indeed anywhere in the country outside of the South-East.

It is clear that poverty is biting in our communities in a deeper way than it has for a long time. So, what are City of York Council, working with our partners, doing about it?

Our strategic plan is based around three pillars of action. Tackling poverty today, Prevention, and Turning the Tide to Create Longer Lasting Changes. Here are some of the ways we are working with the community to make a difference.

York is a brilliant City with a clear social conscience and commitment to do the best it can for vulnerable residents, this anti-poverty strategy is a clear path to live these values into being.

Councillor Katie Lomas

Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion

Councillor Bob Webb

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

Introduction

From the outside, York looks like a beautiful, historic city, filled with culture and charm. Many people who visit York each year, drawn to its ancient walls and Minster, might think that poverty is something that happens elsewhere. But if you look closer, even within the city's famous walls, you'll see that poverty is a real issue for more and more people who live here.

The cost of living in York is very high, and, when coupled with national and international issues, this makes it harder for some people to afford what they need.

125 years ago, Seebohm Rowntree started the first big study of poverty in York. Fast forward to today and poverty is still visible in the city. Although, encouragingly, what is also still true is there remains a strong commitment in York to finding ways to help people in need and make the city more affordable for everyone. Many local organisations are working hard on this issue, and with their help, a new strategy to fight poverty has been created.

This new strategy is focused on the next ten years, but it won't be a one-time fix. Whilst some of the contextual factors in a decade's time will be the same as now, such as the built fabric of the city, the role of technology, and the shifting demographics of the city as the UK's population gets older, there are things we will not be able to predict. For instance, ten years ago, we couldn't have predicted the global pandemic, the rising cost of living, or the war in Ukraine. Because of this, the plan will be updated to deal with new challenges that emerge.

Our Ambition

Our ambition is to fight poverty in York and its impacts now and in the future. We want to improve the city, making it fairer and more affordable for everyone who lives here.

Our Strategic Objectives

There are many factors, at a national and international level as well as locally, that affect poverty, and we can't control all of them.

To help guide us, as we do what we can to reduce poverty across the city, this strategy has three main objectives:

1. **Tackling poverty today** – Helping people who are struggling right now.

2. **Preventing people from falling into poverty** – Making sure fewer people end up in poverty in the future.
3. **Creating long-lasting change** – Making York a more equal and affordable city for the long term.

These strategic objectives are designed to help people in York who are experiencing poverty but also create the longer-term conditions to make York more equitable and more affordable for all. They do not stand in isolation from one another. They are concurrent, happening at the same time, reinforcing and supporting work to tackle poverty in the city.

Strategy Development and Consultation

This strategy sets out the activity required to reduce poverty in the city for the next ten years. It replaces the Interim Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-25.

It has been developed through discussion with lots of different people and organisations, led by the Council. It recognises the Council alone cannot tackle poverty. It requires all of us to work together. In this light, the strategy has been considered, developed, and amended through an extensive engagement process ensuring the voices of York's communities, its representatives, its groups, organisations and businesses are heard clearly in what York will do over the next ten years to tackle poverty.

It is important to recognise the strategy provides a framework for action. It is not the end of the conversation as the city, together, will continue to reflect on and amend activity based on the shifting landscape in which poverty exists.

Defining Poverty

There isn't one single way to define poverty. People usually talk about two main types: relative income poverty and absolute income poverty.¹

- **Relative income poverty** refers to people living in households with an income that's below 60% of the average income for that year.
- **Absolute income poverty** refers to people living in households with an income that's below 60% of the average income from a specific year, usually 2010/11. This is then adjusted for inflation over time.

However, income alone doesn't fully account for poverty. Other factors, like wider living costs and individual needs, should also be considered.

This strategy uses the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's definition of poverty:

"When a person's resources (mainly their material resources) are not enough to meet their minimum needs, including social participation."

This includes things like:

- Resources: Usually, this means income, but it can also include things like savings, things you own (like a house or car), services like healthcare or education, and support from family, friends, or community groups.
- Needs: These are essential items, like food, shelter, heating, clothing, and toiletries. But needs also include things like being able to join and be part of society, whether through hobbies, education, work, or training.

To help city partners keep working together to solve the main causes of poverty, it is recommended that everyone in the city use the same definition of poverty.

This way of thinking about poverty considers where people live, since living costs can be different in different places. For example, in York, living costs are higher than in many other places in the country, so, relatively, what counts as "poverty" here might be different from other places.

