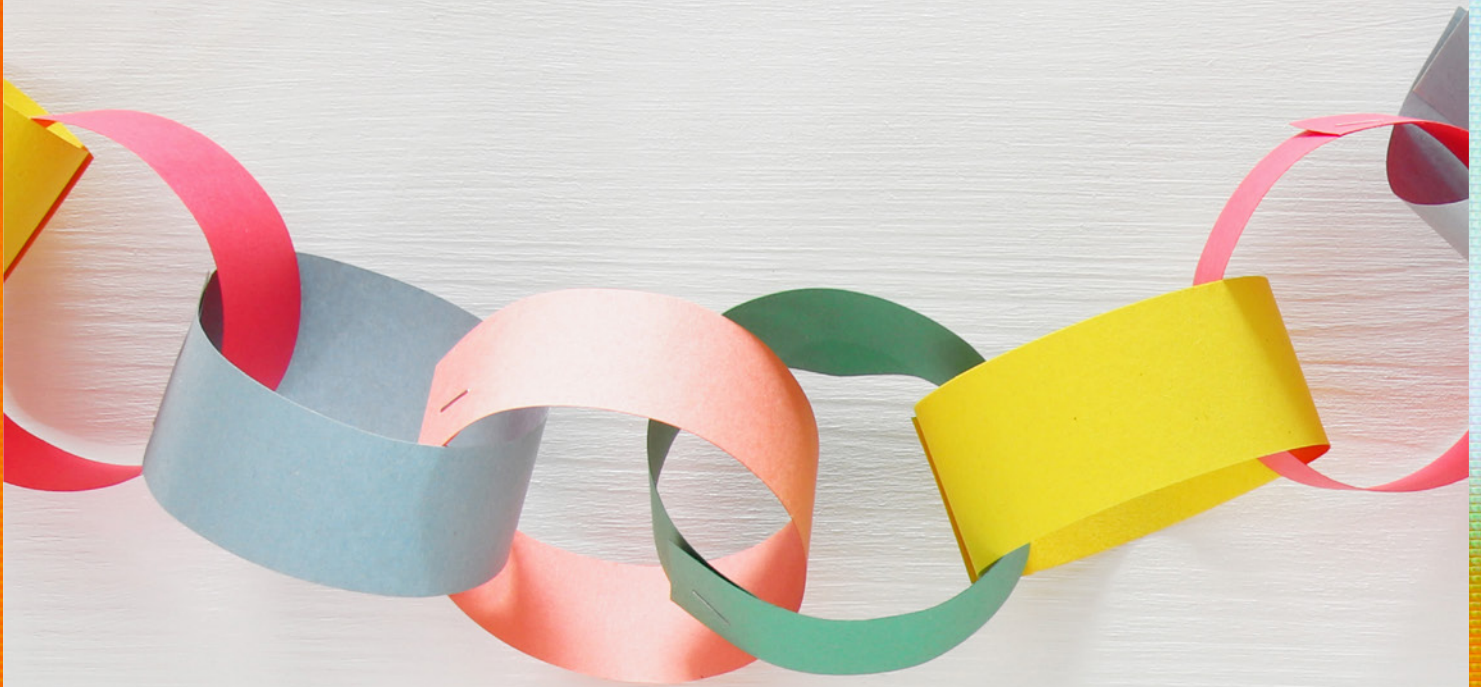


# Hull Poverty Truth Commission Evaluation Report

*“The project wasn’t a paint job.  
It was an engine switch.”*



November 2024

*Dr Gill Hughes  
Dr Juan Pablo Winter*



# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	04
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	06
<b>Glossary of key terms</b> .....	07
<b>Foreword</b> .....	08
<b>Introduction</b> .....	10
<b>Chapter 1.</b>	
<b>Evaluation approach:</b> “We’re only vulnerable if you choose to make us vulnerable...” .....	12
1.1 TPE & Participatory Action Research (PAR) – The Ethos .....	12
1.2 PAR & Evaluation Challenges... and how we dealt with them .....	14
Positionality .....	14
1.3 Evaluation methods .....	15
<b>Chapter 2.</b>	
<b>Introducing Hull and the context of poverty:</b> “They’re not stories. They’re really painful truths” .....	16
2.1 Kingston Upon Hull .....	16
2.2 Hull and Poverty: demographics, facts, and figures .....	17
2.2.1 Understanding poverty .....	20
2.2.2 Measuring poverty .....	22
2.2.3 Experiencing poverty .....	24
The Joseph Rowntree UK Poverty Report 2024 .....	24
Poverty-related stigma and how language matters .....	24
In-work poverty in the UK .....	27
2.3 What is a Poverty Truth Commission? .....	28
<b>Chapter 3.</b>	
<b>Setting the HPTC:</b> “We had the mission and the ambition (to make a difference)” .....	30
3.1 Charting the origins of the HPTC .....	30
3.1.1 The passion behind setting up the HPTC – Councillors and Council Officers meeting of minds .....	31
3.1.2 Commissioning the tender to convene the HPTC .....	33
3.2 The people involved, their roles and expectations of HPTC .....	34
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	
<b>Time to build relationships:</b> “Take off the lanyards” .....	38
4.1 Principles adopted for the HPTC .....	38
4.1.1 The Facilitators and Facilitation Process .....	39
4.2 Welcoming hospitality and storytelling – in safe and brave spaces .....	40
4.3 The Lundy Model .....	41
4.4 TTRREEE: Time, Trust, Relationships, Ethical, Equitable, Engagement to shift power and change systems .....	43

<b>Chapter 5:</b>	
<b>How much did we do?</b> “A strong foundation for moving forward” .....	50
5.1 The process is as, if not more, than the product .....	50
5.2 Showcasing the HPTC .....	53
5.2.1 The launch event .....	53
5.2.2 The film.....	54
5.2.3 The Awakening event .....	54
5.2.4 The exhibition .....	56
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	
<b>Is Anyone better off?</b> .....	58
6.1 Theme 1: Cost of living .....	61
6.1.1 Housing .....	61
Removal of carpets from Council properties .....	61
Supported accommodation .....	63
6.1.2 Food provision .....	65
6.1.3 In-work poverty .....	65
6.1.4 Systems and practices that cost people money .....	66
6.2 Theme 2: Access to healthcare .....	66
6.2.1 Mental health .....	66
6.3 Theme 3: Navigating systems and services .....	70
6.3.1 Services and attitudes .....	70
6.3.2 Committing to systems change .....	72
6.3.3 Lack of information and joined up services .....	73
6.3.4 Letters that impact .....	74
6.3.5 Amplifying voices .....	74
<b>Chapter 7:</b>	
<b>Facilitating change:</b> “It’s been an eye-opener” .....	76
7.1 “We’ve been humanised’ .....	76
7.2 Commitment to organisational change .....	78
<b>Chapter 8:</b>	
<b>Links to other initiatives:</b> Building a movement of System changers .....	80
<b>Chapter 9:</b>	
<b>Conclusions, Learnings and Recommendations:</b>	
“These commissioners have paved the way” .....	84
9.1 Learning to take forward .....	86
9.2 Recommendation .....	89
9.3 Conclusion .....	94
<b>References</b> .....	96
<b>Appendix: HPTC Terms of Reference</b> .....	98

# Executive summary

The first Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC) was completed in July 2024. However, the commissioners and facilitators feel that **this is just the beginning**. The HPTC has inspired a major cultural shift to ensure that people who experience the impact of decisions should be part of the decision-making process. This evaluation report shows how a **‘new business as usual’ is unfolding** and speaks to the statement that the Poverty Truth Network (PTN) embraced:

**Nothing about us, without us, is for us.**

**Hull City Council commissioned the HPTC and the evaluation**, which was to record what was learned from the first HPTC. They took a brave step in commissioning a project that is not prescribed but is emergent and, as such, this offered the key ingredient for the commission to work - time. The ongoing evaluation process operated alongside the commission as part of the unique two-year-long journey informed by Participatory Action Research's (PAR) values. Both the project and the evaluation align with the ethos, which underpins the creation of a long-term relationship between the people involved - the community commissioners (people who have experienced poverty) and civic commissioners (people in roles that can work towards alleviating poverty), facilitators, the advisory group and evaluators. This was based on having time to build relationships through trust, commitment, and mutual respect, valuing each person's unique perspectives and contributions. Hence, this is not just an end of the project report but part of its extensive journey, which will continue into the next HPTC and the subsequent work that flows from this first HPTC.

Poverty Truth Commissions are set up to identify critical issues that create or compound experiences of poverty. They relate to the PTN model that is not about addressing one person's experience of poverty on an individual level but addressing the issue on a collective level. Thus, the story of the experience of poverty may arise out of an individual experience, but that experience is often commonplace to others, and as such, addressing the issue will benefit multiple people.

The first HPTC identified the new pioneers - the **community commissioners** - who have been calling for change in systems that do not meet their needs. They have been working with their newfound unexpected allies - the **civic commissioners** - the people with some power and influence in decision-making - who also saw the need for change. This was ably supported by the facilitators - people from the voluntary sector consortium, which convened the commission, whose commitment, skills and experience supported the development of a collaborative engagement between the two sets of commissioners.

The community commissioners chose the themes addressed in the HPTC before the civic commissioners joined the discussions—all three interlink and overlap. **The themes were 1) Cost of living, 2) Access to Healthcare and 3) Navigating systems and services.**

**The HPTC story has started to show substantial changes, which are unfolding as part of a longer-term process.** The key focal point is recognising that the process is as important as the product. Commitments have been made to make changes, which is great progress towards system change and power being shifted to ensure that people who experience poverty will be part of the decision-making process to challenge and change the current situation, evidence will show in this report that this is happening. Some of the changes being seen relate directly to individual change that benefits individuals, others to organisations or policy and system change, and others to all of the above.