Breaking the cycle of barrier-driven disadvantage

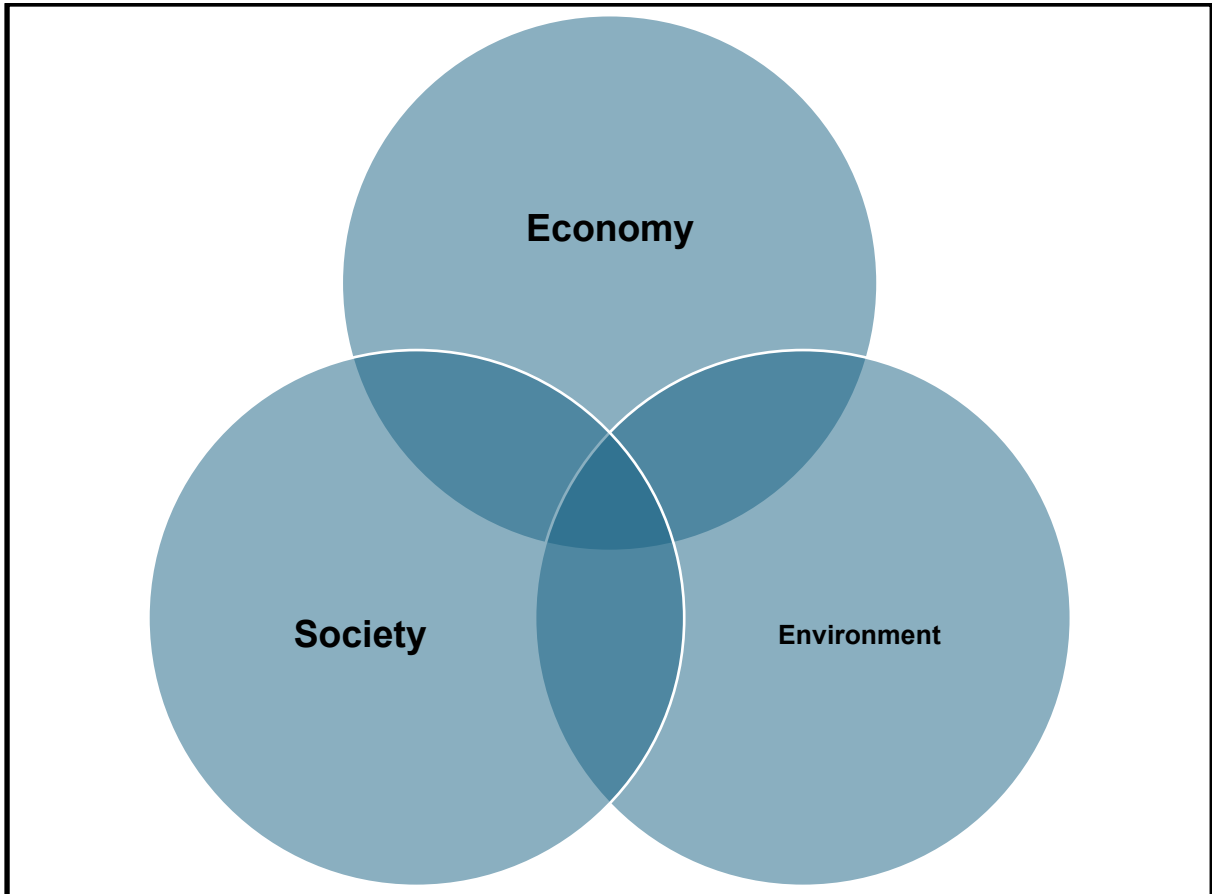
Poverty and disabling barriers reinforce each other. When transport, housing, employment, services and information aren't designed to be accessible or affordable, people face avoidable extra costs and obstacles. These external barriers, not a person's health condition, can trap people in poverty and intensify issues such as food insecurity or difficulties obtaining essential items.

City of York Council is committed to the social model of disability. We will continue to work with disabled residents and Disabled People's Organisations to identify, remove and prevent barriers now and over the long term. This includes: accessible design of streets, buildings and digital services, fair and affordable travel (including concessions and subsidies), support to access skills, training and good work, information in Easy Read, BSL and other formats, timely reasonable adjustments across all Council services and improved access to necessary aids, equipment and energy support.

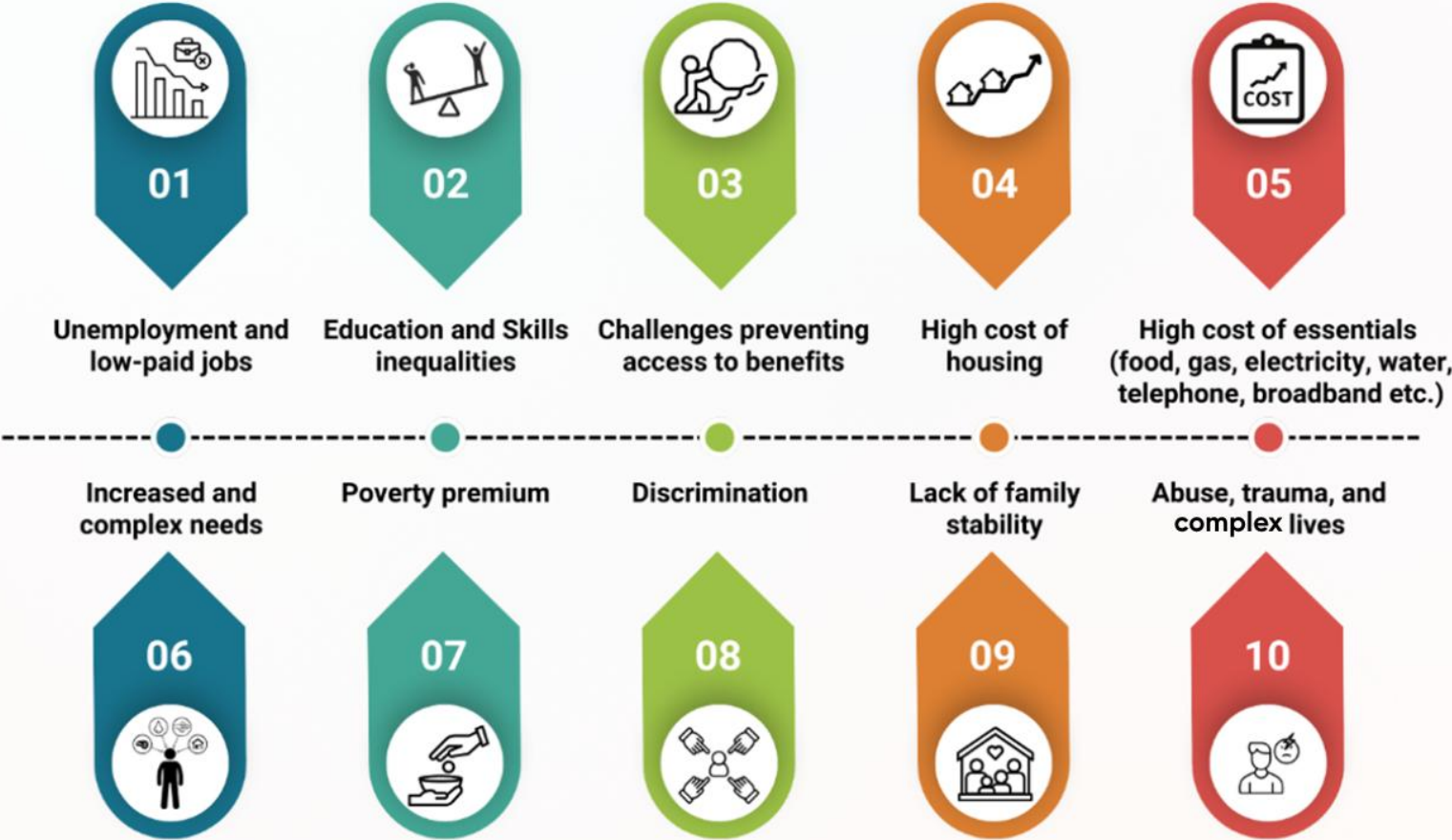
We will co-produce the next phase of our action plan with disabled people and report progress publicly so residents can see what's changing and when.

What Causes Poverty?

Poverty is a systemic issue. The economy, society, and the environment where people live act as overlapping drivers that create the conditions that cause poverty in people's lives. These causes, set out below, reduce the needs people have, or increase needs they cannot afford.



Causes of Poverty



Setting the Context of the Strategy

This strategy comes at a time when there are many long-term and emergent challenges at a global, national and local level. These exacerbate structural inequalities and hinder efforts to tackle the causes of poverty.

York does not stand in isolation. Global and national challenges, such as wars, pandemics and inflationary cost of living pressures impact on our ability to tackle localised issues. We have limited ways to offset these challenges given their scale and scope.

However, we also know there are unique issues to York that influence poverty levels in the city.

- We know that York has one of the highest costs of housing in the north of England with an affordability ratio of 8.5:1 (median house price to earnings ratio)
- The highest housing rental costs in the region – the average rent is nearly £300 per month more in York than the rest of the region (£1,006 v £722)
- Despite these housing costs, median gross weekly pay is only £40 above the regional average and below the national average
- There is a £180 wage gap between the 25 centile and median in York compared to £144 at a regional and £172 nationally, meaning lower paid residents in York are comparatively worse off than their counterparts elsewhere in the country

Despite these challenges, there remains hope and determination to create a better future, with a strong commitment to address the root causes of poverty.

This commitment is also part of a bigger global effort. Ending poverty in all its forms is the first goal of the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#).

At a national level, the UK Government has made tackling child poverty a priority. Across the country, local authorities are developing plans to reduce poverty, working together to find the best ways to make a difference in their communities.

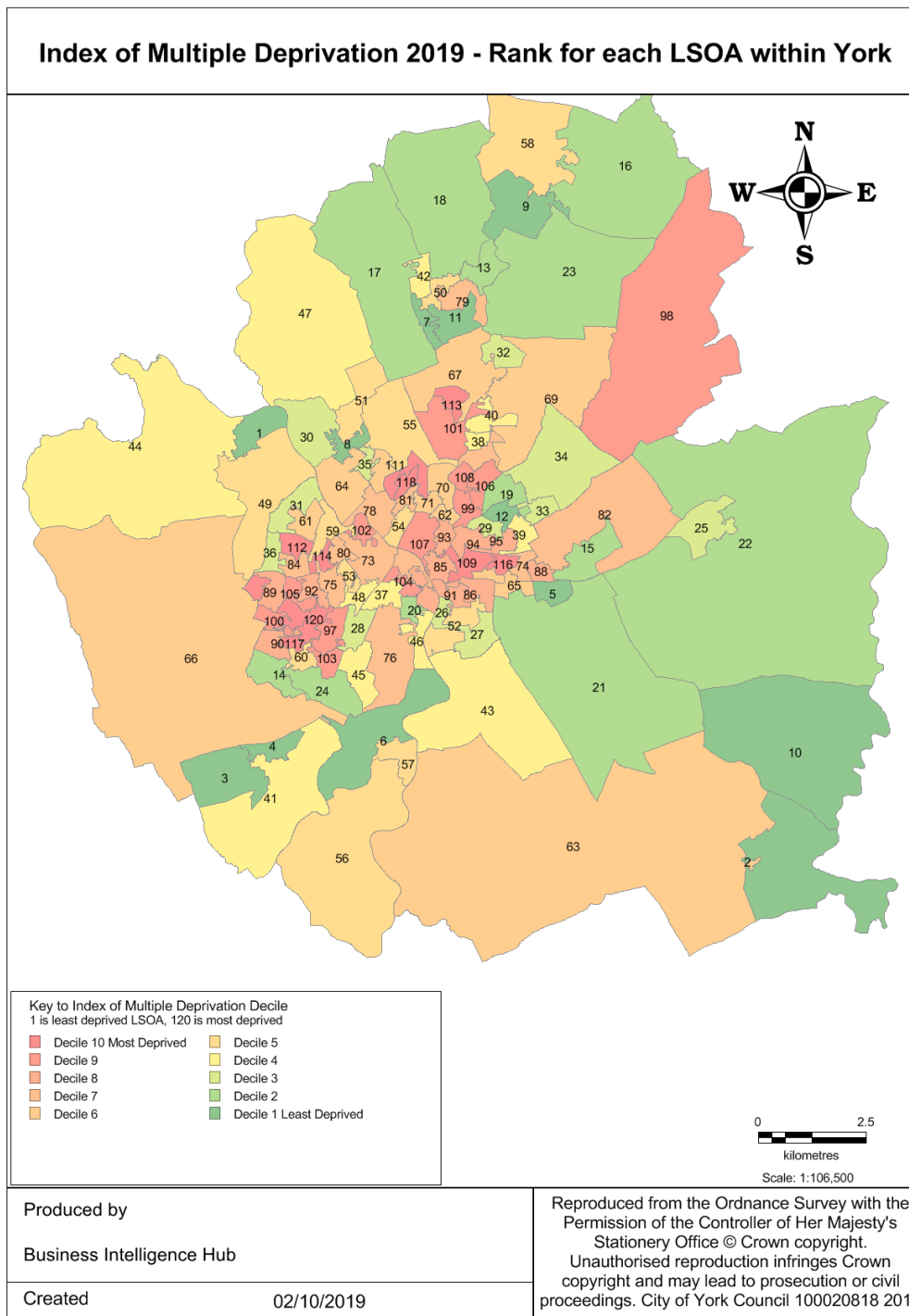
In our region, the Mayor for York and North Yorkshire wants to create "healthy and thriving communities" by focusing on economic growth, better skills, and affordable housing.