**Changes in the cost of living** include the Local Authority Housing Review of tenancy agreement relating to carpet removal in the lease and the amendment of letters from the Supported Housing team (to include schedules of work for clarity), and the review of direct payments through task groups.

**Changes in access to healthcare (specifically mental health)** include the setup of a direct line from Mind to the crisis team so that Mind could get through quicker to a crisis practitioner, the increase of funding to Mind for more staff to answer the phone calls, the organising of a Mental Health working group leading to an event to understand the mental health services - specifically around how to access and what is available, and a booklet which has details about most organisations in the city that offer support.

**Changes to navigating systems and services** a lived experience worker funded through Changing Futures is now hosted by Forum (lead for the consortium that convened the commission). The worker will amplify voices of those seldom heard and develop good practice in coproduction. In progress is the development of a Kindness charter, to ensure that everyone, people who use services and those who provide them, works to be kind and understanding in encounters.

A list of **learnings and recommendations** is presented at the end of this document these include:

- Maintaining engagement with the current commissioners, who have valuable assets in experience, knowledge and skills to work alongside people who provide services to create ongoing change to build on what has been achieved.
- Follow up evaluation check ins in six and twelve months to look at progress.
- Developing poverty-proofing tools.
- Promoting EDI by inviting minoritised ethnic groups, young people, and other groups to be part of the next HPTC.

Most importantly, HPTC commissioners' message for future community commissioners is to take time to build relationships and be open to change.

# Acknowledgments

Thank you to all community and civic commissioners, facilitators, advisory group members, PTC network colleagues, and others who contributed to this report giving their time, reflections and commitment to the evaluation process and to the making of the film—we really appreciated your support and generosity.

## Community commissioners

TJ  
JD  
Julie  
Kirsti  
Sarah  
John  
Dena  
Abi and Rowan - support

## Facilitators

Pippa  
Kate  
Karen  
Andy

## Artists, filmmakers

Peter, Sally, Julia - My Pockets- film makers  
Paul and Rich - film makers  
Claire photographer [UoH]  
Saffi - artist  
Sean - artist  
Victoria and Dom - marketing

Thank you to Hull City Council for commissioning the evaluation, Y-PERN for enabling Juan to be part of the evaluation team, TJ for sharing her poem and My Pockets for allowing us to use the stills from the film in this report.

## Consortium

Forum CIO  
Absolutely Cultured  
Citizens Advice Hull and East Riding  
Cornerhouse  
EMS Ltd  
Goodwin Development Trust  
Groundwork  
Hull Community Church  
Hull CVS  
Hull Food Partnership  
Humber All Nations Alliance

## Civic commissioners and areas of

Julia – Local Authority/Public Health  
Mike – Hull City Council lead  
Paul – Statutory mental health  
Erica – Health and place  
Jenny – Voluntary sector mental health  
Julian - VCSE community resource hub  
Dave – Work and Pensions  
Debbie – Multiple Complex Needs

## Advisory Group

Sally  
Ali  
Michelle  
Hannah  
Linda  
Lucy  
Nathan  
Hester  
Dan  
Susan  
Sue  
Fay  
Gill

## Venues

Jubilee Church  
Oasis Community Church  
Marfleet Community Centre

# Glossary of key terms

**APPG:** All Party Parliamentary Group

**CAB:** Citizens Advice Bureau

**CPAG:** Child Poverty Action Group

**DWP:** Department for Work and Pensions

**GMPI:** Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

**HBAI:** Households Below Average Income

**HCC:** Hull City Council

**HJSNA:** Hull Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

**HPTC:** Hull Poverty Truth Commission

**IF:** Ideas Fund

**IMD:** Index of Multiple Deprivation

**JRF:** Joseph Rowntree Foundation

**MP:** Member of Parliament

**ONS:** Office for National Statistics

**OPHI:** Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

**PAR:** Participatory Action Research

**PTC:** Poverty Truth Commission

**TIP:** Trauma-Informed Practice

**TPE:** Transformative Participatory Evaluation

**TTREEE:** Time-Trust-Relationships-Ethics-Equitable-Engagement

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme

**UK:** United Kingdom

**VCSE:** Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

**Y-PERN:** Yorkshire & Humber Policy Engagement & Research Network

**Y-PIP:** Yorkshire & Humber Policy Innovation Partnership

People involved in the commission:

**Civic commissioners:** Business/Civic partners are expected to effect change in their own organisation where relevant and promote widely HPTC's work.

**Community commissioners:** People who have experienced poverty.

**Councillors:** Represent their ward and the people who live in it.

**Facilitators:** PTCs are set up in different ways. Some employ a coordinator, but in Hull, the Consortium identified four people to facilitate the process.

**HPTC Advisory Group:** Supported the identification of PTCs, development, design, delivery and implementation of HPTC. Its aim was to advise on the strategic direction of the HPTC.

**HPTC Consortium:** The Consortium is made up of 13 VCSE organisations who won the tender and helped coordinate the initial recruitment for the HPTC.

**PTN:** Poverty Truth Network. Supports established commissions creating opportunities to learn together.

# Foreword

I am seething  
 I want you to see me  
 Not through the lens of my pain  
 Not through the things that diminish me  
 Not through the things that have nearly finished  
 me  
 Cause pity to fall like ashes  
 Unasked for  
 A blanket of silence that covers us whole  
 Drowns hope  
 Drowns rage,  
 Drowns action like a still silent death of change

I want you  
 to really  
 See  
 Me

See my dreams  
 See how far and how wide and how deep we could go  
 See the land laid bare  
 jagged and sharp  
 filled with the crystal clear scarcity we share  
 The vast emptiness of what we all own  
 What we all scramble and Scrabble to keep and to hold  
 The futility, the lies dammed lies and illusion  
 Each of us separate and alone

See  
 Me  
 See yourself  
 In me  
 See yourself setting us free  
 See yourself leaving the table  
 The one cobbled together by others dropping crumbs  
 Dropping and dropping till we find ourselves buried  
 Find ourselves numb  
 See yourself and breathe  
 Breathe and let go

Burn the dragons to the ground and grow

a space  
 to breathe

We can want less  
 more  
 nothing  
 everything  
 We can be a phoenix together  
 We can burn and lay waste to what does not serve us  
 We can be the seed that is sown

But only together  
 This is not a path to tread alone

I'll bring the light,  
 you bring the tools  
 and together we'll  
 build a new thing with less and more  
 and we will be whole.

TJ, Community Commissioner

\*Poem written to be spoken aloud at the  
 "Awakening Event", July 2024.  
 To hear TJ recite the poem please visit the film  
<https://vimeo.com/997127971/fd1a115322>

# Introduction

This approach should be the new ‘business as usual.’

Leader of the City Council Cllr Mike Ross  
(Civic commissioner)

The first Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC) came to fruition in July 2024. However, there is a feeling among the commissioners and facilitators that this is just the beginning, hence the ending event was called The Awakening. Councillor Ross’s statement that the approach of the HPTC should become the new ‘business as usual’ represents a major cultural shift to ensure that people who experience the impact of decisions should be part of the decision-making process. This also stands for enhancing or creating policies, influencing practice and changing systems. This change will ensure that the way services are rolled out would be fully informed through engaging with the people who do and will experience them.

This evaluation report shows how this ‘new business as usual’ is unfolding and speaks to the statement embraced by the Poverty Truth Network (PTN):

*“Nothing about us,  
without us, is for us,”*

*“.. It identifies that lasting social change only happens when those who experience the struggle participate in generating that change.”*

(Poverty Truth Network website).

The evaluation report tells the story of the Hull version of the Poverty Truth Commission, offering evidence from people who testified to the importance of working more collaboratively to be effective and impactful, to shift power and change cultures and in turn systems to work towards alleviating poverty.

The Poverty Truth Commission model focuses on relational engagement between people who have experienced poverty (community commissioners) and people who are in roles that could address poverty and its many issues (civic commissioners). The process was facilitated to ensure listening happened to each other’s stories, through curiosity, sharing wisdom and building empathy, which forged the way to build trusting relationships, which enable difficult conversations to take place and to jointly find a way forward.

*“(PTCs) are about civic commissioners understanding what poverty is and how best to make decisions... (and) culture change is way more powerful.”*

(PTN lead)

The major achievement in this HPTC is **culture change**, which unfolded throughout the process with commitment to collaborative working. This is a major turning point for addressing issues and jointly identifying solutions that work for both people experiencing poverty and address systemic issues within organisations.

The evaluation will evidence change at individual, organisational, systems and policy levels. It will also point to social value of cultural change. The more concrete outcomes have the potential for economic change, all of which are contributing to alleviating poverty on a variety of levels.

PTCs are places where those transformational relationships are formed and nurtured. The Poverty Truth Network supports this work, there is a model to work from, but

each commission has its own identity and DNA. With being a community needs-led process it does mean that it is more difficult to predict what will happen and as such the evaluation mirrors the project with its organic and emergent process, which is enshrined in the African proverb:

*“If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.”*

Following this proverb, as this report will show, this was a key conduit, the facilitators followed this process to build successful relationships between the commissioners to enable change to happen. The HPTC has gone far and together by getting to know each person as a human, not a lanyard, a role, or a label. This is a common theme within the PTC movement: understanding people and their lives, whether community/civic Commissioner/facilitator or those in frontline services. Everyone has a context, and understanding this breaks down barriers, to enable change, which will be further discussed below and featured in the HPTC My Pockets video.