In this context, developing a plan to reduce poverty in York is both important and timely.

Poverty in York in 2025

Poverty, and its proxy deprivation, exists in all parts of York although it is more prevalent in some areas than others.

The below map indicates indices of multiple deprivation in the city. This considers seven measures of deprivation – income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing services, and the living environment. The darker the red the more deprived the ward, the darker the green the less deprived the ward.



The variable impact of poverty in the city is further reinforced by life expectancy variation for men with a 10-year difference in life expectancy between the poorest and richest wards in the city (6.71 years for women).

Whilst we cannot know the exact number of people living in poverty in York, through data insight provided by Policy in Practice we are able to provide an indicative poverty rate. This considers households below a selected income threshold, out all households in receipt of benefits.

The data (utilising information from national sources) in the table below is based on Relative Resources Gap (a measure used to assess poverty by considering not just income, but also other resources as defined on page 7 of this strategy).

Relative poverty is where an individual or household lack the resources to maintain a standard of living that is considered the norm of their society.

Deep poverty is where a household's income is significantly below the median household income, often defined as below 50% of the median.

Relative Resources Gap by ward in York			
	As of March 2025 (households)		
	At risk of poverty	In relative poverty	In deep poverty
All Wards	1,747	3,666	332
Acomb	80	112	19
Bishopthorpe	26	36	1
Clifton	115	303	34
Copmanthorpe	15	27	3
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	97	171	20
Fishergate	68	119	4
Fulford & Heslington	47	66	3
Guildhall	177	384	29
Haxby & Wiggington	52	91	7
Heworth	141	343	41

Heworth Without	10	26	2
Holgate	115	274	24
Hull Road	85	194	17
Huntington & New Earswick	136	242	14
Micklegate	140	259	23
Osbalwick & Derwent	43	102	7
Rawcliffe & Clifton Without	69	122	19
Rural West	44	82	2
Strensall	37	66	6
Westfield	232	617	55
Wheldrake	18	30	2

The table demonstrates that poverty is apparent across York but is more concentrated in certain wards. Westfield has the highest rate of relative and deep poverty but there is not one ward where poverty is not apparent.

We know that poverty is more evident for some groups of people than others. Looking at the same data, we know that:

- Those in receipt of universal credit are more likely to be in poverty than those who are not
- Working age people are much more likely to be in poverty than pensioners
- Those with in receipt of disability allowances are more likely to experience poverty
- Carers and lone parents are more likely to be in poverty
- Households with at least one child eligible for free school meals are likely to be in poverty and those with young children are the most likely to be in poverty

However, data only tells us so much about poverty and its impact on individuals and families.

Case Studies: Tang Hall Community Centre (courtesy of Two Ridings Community Foundation)

Tang Hall Community Centre's aim is to manage and maintain a vibrant, welcoming, community hub for the benefit of local residents in and around the Tang Hall area of York. The Centre, a registered 'Warm Space', is open seven days a week facilitating a joined-up approach to providing people with community-based support, social, educational and leisure activities, benefits and debt advice and help into training and employment.

The residential area surrounding the Centre includes streets of social housing which fall within the country's 10% most deprived areas. The current cost of living crisis has created an exponential growth in the demand for support from local people who are struggling to cope financially and emotionally. The Centre operates a community café, hosts a number of tenant organisations and coordinates on-site distribution of free food parcels and essentials for people living in poverty.

The magical ripple effect of sharing food together

Tang Hall Community Centre received £3,000 through Cost-of-Living funding from Bettys & Taylors Group to put towards their core costs and provide food in their warm space. The funding of the community canteen has brought about a transformative ripple effect, positively impacting the community they serve. The financial support enabled them to broaden their outreach and enhance the quality of services provided, creating a nurturing space that extends far beyond the simple act of serving meals.

First and foremost, the funding allowed them to expand on their busy food bank by offering an alternative, calmer and supportive sit-down meal.

Food leads to friendship and more

This provides an atmosphere where the staff and volunteers can genuinely listen to their community and get to know them much better. This connection not only elevates the dining experience for the people coming along, but also fosters a sense of community pride as the Centre creates something special - magical almost - where people from various backgrounds come together to share a meal.

Moreover, the additional resources have empowered them to implement community programs and events. From nutrition workshops, music events, and themed nights to cooking classes. The positive impact of these initiatives are highlighted through the changes we see in the people we support.

Supporting a new mum | Lisa's story

Lisa had a newborn child and did not know anyone in the area. She started to attend the community canteen and has made the centre a second home for herself and her child. The staff have seen her open up about her problems whilst attending the community canteen. They have supported her whilst she overcomes some of the issues she faces. She knows that there is somewhere where she is always welcome.

Allowing us to look after her | Gina's story

The community cafe is one hour a week where she can switch off and have us look after her. She has really opened up and has made some new friends. This simple act of kindness is a lifeline for someone who is struggling and feeling alone. Gina has lived on the same street as the centre all her life and had never been in. A neighbour of hers had suggested that she come to the centre for some respite as she is a full-time carer for her husband and was suffering from depression.

Alleviating loneliness | Ralph's story

Ralph, like so many people, is lonely and does not have the money to get out and about. The community cafe is a place where he comes to socialise and chat with other people. Several times he has told staff that in between weeks he simply did not see other people to talk to. A highlight for Ralph was to share a simple meal over the weekend with someone he met at the community canteen in his own home.

"In essence, the financial support from the Cost-of-Living fund has transformed our community cafe into more than just a place to eat; it has become a catalyst for positive change. With a quality menu, diverse programmes, and an inviting atmosphere, the cafe has emerged as a cornerstone for community development, fostering connections, and empowering individuals on their journey towards a brighter future."

Stephen Collins, Manager at Tang Hall Community Centre

Strategic Framework

This strategy does not sit in isolation.

In 2022, local partners came together to set a 10-year vision to make York a “vibrant, prosperous, welcoming, and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success.” This vision was broken down into five elements: health and wellbeing, education and skills, economic growth, transport, and sustainability.

Sitting behind this were 10-year strategies focused on climate change, York’s economy, and health and wellbeing. This has been reinforced by the development of a Movement and Place Plan that will lead to sustainable, active, affordable transport systems in the city.

The Council Plan (2023-27) and partner strategies are also seen through the prism of the 2032 vision. Indeed, this framework has been used to underline the ambitions of the city, not least in the work to inform York’s growth in response to the opportunities set out within the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (such as the Local Growth Plan) but also at a national level with government.

In December 2024, the Council’s Executive approved Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024-29. The Strategy will guide work in this area over the next five years and will seek to enlist partners, stakeholders and citizens in a plan to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The Strategy builds on existing successes and partnerships, offering pathways to suitable housing that can be sustained with high quality, person-centred support. This sits alongside Council priorities around building 100% affordable homes on council land, and insulating thousands of homes to combat cost of living impacts.

York 2032 provides a framework to identify opportunities to tackle poverty in the city – especially given the connection between the drivers of poverty (economy, environment, society) as well as take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Combined Authority and elsewhere.

York 2032 Strategy and Policy Framework

Our vision

York will be a vibrant, prosperous, welcoming and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success.

A city where history meets the future.

Priorities and Goals

<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>All York residents (young, old and future residents) will enjoy happier, healthier, longer lives, in homes that meet their needs, able to actively participate in their communities, with access to the right support at the right time.</p>	<p>Education and Skills</p> <p>All ages will have access to learning throughout their lives to equip them with the skills to succeed commercially, socially, locally and nationally.</p>	<p>Economic Growth</p> <p>York's economy will be vibrant and inclusive, with businesses supported to grow and prosper and talent nurtured, retained and supported. Our economy will be developed to be well balanced with a mix of different sectors providing opportunities for young and old.</p>	<p>Transport</p> <p>York's transport networks will be inclusive and sustainable, connecting neighbourhoods and communities.</p>	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>York will be carbon neutral and contribute to the regional ambition to be carbon negative, with iconic green spaces to enjoy today and the environment protected for future generations to enjoy.</p>
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Movement and Place Plan 2023–2040

Health and Wellbeing Strategy
2022–2032

Economic Growth Strategy
2022–2032

Climate Change Strategy
2022–2032

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policies set the context. Policies typically include SMART objectives and/or targets. The Council's Executive approves council policy and related budget, with city partner's own governance arrangements responding to their own strategies and policies. Council Policies are called Plans, for example the Local Plan, the Local Transport Plan, the Council Plan, etc.

ACTION PLANS

Action plans set out the city partner's actions to deliver the vision and goals in the 10-year Plan and related 10-year strategies. City Partners own actions plans will respond (in part) to the priorities.

At the same time, whilst recognising our ability to influence national and global challenges are limited, the strategy will adapt and evolve to global and national policy such as the emergent UK Child Poverty Strategy and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Strategic Action Plan

Poverty hurts people and the whole community. It makes it harder for people to stay healthy, go to school or work, and live a life which is free from hardship or financial difficulties, which in turn can cause problems in society.

We know poverty affects some groups of people more than others. Because of this, not everything in our plan will help everyone in the same way. Some of our actions are focused on helping those who are most in need although poverty can and does have an impact across all of society.

The groups most affected by poverty include children, families (particularly those with multiple children), single-parent families, and people who have unstable incomes because of unemployment or low wages. Disabled people, those living in rented homes, and some minority ethnic groups also often face higher rates of poverty.

Our Strategic Objectives are designed to bring results both in the short term and in the long term. These objectives should not be seen in isolation; they build on each other and happen at the same time. They aim to solve immediate problems while also setting up solutions for the future.

Each strategic objective looks at the causes of poverty. By addressing these causes, we hope to find opportunities to tackle the long-term issues that lead to poverty.

Strategic Objective One - Tackling poverty today

Focuses on the actions being taken to help people who are currently living in poverty or are at risk of falling into it.

Strategic Objective Two - Preventing people from falling into poverty

Focuses on actions that can help lift people out of poverty and stop more people from falling into it.

Strategic Objective Three - Turning the tide to create long-lasting change

Making long-term changes to create a fairer and more affordable York for everyone.

Strategic Delivery Plan

Strategic Objective One: Tackling Poverty Today

We are currently working on different actions to help people who live in poverty or are close to falling into it.