Consequently, Hull City Council needs to be commended for its arms-length oversight because this enabled the HPTC to take time, which is not always afforded to processes with deadlines, milestones, and outputs.

*“It was a big unknown developing the commission, but I was comfortable with the uncertainty – though internal systems wanted more certainty.”*

(Advisory Group)

The key to community engagement and participatory practice is time – time to build relationships, which creates trust, openness, and authentic collaboration. This has been the ethos of the facilitators: Pippa Robson, Kate Macdonald, Karen Tozer and, initially, Andy Coish.

*“Slowing down to speed up is key, once relationships of trust are built - actions then move much faster.”*

(Facilitator)

This is because of the strong bond formed in the process. The facilitators cultivated relationships with the community commissioners for six months before

the launch event to enable the group to bond and build trust using deep listening and storytelling exercises. This paid off and enabled the group to invite civic commissioners to join the discussions – representing a shift to more equitable power relationships. The process is as important as the product of the initiative. The HPTC sits alongside other initiatives in the city that put community first (see Chapter 8).

The evaluation process similarly developed over time, as noted, no-one really knew how the PTC would manifest – it is a coproduced organic process. This afforded time for the evaluators also to build trust and relationships with the commissioners, it has been both a privilege to be included in the sessions and vital in observing the unfolding process. For most of the meetings between the community and civic commissioners we (the evaluators) observed, took notes, and, as with everyone, we laughed and cried when hearing the experiences, and gave our opinions when required.

We also co-produced a short film and a HPTC exhibition (curated by one of the community commissioners), as further described in Chapter 5.

As noted above those involved felt this was just the beginning so the good news is that it has been announced that there will be two further commissions to follow, funded through the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This first commission offers an important working model from which to build, as will be detailed in this report, albeit new commissioners and new themes will be formulated to create its own identity.

We hope there is something for everyone in this report – those who enjoy background and those who like process and those who are keen to see what has changed.

We sincerely thank everyone involved, it has been an honour to be part of the HPTC and major thanks for everyone’s cooperation and support in the ongoing evaluation and the subsequent report and films.

**Gill Hughes and Juan Pablo Winter**

# Chapter 1. Evaluation approach:

“We’re only vulnerable if you choose to make us vulnerable..”

As noted above this evaluation was commissioned by Hull City Council (HCC) to record the learning from the first Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC). It has been in parallel to the commission and as such has also been relational and has taken time to emerge. This evaluation report is part of a unique two-year-long journey conducted using Transformative Participatory Evaluation (TPE) informed by the values and principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR)<sup>1</sup>. Its foundations align with the ethos of the Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) and respond to a long-term trusting relationship between all of the people involved valuing each person’s unique perspectives and contributions. Hence, this report is part of the HPTC’s extensive journey. As evaluators, we were welcomed into the meetings. It was made clear to the commissioners and visitors that our presence related to the evaluation of the process. Juan joined Gill in May 2023 and together we have been part of the experience of the HPTC.

## 1.1 Transformative Participatory Evaluation & Participatory Action Research – The Ethos

The evaluation relates to the values of Transformative Participatory Evaluation (TPE), drawing on elements from Participatory Action Research (PAR) described below. Like PAR, TPE aims to democratise social change and reflect on who controls the production of knowledge (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Conducting TPE is about acknowledging that

people do not need professional credentials everyone can contribute valuable expertise and insights to an evaluation process, and that those closest to an issue are generally those who know most about it. In TPE, not only is the distance between the evaluators and people engaged in the process broken down, it foregrounds the voices of those involved in the HPTC. In discussion with the PTN they focus on the stories of PTCs more so than quantifying change – recognising the process takes time to reveal the tangible actions, but importantly how the stories are key to change and especially what happens for the commissioners.

Following the PAR values, we developed this inclusive and democratic HPTC evaluation report by including and involving the community commissioners intensively, and the civic commissioners, facilitators, members of the advisory group to ensure the evaluation was ‘with’ them and not ‘on’ them. The HPTC (and, consequently, this evaluation report) is meant to be ‘transformative’ rather than ‘informative’, challenging traditional hierarchies and power dynamics and disrupting traditional distinctions between those who produce knowledge and those who are affected by that knowledge. The term ‘action’ in PAR refers to the active involvement of people that can be tangible (e.g. policy change) or transformational in the beliefs and perceptions of the people involved in the process (e.g. people feeling they gained confidence, skills, or agency). We believe the PTC process has achieved both and we aim to capture it in this report.

*“We expected to see the maturing of relationships in the city with open conversations on poverty and become embedded in the day-to-day jobs. People didn’t tend to talk about it or the structures, but we hoped it would become a language. We thought it would operate but maybe not go past policy. Still, it has influenced policy such as health inequalities and tangible areas like housing, mental health and the letter changes.”*

(PTC Advisory Group member)

*“(The best part was) having all people in the same room, and people living with poverty setting and driving the agenda.”*

(Civic commissioner)

PAR is more than research it is about a group of people who play an active and integral role in the iterative research/project cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002). Together, as happened in the HPTC, working practices were established to tackle problems caused by unequal social systems and to envision and implement alternatives (McIntyre, 2008; Cornish et al., 2023), which is the ambition of PTCs across the country. Sharing knowledge with people involved in PAR & TPE is a way to recognise and value different sources of knowledge, skills, experiences and resources. The knowledge and skills of the people involved are not just acknowledged, but they are the foundation of the process. This shift from a traditional top-down power dynamic to a co-construction of knowledge (Grant et al., 2008) is a crucial aspect of PAR creating a more equitable, relational experience – which this evaluation will show within the process of the HPTC. Overall, PAR is rooted in deep, trusting, critical, and co-creative relationships and is a crucial tool to address power imbalances and confront alienating and unjust ways of working by collectively producing knowledge and creating action as a catalyst for social change (Grant et al., 2008; Kemmis, 2008; Bradbury, 2015).

## 1.2 PAR and Evaluation Challenges... and how we dealt with them

To bridge the divide between what people experiencing poverty live with, and traditional researchers' interpretations of those stories, it has been suggested that the choice of language of poverty should aim to reduce stigma and the impacts of such can be seen described by community commissioners in this report, and how the terminology and the beliefs behind it affect those on the receiving end of such negative comments.

*"We're only vulnerable if you choose to make us vulnerable... and I don't feel vulnerable here."*

(Community commissioner)

The second part of this quote is a testament to the HPTC facilitation creating a space of safety. The benefits to those involved should outweigh the risks, and to do that evaluators must be able to identify and acknowledge their own biases and emotions and remain open to being challenged (Tardieu et al., 2023). This required our commitment, as evaluators, to ongoing self-reflection and self-critique to redress power imbalances and develop equitable, mutually beneficial, and supportive relationships with the commissioners.



## Positionality

The evaluation has been convened by Gill Hughes and Juan Pablo Winter. To ensure transparency, it is important to note that Gill has been involved in developing the HPTC since 2019. This offered a unique opportunity from an insider/outsider perspective. Insider because of being involved from the beginning and outsider, as an observer in the sessions with Juan to witness the HPTC process unfolding. This mirrored the underpinning heart of the process – facilitating the building of time, trust and relationships with commissioners and facilitators, who have been generous with sharing their views throughout the process and particularly now as it comes to fruition.

Gill is a white, working-class woman from a Liverpoolian family but has settled in Hull. She became involved with participatory research practices before joining the university and has continued engage in community projects and to call for community engagement at the centre of research, knowledge exchange, learning and teaching. As above, she was involved in the early inception of the HPTC having been involved in projects to rethink poverty, and as such, had a vested interest in its development, implementation and hoped for success. However, as an evaluator it is the stories of those involved that guide the report not her vested interest.



(Still from short film: My Pockets)

Juan is a mixed-race male born in Chile. He has twenty years of experience working with people living in extreme poverty in Chile and South Africa. He has lived in the UK for almost ten years and currently works at the University of Hull. He joined the HPTC as a participant evaluator in May 2023. His previous academic and practitioner experiences can condition his understandings and interpretations of the data produced in the HPTC.

To avoid misunderstandings, misinformation, and misrepresentation, we aimed to centre this report on the people's voices. Throughout the process, we ensured opinions and thoughts were correctly interpreted.

## 1.3 Evaluation Methods

We used several methods to co-produce and collect rich data for this evaluation process, including:

**Participant Observation:** During monthly meetings, we learned from the life experiences of those involved acknowledging that it was their knowledge (and not ours) that was most relevant to the evaluation and gave access to more in-depth insights into experiences of poverty.

**Recording reflections:** During the meetings, the facilitators and ourselves took notes on the three interrelated themes chosen to work on throughout the PTC, notes were made available to us.

**Desk Review- Official Reports/ Documents:** We examined policy reports and official documents used (sometimes produced) and presented during the meetings. We also explored the initial objectives of the HPTC and post project reflections.

**Focus Groups:** Towards the end of the project, we had separate focus groups with community and civic commissioners, facilitators and the advisory group to ask them about their processes and to what extent and how they experienced change at different levels: as individuals, group/organisation, and at a system level. We held some individual semi-structured interviews for those who could not attend the group sessions. We offered an open-ended online survey (to describe viewpoints on issues that

were not wholly addressed using the other methods (sometimes the act of writing can provide clarity on reflections). The survey was sent to all involved.

## Summary:

- The evaluation was commissioned by Hull City Council to record the learning from the first Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC).
- It is informed by the values and principles of Transformative Participatory Evaluation and Participatory Action Research (trust, commitment, mutual respect, and amplifying people's voice).
- Keys to success in the HPTC was how relationships of trust were facilitated through a long-standing relational engagement that allowed those involved to feel part of a safe environment where opinions, feelings and contributions mattered, were respected and valued by all, which will be a feature of this report.
- Several methods were used to co-produce and collect rich data for this evaluation process, including participant observation, recorded reflections, personal diaries, official reports/ document analysis, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended online surveys.



# Chapter 2. Introducing Hull and the context of poverty

“They’re not stories. They’re really painful truths”

This chapter details a little about (Kingston upon) Hull as a place and then the context that created the need for a Poverty Truth Commission. Hull is often referred to as one of the most ‘deprived’ cities, yet it could be more effectively described as under-served and under-resourced. The report reflects on the stigma that it carries as ‘deprived’, which can mask the vast amount of initiatives and committed people who are working to challenge poverty and other issues that impact its residents. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first describes some of the demographics of the city. The second section briefly reflects on the different understandings of poverty, the ways to measure it, and how people experience it. The last section explains what a Poverty Truth Commission is.

## 2.1 Kingston upon Hull

Kingston upon Hull, generally known colloquially as Hull, is a city with a rebellious past, turning King Charles 1 away, having a part to play in the abolition of slavery through MP William Wilberforce’s involvement with others in leading change. It was initially a strategic port called Wyke upon Hull, fishing became the main industry until the Cod Wars of the 1970s. This was a dangerous industry with poor health and safety, culminating in the Triple Trawler tragedy 3 1968, where three ships were lost. This fired rebellion from the Headscarf Revolutionaries – the women of Hessle Road, who fought the poor conditions their fathers, husbands and sons

experienced. The women were tenacious in the face of adversity. In doing so, they were victorious but not always welcomed because the employers could not afford to make changes and thus, jobs began to disappear. This was at the same time as the Cod Wars took hold, and Hull lost its main industry.

There is often a framing in the city of ‘Only in Hull...’ The distinctness of Hull was portrayed in the film that contributed to winning the City of Culture Bid for 2017, focusing on Larkin’s point that Hull is ‘(a) city that is in the world, yet sufficiently on the edge of it to have a different resonance’. This is accentuated by the rail network not passing through, being a port gateway to Europe, having big skies and a history of freedom fighting.

This sets the context for a city of determination. It survived being second to London as the most bombed city in World War 2 and is now second again to London for flood risk.

In more recent times, Hull has been hit harder than most by the austerity policies emanating from the 2010 coalition government cuts, which saw £121 millions of core funding lost from 2011 (Hull Daily Mail 2018).

The first HPTC has new revolutionaries, the new pioneers – the Community commissioners – who have been calling for change. In the HPTC they have been working with their newfound unexpected allies – the Civic commissioners – the people with some power and influence in decision-making – who also saw the need for change. This was ably supported by the facilitators – people

from the voluntary sector consortium, whose skills, knowledge and experience in community engagement, built coalitions to convene the commission and explore experiences of poverty in the city.

## 2.2 Hull and poverty: demographics, facts and figures

According to the last census in the UK (2021) (1), 267,010 people live in Kingston Upon Hull (2). This represents a population growth of 4.1% since the last census in 2011. Of the total population, almost 20% are under 15 years old, and 15.3% are over 65. The median age was 36 (4 years lower than the national median), and 11.4% were identified as ‘disabled and limited a little’. In 2020/22, Hull’s life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 75 years for men and 79.9 years for

women (3.9 years lower for men and 2.9 years lower for women in Hull compared to England) (HJSNA, 2024).

When the Poverty Truth Commission Advisory Group was exploring a model to address poverty in the city, the statistics relating to Kingston Upon Hull were telling. The city had one of the highest proportions of child poverty in the country, with 33.4 % of children living in relative poverty, as compared to only 5% of local authorities identified as having a child poverty rate of over 30% (DWP 2021), and around one-third of all school children in Hull were eligible for free school meals (compared to fewer than one-quarter for England) (ONS, 2023; HJSNA, 2024).

**267,010**  
people live in  
Kingston Upon Hull

**20%**  
under 15 yrs

**15.3%**  
over 65yrs

**11.4%**  
disabled and  
limited a little

**75 yrs**  
male life  
expectancy  
3.9 years lower for men  
compared to England



**79.9 yrs**  
women life  
expectancy

2.9 years lower for women  
compared to England



**33.4%**  
children living in  
relative poverty

as compared to only 5% of local  
authorities identified as having  
a child poverty rate of over 30%  
(DWP 2021)



**1/3**  
school children in Hull  
were eligible for free  
school meals

compared to fewer than  
one-quarter for England

Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)(4), Hull was the fourth most deprived local authority in England (out of 317), having been the 3rd most deprived local authority (out of 326) in 2015. Besides, half of Hull's 166 geographical areas on which the IMD is based were in the most deprived fifth nationally, and one in five households was in fuel poverty (ONS, 2023; HJNSA 2024).

The IMD 2019 is based on seven domains (based on 39 separate indicators), which are weighted according to their relative importance in relation to the overall score (weights in brackets). In Hull, 67,916 (58.8%) of households were classed as deprived in at least one dimension: (i) income deprivation (22.5%); (ii) employment deprivation (22.5%); (iii) health deprivation and disability (13.5%); (iv) education, skills and training deprivation (13.5%); (v) barriers to housing and services (9.3%); (vi) living environment deprivation (9.3%); and (vii) crime (9.3%)(5).

Regarding immigration and ethnicity demographics, almost 35 thousand residents of Hull were born outside the UK, of which over 10 thousand arrived in the UK from 2016-2021. Of residents 91.8% of people identify their ethnicity as white (reduced from 94.1% in 2011), 2.8% as "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" (compared with 2.5% the previous decade), and 1.9% as "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" (compared with 1.2% in 2011).

Over the same period (2011-2021) according to the Office for National Statistics, the percentage of employed people rose from 51.1% to 53.3%, and the unemployed (over 16 years excluding full-time students) fell from 7.4% to 4.1%. Of Kingston Upon Hull households, 48.3% owned their home in 2021 (down from 49.5% a decade before), which is considerably lower than the indicator in the neighbouring area of East Riding of Yorkshire (73.1%) (ONS, 2023). In terms of religion 49.2% reported having "No religion" (up from 34.8% in 2011), and 39.9% identified as Christian (down from 54.9% in 2011)(3).

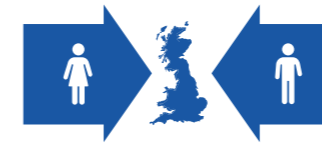
**In 2015 Hull was 3rd most deprived local authority in England, 4th most deprived in 2019**  
(Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)(4))

**In Hull 67,916, 58.8% of households deprived in at least one dimension**

**In Hull 1 in 5 households in fuel poverty**  
(ONS, 2023; HJNSA 2024).

**22.5% income deprivation  
22.5% employment deprivation  
13.5% health deprivation & disability  
9.3% barriers to housing & services  
9.3% living environment deprivation  
9.3% crime**  
(IMD 2019)

(1) Census 2021 occurred during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of rapid and unparalleled change. The national lockdown, associated guidance and furlough measures might have affected some indicators.  
 (2) There are 3 area committees in Kingston Upon Hull: West, North and East Hull. These are comprised of all Elected Members from the area's wards and are responsible for making decisions on all items that can be delegated from the Guildhall. A ward is an area within a local authority, typically used for electoral purposes. There are currently 21 wards in Hull (Kingston Upon Hull Data Observatory, 2024).  
 (3) Because the census question about religious affiliation is voluntary and has varying response rates, caution is needed when comparing figures between censuses.  
 (4) The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The IMD ranks every small area (Lower Super Output Area) in England from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived).  
 (5) This survey was undertaken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and the situation regarding household finances is estimated to have considerably worsened in Hull since 2019.



**In Hull almost 35,000 residents born outside UK**  
of which 10,000 arrived in the UK from 2016-2021



**In Hull employment rose from 51.1% to 53.3%**  
Unemployment fell from 7.4% to 4.1% in the period 2011-2021



**Ethnicity**  
**91.8% white** (reduced from 94.1% in 2011)  
**2.8% "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh"** (compared with 2.5% the previous decade)  
**1.9% "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African"** (compared with 1.2% in 2011)

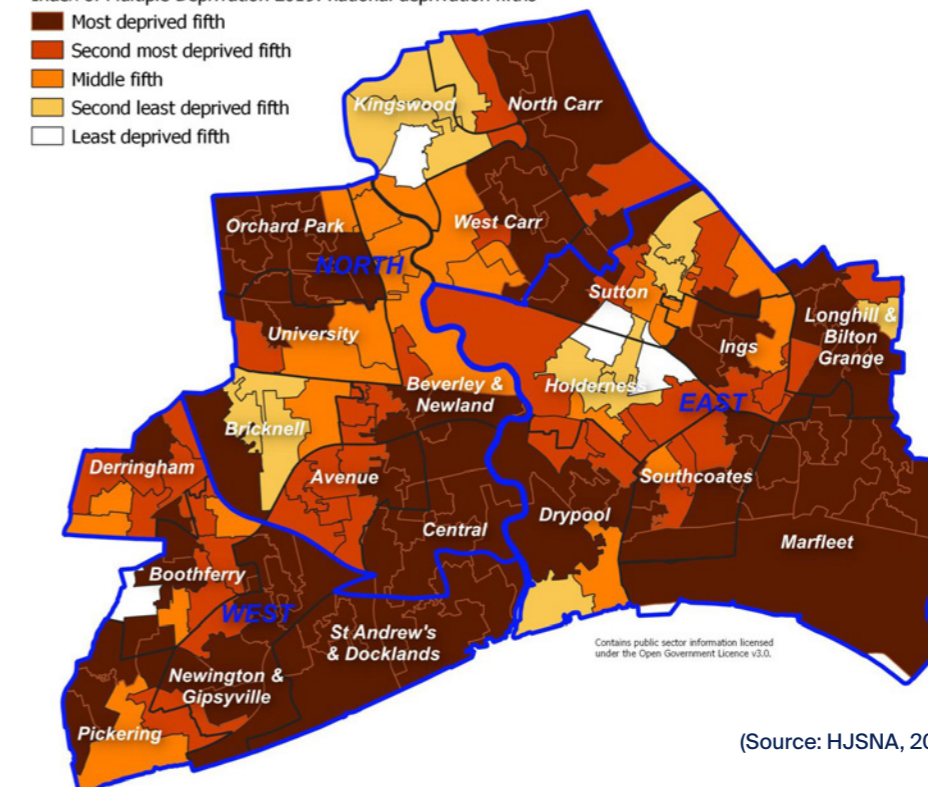


**Housing**  
**48.3% in Hull owned their home in 2021** (down from 49.5% a decade before)  
**73.1% in East Riding of Yorkshire** (ONS, 2023)