Challenge	Examples of what we'll do and are already doing	Lead CYC officer (inc working in conjunction with partners where needed)
Challenges preventing access to benefits		
Maximising income for individuals	Working in partnership, utilising data tools and spatial mapping, to find people who are eligible for support and contacting them through the Council's services.	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Finance
Using government schemes like the Household Support Fund (to be replaced by the Crises and Resilience Fund from April 2026)	Administering funding through Council processes, ensuring a cash first approach reaches those in greatest need	Director of Finance
Ensuring access to the right information	Working with partners to guide people to the right services and support, using data analysis to develop targeted campaigns for identified groups.	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Finance

	Continuing to support the Advice York Network to work together and access grant funding agreements where appropriate	
Providing digital support	Recognising that many services are now online, continue to work with organisations like York Explore to help those without technology or confidence use digital services, and support delivery of Digital Friendly York as a Community Interest Company	Director of Housing and Communities
Education and skills inequalities		
Helping children start their day right	Providing free primary school meals in Westfield, Burton and Fishergate Schools and continue to analyse its impact within Schools Poverty Framework	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Creating a basic foundation to be universally considered and applied in schools and community to reduce the impact of poverty	Ensuring every child feels a strong sense of belonging through equality and equity including activity to support:	Corporate Director of Children and Education

	<p>School uniform affordability and accessibility</p> <p>Accessible and affordable trips and activities</p> <p>Consideration of community needs</p> <p>Trauma informed responses to issues in schools</p> <p>Accessibility of wraparound care</p> <p>Availability of stationary, technology and broadband</p> <p>And bridging the gap between primary and secondary school as more resources are needed to support specialist subject delivery</p>	
Supporting entry-level and basic skills provision	Offering community outreach through York Learning to help with skills like maths, English, digital skills, ESOL and job readiness	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Improving advice and support to access skills	Helping people, especially those hard to reach, to get information and support to improve their skills	Director of City Development

	including via regular skills and employment events	
Increasing and supporting apprenticeships	Creating more opportunities for all those looking to start careers, reskill and upskill and considering the role of work experience and the work on the Gatesby benchmarks in schools	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Addressing generational poverty	Review outcomes from The Place at Sanderson House, Family Hub and Family First pilots	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Unemployment and low-paid jobs		
Promoting fair wages and good work conditions	Supporting the Good Business Charter and the real Living Wage ensuring that the Council continues to be accredited and works with others to support their accreditation journey	Director of City Development
Making transport to work affordable	Working with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to continue to offer reduced bus fares in the city	Director of Environment and Regulatory Services
Helping veterans in poverty	Continue to advance the Council's Armed Forces Covenant commitment	Director of Housing and Communities

	and advocacy to ensure veterans get the support they need	
Supporting disadvantaged communities into work	Promoting job schemes for disabled people and dementia-friendly employment.	Director of City Development
Training support	Offer opportunities to secure training that is relevant to the local job market aligned to local economic strategy and the YNYCA's ambitions	Director of City Development
High cost of housing		
Reducing energy costs in homes	Continuing to upgrade social housing with energy-saving improvements	Director of Housing and Communities
Providing warm spaces	Running the Warm Places programme to give people somewhere warm and supportive in winter.	Director of Housing and Communities
Supporting the homeless and rough sleeping communities of York	Implementing the homelessness and rough sleeper strategy including adopting a housing first approach to homelessness with the provision of housing support multidisciplinary teams	Director of Housing and Communities

High Cost of Essential Goods		
Supporting food banks	Directing people to food banks when in need and providing support to them	Director of Housing and Communities
Providing access to digital services	Working with groups like the York Community Furniture Store to offer affordable technology.	Director of Housing and Communities
Helping with energy costs	Providing practical, financial and accessible support for people looking to lower their energy bills through home improvement and efficiency measures	Director of Housing and Communities
Increased and complex needs		
Improving health for people in poverty	Promoting public health programmes to encourage healthier lifestyles (healthy, affordable eating, alcohol misuse, smoking cessation etc) and collaborating with partners and providers to addresses health challenges in the city	Director of Public Health
Reducing loneliness and isolation caused by poverty	Building on York's expertise in Local Area Coordination and social prescribing, identifying the wrap around support that can be vital to an	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Public Health

	individual's wellbeing through the Neighbourhood model	
Addressing health service barriers	Making it easier for people in poverty to access health services through integrated community health and neighbourhood model	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Public Health
Poverty premium		
A "cash first" approach	Offering direct payments to individuals facing hardship, rather than relying solely on in-kind support like food parcels. This approach aims to give individuals more autonomy and control over how they meet their needs, allowing them to purchase what they require most, including food, clothing, or other essentials.	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Finance
Finding sustainable finance solutions	Working with organisations like Credit Unions to help people access safe loans and savings accounts whilst also helping people to access benefits that they are entitled to and good employment opportunities	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Finance

Providing affordable goods	Collaborating with partners to provide access to affordable goods, fuel and food and alignment to work of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group	Director of Housing and Communities and Director of Finance
Discrimination		
Implementing and embed the social model of disability in our working practices	Providing elected Members and officers with appropriate Disability Equality Training, ensuring	Director of Housing and Communities
Acknowledging particular challenges facing some parts of our community in accessing support	Working with groups like the York Carers Centre, refugee communities, and disability and LGBT groups to understand their needs and provide support.	Director of Housing and Communities
Listening to the voices of young people when discussing issues such as poverty	By giving them a voice through our Children and Young People's Plan and Children's Rights Co-Production tool kit and via organisations such as Health Watch and its Core Connectors Report 2025	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Lack of family stability		
Providing early help for families in need	Delivery of the Early Help Strategy and RAISE York Family Hubs programme which prioritises	Corporate Director of Children and Education

	addressing poverty and the cost of living	
Abuse, trauma and complex lives		
Taking a trauma-informed approach	Continue to implement a trauma informed approach to customer relations, ensuring all staff recognise the challenges some people face and the impact this has on their interactions	Director of Housing and Communities
Embed the Council's Managing Customer Relations policy	Continue to embed the Managing Customer Relations policy in council activity aligning to the Poverty Truth Commission Organisational Standards	Chief Officer – HR and Support Services
Tackling domestic abuse	Working with partners to implement the North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy (2024-2028) to ensure early intervention and support for those experiencing domestic abuse. Continuing toward DAHA accreditation in housing services	Director of Public Health and Director of Housing and Communities