**Religion**  
**49.2% "No religion"** (up from 34.8% in 2011)  
**39.9% Christian** (down from 54.9% in 2011)(3)

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019: national deprivation fifths



(Source: HJSNA, 2024)

## 2.2.1 Understanding Poverty

### Poverty is...

*“Characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”*

(United Nations)

*“Not a static condition. Resources rise and fall, as do needs and people’s ability to meet them. Individuals can move in and out of poverty over time – so it may be temporary, recurrent or persistent over longer periods.”*

(Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

*“When you’re in a violent relationship and have to leave your own home to find safety. Your violent partner pursues you. You cannot concentrate at work. You lose your job. You lose your confidence. You cannot feed your kids to keep them warm.”*

(Community commissioner (film))

Poverty is a complex and subjective concept and far wider than financial issues, as will be explored in this HPTC report. There exists no single, universally accepted definition of poverty. Generally, the understandings held by more powerful groups are the ones reflected in dominant conceptualisations (e.g., the United Nations, World Bank, and national governments). The box contains some of these definitions, measures of poverty but also some amalgamated stories of poverty explained by the community commissioners in the My Pockets film, offering insight into how poverty manifests in the everyday lives of people who experience it.

This section does not provide a literature review or an extensive debate on the scope and nuances of poverty. However, it is important to acknowledge the range of meanings, criteria and understandings of poverty and some of its underlying issues.

*“When you only got 20 quid. You need it for petrol to get to work. And if you spend it on food, you won’t get there. And you won’t get paid. You’ve not eaten for two days. Then the council tax court summons drops through your front door.”*

(Community commissioner (film))

*“A stack of things on top of one another... You’re an unpaid carer... There’s help on a website, but no data on your phone... There’s a loan you can never escape... Hundreds of different emails and phone calls to multiple services and agencies... The prices go up. Your wages and benefits don’t... You say you are ill for the birthday party because you cannot afford the gift... The damp in your bedroom has seeped into the wooden furniture you used to be so proud of... You have another assessment next week; you panic, and you lie awake at night. You fight through all that, and the moment you start to turn things around, all the support is taken away, and you fall back down. You wonder if it would be better for everyone if you were dead.”*

(Community commissioner (film))

*“When people lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong.”*

(Peter Townsend - sociologist and anti-poverty campaigner)



(Still from short film: My Pockets)

*“Harmful and unjust because it deprives people of the ability to live the lives they want.”*

(Amartya Sen)

*“Like a punishment for a crime that you didn’t even commit!”*

(Community commissioner)

*“Not having enough resources to meet household needs and participate in society.”*

(Child Poverty Action Group, CPAG)

*“When the mental health problems caused by your disability worsen. But the people in your street cannot see them. They are struggling, too, and grass you up to the DWP to tell them that you are volunteering at the Day Centre and faking your disability. The doctor says you’re too isolated, and volunteering would do your disability wonders. But you quit. Stop leaving the house. Stop opening the curtains.”*

(Community commissioner (film))

## 2.2.2 Measuring poverty

Adding to the complexity are the different ways of measuring (and experiencing) poverty outlined here.

### Income Poverty

A country's national poverty line is typically a monetary threshold below which a person's minimum basic needs cannot be met. This helps governments track how many people live below the national poverty line so they can monitor their progress. The World Bank updated the global poverty lines in September 2022. Since then, extreme poverty has been measured as the number of people living with less than USD2.15 per day (£1.7 approx.). According to the international financial institution, around 700 million people in the world were in this situation in 2019. When the United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, Goal 1 was to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere" by 2030.

The UK government defines poverty in terms of disposable household income (income after adding on benefits and deducting direct taxes). The most common measures of poverty based on disposable income are Relative low income and Absolute low income. The first refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year; the latter refers to people living in households with income

below 60% of the median income in a base year, usually 2010/11 (this measurement is adjusted for inflation)(1) (House of Commons Library, 2024). Income can be measured before or after housing costs are deducted. According to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP, 2024), around one in six people in the UK had a relatively low income (relative poverty) before housing costs in 2022/23. This rises to just over one in five people once housing costs are accounted for. In 2022/23, 14.3 million people (21%) were in relative poverty (after housing costs), including 4.3 million children. According to the same study, over the longer term, poverty rates have reduced since the late 1990s for children, pensioners, and working-age parents. However, for working-age adults without dependent children, the likelihood of being on a relatively low income has increased (DWP, 2024).

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) explore the Minimum Income Standard, which is not necessarily a measure of poverty, it relates to what can be seen as '(a) minimum standard of living in Britain today (which) includes, but is more than just, food, clothes, and shelter. It is about having what you need ... to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society' (JRF, 2024: online). It was very clear listening to the community commissioners how their opportunities and choices were impacted by poverty.

**£1.70**  
**Extreme poverty**  
 measured as the number of people living with less than **£1.70 per day**

(World Bank, September 2022)

**700 million**  
 people in the world are in extreme poverty  
 (2019)

**United Nations goal to end poverty in all forms everywhere by 2030**



**1 in 6 people**  
 in the UK are in relative poverty before housing costs - 2022/2023

DWP, 2024

**Rising too...**



**1 in 5 people**  
 in the UK are in relative poverty when including housing costs - 2022/2023

DWP, 2024



**14.3 million**  
 (21%) people in the UK are in relative poverty (after housing costs)

DWP, 2024



Including...  
**4.3 million children**



**Poverty reduced**  
 since late 90s for children, pensioners, and working age parents

DWP, 2024



However...  
**Poverty increased**  
 for working-age adults without dependent children

DWP, 2024

(1) By using an income threshold that is fixed in time, this measure looks at how the living standards of low-income households are changing over time (House of Commons Library, 2024).

## 2.2.3 Experiencing poverty

### The Joseph Rowntree UK Poverty Report 2024

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report on Poverty in the UK (2024) sets out the scale and nature of hardship across the UK. Among its findings, it covers the struggles of people living with disabilities, informal carers, people claiming benefits, and the cost-of-living crisis:

- There are 15.7 million disabled people in the UK – (nearly one in four people - 24%) – and just over a third of all families contains at least one person who is disabled. The poverty rate for disabled people is 31%, 12% higher than non-disabled people.
- Informal carers are much more likely than those with no caring responsibilities to be living in poverty (28% compared with 20%). In 2021/22, nearly one in ten adults in the UK (4.8 million) are informal carers, with six in ten of these carers living in families where someone is disabled.
- Around half of all families in the UK receive some form of financial state support, nearly half (46%, equivalent to 7.2 million households in the Family Resources Survey) receive one or more of Universal Credit (or its equivalent benefits), disability benefits, Carer's Allowance or Pension Credit. The poverty rates of people claiming different income-related benefits are much higher than the national average poverty rate. This is to be expected given the 'low income' eligibility criteria for claiming these benefits. However, it also demonstrates that the benefits available are frequently insufficient to enable recipients to escape poverty. Indeed, the basic rate of Universal Credit is even below destitution thresholds.
- In October 2023, around 2.8 million of the poorest fifth of households (47%) were in arrears with their household bills or behind on scheduled lending repayments, 4.2 million households (72%) were going without essentials, and 3.4 million households (58%) reported not having enough money for food.

### Poverty-related stigma and how language matters

Lister (2020) focuses on elements of poverty that resonate with the stories from the HPTC, which render people powerless, voiceless and feeling a loss of respect and dignity. This manifests in lack of agency and human rights and insecurity. She explores dimensions of poverty that are 'relational, cultural, symbolic and material' – beyond financial. Lister rethinks poverty, relating this to an articulation of social justice, identified as redistribution (of resources and opportunities) and recognition (of diversity within inequality) – sitting with Fraser's (2009) conceptualisation, to which Fraser also added representation (having a voice). The HPTC is attempting to identify the potential for redistribution, acknowledging the diversity of experience and providing representation – amplifying the voices of people who have experienced poverty.

The previous sections have addressed some definitions of poverty. Equally and even more important for people experiencing poverty is how it makes people feel. These aspects of poverty include the feeling of not being heard or respected, humiliation, powerlessness, the denial of rights, stigma, and shame—the sense of dehumanisation and being constantly 'othered' by those with relatively more power (see photographs of boards written by community commissioners later in the report).

However, the HPTC has worked to redress this feeling, which can be seen in the My Pockets film – the process enabled people to meet as humans, with an identity, history and context.

*“I feel I can be myself because of building trust.”*

(Community Commissioner at the end of the process of the HPTC)

Poverty-related stigma can be perpetuated through language, policies and systems. It relates to, for example, the anxiety and stress of applying for benefits, accessing public institutions and dealing with public attitudes. Ultimately, it is about the consequences on the emotional and mental well-being of those experiencing poverty and how these can

create barriers or prevent people from being themselves or reaching out for support – this will be seen in the report – mental health became a major feature for the commission.

If we don't examine the language we use (and we have taken care in this report to choose wisely), the influence of language hits hard with its powerful ability to sway judgement. Massey (2015:24) argues that: '(t)he language we use has effects in moulding identities and characterising social relationships' it becomes the taken-for-granted way of thinking as common sense. Massey adds '(d)iscourse matters. Moreover, it changes, and it can – through political work be changed'. As will be seen the HPTC and PTC movement in general challenge and call out language use to create change.

There were several discussions in the HPTC about stigma and how poverty leaves an indelible mark physically, emotionally and psychologically. Tyler (2020) explores the Oxford English Dictionary definition of stigma; '(s)tigma, noun, figurative. A mark of disgrace or infamy; a sign of severe censure or condemnation, regarded as impressed on a person or thing; a 'brand'. She follows this with a quote from Stephanie who Tyler met through the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission, a former schoolteacher and single mum, whose definition of how stigma manifests '(e)very news bulletin seemed to be calling me scrounger, fraud, cheat or scum...'. Stephanie's story of how she came to experience poverty related to family illness, informal caring responsibilities impacting her ability to do paid work, having to sell her house, then austerity cuts impacted supply teaching roles, and she began to feel shame at having her bank card declined, using foodbanks, a payday loan leading to debt – with 'stigma and shame' growing.

At the start of the commission community commissioners were asked how they felt:

*“They're not stories. They're really painful truths.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“You might be poor, your shoes might be broken, but your mind is a palace.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“I am just told I don't understand. They do the best they can ... but I don't understand!”*

(Community commissioner)

*“I am not lazy. Being disabled is a full-time job, and I work really hard at it.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“People are too afraid to talk because of the stigma... it is ok not to be ok!”*

(Community commissioner)

Tyler (2020) identifies how the language of 'striver v shirker' is divisive and reductionist ways of describing what is still in play since the Poor Laws of the 1800s with the view of 'the deserving and undeserving poor'. Tyler (2020:188) reported that: People on the Poverty Truth Commission also describe the cumulative impact of living in a society where stigma frames political and media coverage and debate around welfare issues, and the ways in which this all-pervasive 'welfare stigma' shapes people's attitudes towards them as scroungers, as fraudulent, as scum'.

*“I've been spat, shout at, because of being the lucky one... getting benefits (disability allowance).”*

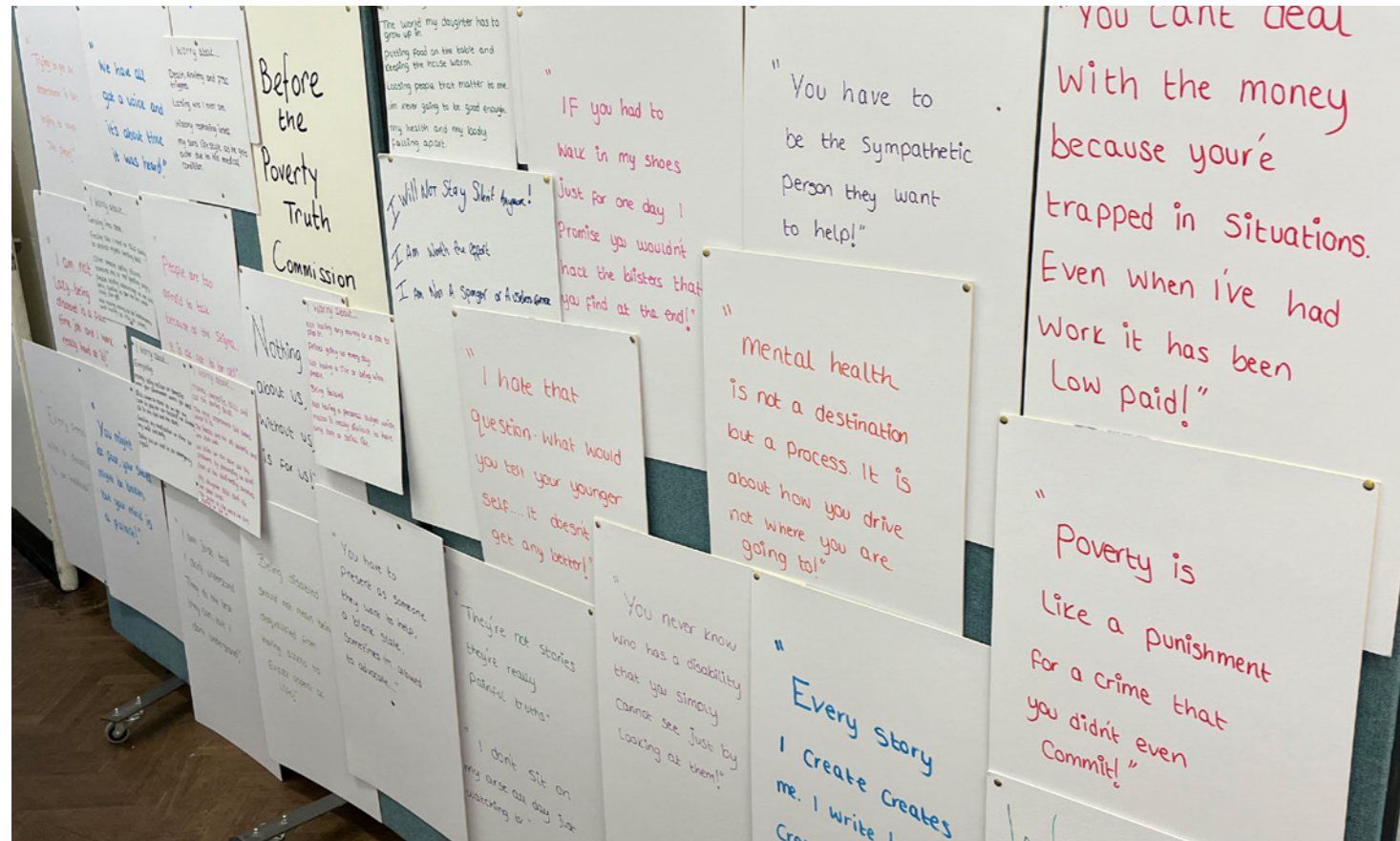
(Community commissioner)

*“They know you’re on benefits, they treat you like shit.”*

*“People are too afraid to talk because of the stigma... It is ok not to be ok!”*

*“(We feel) we’re not citizens... we’re subjects... or 2nd class citizens.”*

(Community commissioners)



Boards showing what Community commissioners felt before joining the HPTC these were produced for the opening launch (pictures taken at the Awakening event in July 2024).

Knight (2017: 1) supported initiatives such as #thehullwewant (involving Hughes, Macdonald and Tozer) to rethink poverty, he cited Beatrice Webb 1909, one of the protagonists in the development of the Welfare State, ‘It is now possible to abolish destitution’. However, ‘poverty is still with us’ (Knight 2017: 1). He refers to the ‘humiliation of the 19th century soup kitchen.... Replac(ed) ..with the 21st-century foodbank’. A ‘discursive framing of poverty as a personal failing and choice... (has) fundamentally altered the lived

experiences and life courses of families on low income’ (Garthwaite et al., 2022; 4). In a HPTC community Commissioner discussion during the evaluation it was noted how;

*“language is Victorian’ with a view that ‘work will set you free’ but recognising that ‘capitalism others people.’*

(Community commissioner)

**In-work poverty in the UK**

*“You can’t deal with the money because you’re trapped in situations. Even when I’ve had work it has been low paid!”*

(Community commissioner)

In-work poverty was a key issue raised by the community commissioners throughout the HPTC process because people in work also struggle and more often use foodbanks and other associated support. In-work poverty occurs when a working household’s total income is insufficient to meet their needs. A key driver is low pay. According to the Living Wage Foundation, more than 20% of the UK workforce was being paid below the Real Living Wage in 2022 (£11.05 per hour in London and £9.90 in the rest of the UK to that date) (APPG, 2022). However, low pay and in-work poverty are not the same (Horemans et al., 2015), and the overlap is not as large as is often assumed (APPG, 2022). While measures of low pay consider only the earnings of an individual worker (who receives less than two-thirds of median hourly earnings), in-work evaluates the total circumstances of a working household, considering income from all sources (not only earnings from employment) (Hick & Lanau, 2017). Thus, low pay is only one possible reason for in-work poverty occurring (Gardiner & Millar, 2006).

There are several reasons why families experience in-work poverty, e.g. job quality (low pay), household expenditures, and job quantity (household members in work) (Goerne, 2011). In the UK, the introduction of Universal Credit in 2010 came as an attempt to address some of these issues. However, not only the measure has arguably not been entirely successful, but it has also experienced several cuts over the last few years (e.g., frozen working-age benefits, reduced work allowances, removal of Child Tax Credit for 3rd and subsequent children, etc.) (Hick & Lanau, 2017).

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022), around two-thirds (68%) of working-age adults in poverty in the UK live in a household where at least one adult is at work. This is the highest figure since records of Households below average income (HBAI) began in 1996/97 when the figure stood below 50%. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2022). Apart from low pay, house expenditures, and job quantity, some of the causes that explain

this situation are the rise in the cost of living and housing. Other possible causes of worsening in-work poverty include caring responsibilities, the inadequacy of the social security system, and insecure work (APPG, 2022).