Supporting carers	Engaging with the Carer Forum and support organisations to make sure carers have the help they need	Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Integration
Continued implementation and promotion of the Poverty Truth Commission Organisational Standards	Embedding in Council customer policies and the Neighbourhood Practice Model, and promoting with city partners	Director of Housing and Communities

Case Study: Helping Bobby find stability and belonging (Courtesy of the City of York Council)

Bobby had spent years living in a van with his dog after leaving prison. He didn't want to live in a hostel and had never had a tenancy of his own. Life on the streets was taking a toll on his health and wellbeing; he had no proper access to water, wasn't registered with a GP, and wasn't getting the benefits he was entitled to. He found out about a local drop-in through word of mouth and started attending regularly. Over time, he built up trust with the Local Area Coordinator (LAC) and others in the community. They listened to what he wanted, not just what the system could offer. With support, Bobby registered with a GP and applied for the right benefits. He was later introduced to housing officers who respected his wish not to go into hostel accommodation. Instead, he was offered a temporary bed in a quiet building, followed by his first ever home of his own. The local community had been quietly gathering essential household items for Bobby, and he was overwhelmed by their kindness when he collected them. Now settled in his new area, he's giving back, offering to help others move furniture and staying in touch with the drop-in group that helped him.

Bobby's story shows how listening, building trust, and working at someone's pace can help tackle poverty in a meaningful way; by giving people control, safety, and a sense of belonging.

Strategic Objective Two: Preventing people from falling into poverty

We're working to help people who are struggling with money now, and we're also trying to fix the bigger problems that cause poverty, so fewer people end up in difficult situations.

Challenge	Examples of what we'll do and are already doing	Lead CYC officer (inc where working in conjunction with partners)
Challenges preventing access to benefits		
Make sure people know where to get help	Work with groups like the Financial Inclusion Steering Group to guide people to the right advice and support	Director of Housing and Communities
Education and skills inequalities		
Work with the YNYCA to identify areas of focus to support those inactive in the labour force	Securing funding for York programmes within the recently announced Trailblazer fund	Director of City Development
Help people in York get good, stable jobs	Make sure people are learning the right skills for growing job areas and connect them with employers	Director of City Development
Help people who find it hard to get a job (like young people not in school or training, and people over 55)	Through targeted support programmes, including those funded via the MCA's Trailblazers	Director of City Development

	programme or UKSPF, and successive funded programmes.	
Support financial education programmes	Working with partners in the city to utilise volunteer days and other mechanisms to teach residents of all ages about financial management techniques	Director of Housing and Communities
Extending free primary school meals	Continuing the roll out through the city as part of both local and national schemes	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Addressing generational poverty	Providing education access, including things like school uniforms, broadband, and after-school clubs	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Unemployment and low-paid jobs		
Explore options to reduce the need for expensive personal vehicles to get to work or education	Working constructively with schools, developers and employers, as part of implementing a Movement and Place Plan, to encourages greater walking, wheeling and cycling to places of education and work and encouraging greater take up of sustainable public transport options.	Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services

Explore options to reduce the cost of travelling to work	Encouraging businesses and organisations operating within the city to reduce their transport footprint through the introduction of staff travel plans and sustainable travel options to work	Director of City Development
Make sure job training matches what local jobs need	Connect local training with future job opportunities	Director of City Development
Enable employment opportunities for parents with childcare needs	Work with childcare providers to support working parents	Corporate Director of Children and Education
High cost of housing		
Develop housing that meets environmental needs and reduces bills for residents	Delivering new affordable homes across the city on council-owned land to Passivhaus standard, reducing energy costs	Director of Housing and Communities
Support people to own their home	Building more affordable homes and working with developers to develop more affordable housing across the city	Director of Housing and Communities
Make rented homes more energy efficient	Talk to landlords to make sure rental homes use less energy	Director of Housing and Communities
High cost of essential goods		

Create low-cost sustainable public travel routes	Seeking funding for and set challenging targets for increased bus network coverage, ensuring all low-income areas are appropriately served, as part of the wider Local Transport Strategy	Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services
Identify digital inclusion opportunities	Work with organisations across the city to provide access to skills, support and training in addition to access to hardware.	Director of Housing and Communities
Reduce the cost of energy	Providing new renewable energy generation	Director of Housing and Communities
Increased and complex needs		
Coordinate support for families of children with Special Educational Needs	Continue to implement the SEND Hub	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Poverty premium		
Support all young people to be able to access cultural and creative opportunities providing them with inspiration and educational opportunities	Implementing the cultural passports programme funded through the Mayoral Investment Fund that enables young people to access cultural opportunities and provides a wider benefit to families to recognise	Director of Housing and Communities

	the opportunities that the culture and heritage of York provides	
Lack of family stability		
Work with the Government to reduce child poverty	Respond to the Government's new Child Poverty Strategy when it's released and advocate York's children	Corporate Director of Children and Education

Case Study: Helping people into work through confidence and skills (Courtesy of the Two Ridings Community Foundation)

Good Organisation is a social enterprise in York that supports people who are at risk of falling into poverty, particularly those facing homelessness, addiction, or other barriers to work.

With help from local funding, they run a programme that builds confidence and teaches people the skills they need to apply for jobs. This includes writing CVs, practising interviews, exploring different types of work, and getting support to move into employment or training.

Importantly, the programme also removes hidden costs that can make it hard for people to take part, such as travel expenses, mobile data, or suitable clothing for job interviews.

Workshops are held in safe, familiar places to help people feel at ease, and everything is tailored to each person's needs and goals. Some people go on to find jobs, others start volunteering or access further education, but everyone gains confidence and new skills.