*“I worry about prices going up every day... and not having a personal budget, which makes it really difficult to have any sort of social life.”*

*“Trying to get an assessment is like trying to meet the pope!”*

*“Everything is a constant waiting list.”*

(Community commissioners)

There are groups at higher risk of falling into in-work poverty than the rest of the population. These groups include people with mental health issues, women and lone parents, minority ethnic communities, and self-employed people (APPG, 2022). Consequently, living in in-work poverty can also be incredibly stressful for people and negatively affect their mental health.

In whatever form people’s experience of poverty takes – in-work, not able to work, or no available work - the emotional stress from struggling day-to-day to survive was made clear by the testimonies shared by the HPTC Community commissioners:

*“If you had to walk in my shoes just for one day, I promise you wouldn’t back the blisters that you find at the end.”*

*“It feels like it is one battle after another... and after another. You feel you are constantly being whac-a-mole.”*

*“I hate the question about what you would tell your younger self... It doesn’t get any better!”*

(Community commissioners)

The question is what can we do about it, how can we amplify the voices of people who experience poverty – this is where the Poverty Truth Commissions come in.

## 2.3 What is a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC)?

The Poverty Truth Network (PTN) acts as a resource and umbrella body for PTCs across the UK. It supports Poverty Truth Commissions (PTCs) to provide opportunities for each to come together. While there is a model to guide how they unfold, all local commissions are responsible for their own work and offer space to respond to the context of the locality. PTCs set up to identify key issues that create or compound experiences of poverty. They relate to a model that is not about addressing one person's experience of poverty on an individual level but addressing the issue on a collective level, i.e. the story of the experience of poverty may arise out of a personal experience, but that experience is often commonplace to others, so addressing the issue will benefit multiple people.

*“Currently the PTC Network is exploring the common issues that arise across the local PTC to work nationally.”*

(PTN mentor)

The Poverty Truth Network (2024: online) developed **three distinctives to understand and articulate a ‘Poverty Truth’ way of working**. These are:

### 1.

Poverty Truth starts with the direct experience of people who know what it means to struggle against poverty. It is these experiences that initiate the conversation and concerns that set the agenda. Through this wisdom, the important issues are articulated. Crucially, these concerns, experiences and wisdom remain throughout all Poverty Truth work.

### 2.

Poverty Truth builds powerful relationships between those who have experienced the struggle and decision-makers. Difficult conversations only happen when trust is built, and relationships are the soil in which trust grows. So, poverty truth insists that we take time to pay attention to one another. We listen deeply with our hearts and our heads rather than rushing to fix problems.

### 3.

Poverty Truth seeks to humanise people and systems. We meet one another as human beings not merely professionals or service users. As we do this, we will see more clearly the causes of poverty recognising that whilst they are systemic, we can find long-term solutions where we all flourish.

[www.povertytruthnetwork.org](http://www.povertytruthnetwork.org)

Hull's Poverty Truth Commission adopted this approach to ensure consistency across the programme. The PTN supported the set-up and continuance of Hull's PTC and the facilitators as they embarked on convening the commission.

PTCs bring together individuals with direct experience living in poverty with key policy and decision-makers. This collaboration aims to forge relationships and facilitate discussions to build a shared understanding of practical steps that can be taken to improve people's lives and reduce poverty. With the influence of policy and decision-makers, they work to understand the nature of poverty and its underlying issues and explore creative ways of addressing them.

PTCs have had a transformative impact on those who engage with them. In the acknowledgements of Darren McGarvey's (2017) book *Poverty Safari: Understanding the Anger of Britain's Underclass*, he offers thanks to:

*“The Poverty Truth Commission, class of 2009 - the original and the best. Our time together fundamentally changed the direction of my thinking and, thus, of my life. I hope I've written a book that reflects our hopes, fears, dilemmas and contradictions.”*

Professor Imogen Tyler was also a member of a PTC in Morecambe, one of the PTCs that the HPTC advisory group met online that helped understand how the process worked – that change could happen immediately rather than waiting until the end, as was the Fairness Commission model. In her book *Stigma* (2020:1), Tyler draws from her experience as part of the PTC, dedicating it to ‘the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission whose humanity and practices of social solidarity fill me with hope for the future’. Hope is at the centre of the HPTC too.

### Summary:

- **(Kingston Upon)** Hull is often referred to as ‘deprived’, yet the reality is it is **under-served and under-resourced** and hit harder than most by austerity policies and cuts.
- The census in the UK (2021), noted 267,010 residents of Hull. When the PTC Advisory Group was exploring a model to examine poverty, **Hull was the fourth most deprived local authority in England** (out of 317) with one of the highest proportions of children living in relative poverty (33.4 %).
- **There exists no single, universally accepted definition of poverty.** This section identified how international organisations and national governments define, measure and identify those living in poverty, and offered insight into how poverty manifests in the everyday lives of people.
- **PTCs set up across the UK to bring together individuals who have direct experience of living in poverty with key policy and decision makers,** forging relationships to build a shared understanding of practical steps that to improve peoples' lives and reduce poverty.

# Chapter 3. Setting up the Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC):

“We had the mission and the ambition (to make a difference)”

This chapter examines the setting up of the Hull Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC). In doing so, we aimed to ask those involved to tell us their story and how they got involved. The sum of those stories helped us identify how different forces within specific contexts and timeframes helped form the HPTC. Its origins predate the Covid outbreak and involved several people who had various roles in the city. As further described in this chapter, the catalyst for the HPTC was the passion of all these actors for addressing poverty in the city. This section tells the story from the origins of the HPTC, through commissioning the tender, to finally forming the HPTC, and agreeing on its different actors and their roles.

## 3.1 Charting the origins of the Hull Poverty Truth Commission

The HPTC came about when the UK had been experiencing years of factors that contributed to the increase in poverty: the financial crash in 2008, austerity policies followed as a chosen response by the Coalition government in 2010, a Brexit vote in 2016, the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the cost of living and energy crisis from 2021, the Ukraine War in 2022, and the overarching issues of climate change. Some of this context was cited by one of the two original initiators, of

the need to find ways of addressing poverty in Hull:

*“Financial crash, austerity policies, the standard of living disappearing and arrears in council tax, rent, and fuel. We were at the coal-face everyday... We felt we were going back into Victorian times.”*

(Advisory group member)

The then Labour Council was in power, and Councillors Pantelakis and Bridges, who also worked at the Citizens Advice Bureau, wanted to address the poverty levels in the city. They saw the consequences on a daily basis at the ‘coal-face’ and did what they could to support people in making arrangements to address the debt they accumulated. In addition to arrears, the councillors saw the increase in additional costs of bailiffs added to what was already owed; often, these were council-arranged bailiffs.

*“We came on the council to make a difference... We had the mission and the ambition.”*

(Advisory group)

The councillors, worked with former councillor Andy Dorton, who chaired the Anti-Poverty Task group to explore initiatives to rethink poverty in the city. In 2013, the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish group report identified:

...eleven functional themed groups that can be more effectively monitored by the People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Commission. The themed groups are as follows:

- Land and Growing
- Learning and Skills
- Retail
- Food
- Saving Fuel Saving Money
- Credit and Savings
- Corporate Debt Recovery Policy
- Advice and Support
- Housing
- Health
- Raising Awareness / Communications

(Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Panel Recommendations Progress Report, 2015: online)

These themes were discussed throughout 2014/15. At the same time major cuts of £300k to the Hull Advice service were implemented, and the potential for further cuts of £170k, which would impact the support available.

One of the difficulties was that what people told them as councillors (e.g., potholes, bins) was different from what they told them at CAB (e.g., struggling with the cost-of-living crisis), so there was a need to ensure the voices of people who experience poverty were heard in places of power and influence.

## 3.1.1 The passion behind setting up the HPTC – Councillors and Council Officers meeting of minds

Advisory group member summarised:

“Our work at Citizens Advice meant we witnessed poverty starkly increasing week in week out. The socio-economic and political context, and subsequent policy decisions, are crucial – the Austerity agenda and all that went with it has had, and continues to have, a chasmic impact on the lives of those with the least in terms of finances and opportunities.

Fundamental to our passion, as Councillor Pantelakis said, is also that we are in Hull. The deprivation here is known but we sometimes hardly dare speak of it for fear of putting down communities or dragging Hull down.

We believed that giving a voice to the people experiencing it (poverty) in communities across the city carries far more weight than believing we know what it’s like to live in poverty and work together to find solutions.

(The evaluation conversation)... reminded us why it mattered so much and how much we did do to ensure a PTC got off the ground when many around us weren’t really that interested and thought that it wasn’t going to be popular with people who have done well for themselves and vote.”

The councillors wanted to bring together policymakers and people of power to make change possible. They had enough evidence from CAB and were concerned with the needs of people experiencing poverty and were not getting anywhere. Despite the local authority’s efforts, no real change was happening.



At the same time, Julia Weldon, Head of Public Health and Deputy Chief Executive of the council (HPTC Advisory Group member and more recently a Civic Commissioner) and Alison Patey, (Assistant Director of Public Health of the council, and HPTC Advisory Group member), were involved in Due North: The report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North. Julia Weldon served on the Inquiry and Ali Patey contributed to it. This report identified the major issues around inequity. Also integral to this work was the role Sally Barlow, Public Health Programme Lead for Communities and Partnerships, played. She was part of the HPTC advisory group and later chair she researched initiatives around the country to explore. The catalyst for the eventual HPTC was the coming together of the councillors and the officers – both with passion to address poverty in the city.