This support helps stop people from falling further into poverty by opening the door to long-term opportunities and a more secure future.

Strategic Objective Three: Turning the tide to create long-lasting change

This part of our plan looks at big changes that need to happen over time to really make a difference in ending poverty. Some things are starting now but will take time to show results, while others are long-term ideas to help York and its people in the future.

Challenge	Example of what we'll do and are already doing	Lead CYC officer (inc where working in conjunction with partners)
Challenges preventing access to benefits		
Work with the Government and others to make sure people get the support they need	Build strong links with the Government and take part in national discussions about what support should look like	Chief Strategy Officer
Education and skills inequalities		
Reduce long-term unemployment and inactivity in the city	Work with YNYCA and government to implement lessons learnt from trailblazer and deliver long term skills provision for York Work with YNYCA to identify space for new employment / commercial premises including delivering an	Director of City Development

	<p>inward investment campaign to attract anchor institutions into the city.</p> <p>Deliver the York Central business district, attracting 10k new jobs into the city, including the Innovation Hub for well paid jobs and the GPA building for civil service Departments relocation.</p>	
Creating the space for people to learn new skills	Working with providers and the YNYCA to enhance the offer for people looking to learn and upskill, eg. construction skills centre and the Innovation Hub on York Central	Director of City Development
Unemployment and low-paid jobs		
Ensure organisations contribute to the societal wellbeing of the city	Implementing a social value outcome framework for procurement / contracting that considers the holistic needs of York in addition to monetary value of contracts, sharing the framework with city partners to make the most of our collective purchasing power.	Chief Strategy Officer

Help social enterprises grow (businesses that help people and communities)	Working with organisations to identify mechanisms that can support social enterprise, including supporting business growth activities funded through YNYCA UKSPF programme, encouraging greater community wealth building opportunities through the social value outcome framework	Director of City Development
Create sustainable, affordable transport systems into York and within the wider region	Fully implementing York's Transport Strategy to provide a holistic, sustainable transport offer that is affordable for all residents	Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services
Support the development of jobs that meet the needs of residents	Promoting the benefits of flexible working to employers and celebrating York as a Good Business Charter City, encouraging more businesses to improve working conditions.	Director of City Development
High cost of housing		
Develop and build out sites for affordable housing across the city	Implementing the Local Plan, working with YNYCA to secure funding and support for these programmes	Director of City Development
Address rental prices in the city	Advocating for a review of the Broad Rental Market Area	Director of City Development

Continued role of the Council as a social landlord	Ensuring the Council continues to promote viable, efficient, affordable housing that meets the needs of tenants	Director of Housing and Communities
Provide community infrastructure that is free and accessible to all	Utilising developer contributions via mechanisms such as Community Infrastructure Levy, to contribute towards vital infrastructure such as health, transport, schools and playparks/open space that reflect the needs of communities	Director of City Development
High cost of essential goods		
Create local energy solutions to lower household bills	Secure funding to build local energy projects to help people save on bills	Director of Housing and Communities
Support sharing and reuse in the community (called the circular economy)	Support things like repair cafés, tool libraries, and food sharing centres. Create a plan to help York use less and waste less	Director of Housing and Communities
Increased and complex needs		
Redraw the health and wellbeing map of York to focus more on local need	Implementing the Neighbourhood Model and working with organisations such as the Integrated Care Board and community partners to reshape	Director of Public Health

	health and wellbeing for local community needs	
Reduce longer-term health issues in the city	Implementing early intervention and prevention initiatives, including consideration of disability, that get upstream of health and wellbeing issues that contribute to and symptom of poverty	Director of Public Health

Case Study: Building lasting opportunities through social enterprise (Courtesy of the Two Ridings Community Foundation)

Chocolate & Co is a York-based social enterprise helping people rebuild their lives after experiences like homelessness, addiction or time in prison. By offering hands-on training, support and paid employment in a city centre café, they’re creating long-term opportunities for people who are often excluded from work.

The support is practical and personal; people learn barista and customer service skills, gain qualifications like food hygiene, and get help with things like travel, ID and counselling. The goal is not just to provide a job, but to build confidence and a future.

Many go on to work at the café or move into other jobs locally. Chocolate & Co also works with other employers to create more chances for those with lived experience to succeed.

As a social enterprise, it reinvests in people and the community; making it a strong example of how York can grow local businesses that do good while supporting the local economy.

This work is already having an impact, and over time it will help York create a fairer, more inclusive economy that gives everyone a chance to thrive.

How Progress Will Be Monitored

This strategy is shared and supported by different groups and organisations in York. The City of York Council has endorsed it on behalf of the city.

The Financial Inclusion Steering Group will lead monitoring the strategy's progress. They will check if the actions are being delivered and if things are improving, using the indicators listed below and considering the real-world application of this strategy's approach.

We will develop an Annual Action Plan with the Financial Inclusion Steering Group, and annually review of indicators, approved by Executive Member Decision Session.

The Council, through its regular reporting mechanisms, will also review the strategy to make sure it's working and fit for purpose.

Indicators

We'll keep track of the causes and impacts of poverty in York by reviewing performance indicators in addition to keeping an overview of indicative poverty levels as identified in this strategy over time.

In addition, the Financial Steering Group will monitor progress against the actions we take, looking at eligibility and engagement in the different programmes to support people.

We will learn from the lived experience of people experiencing poverty, or at risk of poverty to understand how this changes over time.

Indicative performance measures
Median earnings of residents - Gross Weekly Pay (£)
Gross Disposable Household Income (£ per head of population)
Earnings gap between the 25 percentile and the median (£) (York)
Housing affordability (median house prices to earnings ratio)
Price Index of Private Rents, UK – Monthly Price - as a percentage of median monthly salary - 2 bed property
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)
Number of affordable homes
Free school breakfasts delivered in schools