Professor Susan Lea, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Hull, Fay Treloar, Director of Business Engagement & Enterprise, and Dr Gill Hughes (also evaluator) joined the councillors and officers to form the Advisory group in 2019 to explore possibilities of bringing a Fairness Commission to Hull. In October 2019, Knight (2017), whose book Rethinking Poverty featured work in Hull met the Hull advisory group and offered insight into the shortcomings of Fairness Commissions (FC), where people of power and influence act as panels of experts hearing testimonies from those who bear witness to experiencing poverty. The FC produces a report at the culmination. Bunyan and Diamond (2016) evaluated 33 commissions, noting that they identified many issues that were not always acted upon.

Following research, the group gathered evidence from York, Salford, and other cities. They visited Salford to explore how they had conducted their approach (in March 2020 prior to the first lockdown from COVID-19). In 2020, Andy Dorton identified the Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission and shared this with the group, which sparked interest in a new community-led approach. Coincidentally councillor Mike Ross, now leader of the council also discussed the PTC movement because he has connections to the PTN so was aware of its potential.

The advisory group wanted to ensure that any commission set up in Hull would be ambitious to represent as many voices as possible in determining the extent and impact of poverty, which manifests in many diverse ways. The councillors felt that setting up a commission would provide the platform for communities to, not only identify the issues, but also contribute to solutions – as the experts in living and coping with poverty and inequity.

PTCs go further than the Fairness Commissions, with a more concerted effort to centre on the voice of those in poverty by adopting community commissioners (as above people who have experienced poverty) who work with civic commissioners who have power and influence to make changes. Action is encouraged throughout rather than waiting for a report and recommendations at the end. This approach also offers the opportunity for system and policy change beyond the specific issues that can be addressed immediately.

In 2020, Andrew Grinnell, co-lead of the Poverty Truth Network, offered overviews of how the PTC works. The process shifts the power imbalance as the community commissioners invite the civic commissioners 'professionals' to join them. This ensures the approach is community-led leading to a more collaborative engagement to coproduce creative solutions from a grassroots ethos.

It is hoped that organisations will implement lasting changes to policy and procedure that make for a more equitable society, making life easier for those struggling. The Commission does not need to wait for an end report to tackle the issues of poverty - where solutions can be identified, change can be immediate.

Hull's Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC) exists to bring together business and civic leaders to work collaboratively with those experiencing poverty in a variety of ways to create a powerful and solution-focused response. Its main objectives were:

Hull's Poverty Truth Commission is coming together to make a difference:

- To how people think about poverty
- To show the truth and experiences of people living in poverty
- To challenge the stigma of poverty
- To share stories and change the understanding of the wide variety of forms of poverty
- To discover solutions together that directly tackle poverty

This evaluation report showcases that each of these ambitions has been met and illustrated throughout in the words of those involved.

### 3.1.2 Commissioning the tender to convene the HPTC

This was planned by the HPTC Advisory Group (see following section) and released in August 2021 with two online information sessions. The deadline was one month, and there was a requirement to have a consortium approach to bring Voluntary and Community sector organisations together to address poverty in the city. The tendering process was still within the Covid-19 confines, during this time there was an increased realisation of the role of the VCSE in the city and as such it seemed appropriate to develop a consortium approach. The aim of this tender specification was to outline the required service elements to achieve the following:

- Brings about changes for individuals, for organisations, at a policy level and in helping to alter the ways people think about poverty.
- Gathers some of Hull's key decision makers with those living at the sharp end of poverty to work together to overcome poverty.
- Impacts at a wider societal level and helps to change the public debate about poverty across the UK

The timescale was tight, so it was eventually decided that 13 VCSE groups would come together to tender, led by Forum, (formerly North Bank Forum), an organisation that supports the VCSE's infrastructure and has experience in tendering.

Initially, the consortium met several times to discuss how to convene the commission. It was agreed that it would not be appropriate to introduce young people into the forum, so The Warren, supporting young people from 16 to 25, took responsibility for working with young people to make a video for the launch event to tell their stories.

From the 13 organisations, four people came forward to be facilitators of the process: Pippa Robson, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Forum; Karen Tozer, programme manager of Groundwork Yorkshire; Kate Macdonald, CEO of Timebank; and Andy Coish of Citizens Advice Bureau.

Although there is a PTC model to guide the convening of commissions, much is open for interpretation to reflect the context, history and people involved. This organic approach allows flexibility and responsiveness to needs-led participatory practices, which challenge traditional fixed and static methods to enable flow and spontaneity. This in turn, makes for a novel approach, which is hard to plan for in some senses and requires time, which was afforded enabling the process to unfold.

In May 2022, the Liberal Democrat party took over Hull City Council from the Labour party (Cllrs Bridges and Pantelakis retained their seats). Julia Weldon, Ali Patey and Sally Barlow had engaged with Cllr Mike Ross and colleagues in opposition regarding the HPTC, which smoothed the transition from one council to the next. Cllr Ross's connections to the PTN helped the continuance of the HPTC and subsequently he became a civic Commissioner. Cllr Linda Chambers joined the HPTC Advisory group on behalf of the Liberal Democrats – her portfolio was Adult Services and Public Health. The HPTC Terms of Reference are contained in Appendix.

### 3.2 The people, their roles and expectations of HPTC

The commissioners in Hull were identified, supported and guided by facilitators from Hull-based voluntary sector organisations and an advisory group consisting of representatives from Local Authority councillors and officers, public health leads, and representatives from the University of Hull and the NHS.

**The Advisory Group** supported the development, design, delivery and implementation of Hull's Poverty Truth Commission (HPTC). Its aim was to advise on strategic direction; support and mentor the delivery partner; share connections and networks to ensure inclusive engagement and identification of the broadest testimonies of poverty and inequality; support and mobilise conversations to strengthen the connection between the Council and its citizens and city partners building relationships and trust to enhance collaboration; contribute to identifying appropriate civic and business commissioners; explore further funding opportunities and access additional resources to expand the scope of the PTC; play a role in supporting the delivery of the PTC recommendations; determine the scope of, and monitor the arrangements for, the delivery of an ongoing evaluation of the PTC; and to develop a succession plan for future rounds of the PTC.

When reflecting on their expectations when engaging with the HPTC:

*“I was interested in hearing the voices of lived experience and for a Poverty Truth Commission in Hull to have an impact on poverty.”*

*“I expected mature relationships in the city with open conversations on poverty to be embedded in the day job... become a language. I hoped that Hull would grab it by the horns and make it happen – I saw what I wanted to see.”*

(Advisory Group members)

**Community commissioners** chosen to share their experiences and to decide what they would communicate about poverty, they are encouraged to share individual experiences and insights into the inequalities they face. They lead the project and set the agenda. When getting involved in the HPTC:

*“I didn't know what to expect, but it soon became a comfortable experience, learning how the people with lanyards felt about us.”*

*“(I thought it was) An opportunity to talk openly about the conditions of poverty and how I was treated by different services.”*

(Community commissioner)

**Civic commissioners** build trusted relationships with the community commissioners to work with their stories to generate solutions together to bring about change at a system level. It is hoped they will effect change in their own organisation where relevant, promote widely and communicate to peers actively advocating for the HPTC's work. When hearing about the HPTC:

*“I was unsure what to expect as I had not been at the initial launch event... Prior to attending the meetings I was apprehensive that it might be a process which wouldn't change anything for people. I really didn't want that to be the case, and it wasn't.”*

*“(I thought it was an) opportunity to examine concerns relating to the struggles faced by local people within the city and what actions could be taken to address them.”*

*“I did not know much about it, I don't think the title necessarily describes the concept or the process. I became a civic Commissioner after finding out more at the launch.”*

(Civic commissioners)

The process was also helpful to civic commissioners:

*“I was new in post, so finding out about everyone and what they do has been good. I do a lot of lived experience work and it has sometimes felt like one side versus the other. Plus, there has been a reality check for me about the link to poverty and how much links to that.”*

(Civic commissioner)

**Consortium for delivery of the PTC.** PTCs set up in different ways. Some employ a coordinator, but in Hull, the consortium came together with the expectation that working together would bring significant benefits in terms of quality of the commission for people involved. It was hoped that as well as the benefits derived from collaborative activities, smaller organisations familiar with the issues and challenges of poverty in their neighbourhoods would be well-positioned to add value as consortium members.

*“We were very keen to be involved in the process as we know the enormous impact of food insecurity on individuals' health and wellbeing, and that food poverty is just one dimension of poverty as a whole. We convene the Hull Food Inequality Alliance and hoped that the learnings from the Poverty Truth Commission could help inform our work to improve household food security in Hull.”*

(HPTC Consortium member)

The Consortium would support recruitment of the testifying commissioners; to confirm the topic focus of the Commission cycle; and to create a space to meaningfully bring together people with different experiences, knowledge, and power. The Consortium was expected to ensure that all testifying commissioners were given a suitable level of practical and emotional support throughout the process. The Consortium would not work in isolation, and delivery was dependent on effective working relationships with partners.

*“I was concerned that I have been working within the VCSE sector for many years and that this was perhaps a real opportunity to bring about change. With this in mind, I decided to throw my hat in the ring and push to be part of the process so I could help ensure it was everything it was set out to be and that Hull gets the change it needs and deserves.”*

(Facilitator)

**Facilitators** - brought different skills, knowledge and experience (see section 4.2) but their commitment was shared to creatively weave the connections to build the bridge between the two sets of commissioners, contributing to generating the relational trust that has come to form the strength and major achievement of the commission's activity. They organised the meetings, planned and prepared the tasks that the commissioners would work through to draw out issues, engage in discussions, planned task groups, invited in people from services to offer additional insight, and provided both practical and emotional support for those involved. This has been an organic process because the HPTC has been emergent. The facilitators were committed to coproducing with community commissioners, which was evidenced widely in the opening and awakening events, with codesigned activities, presentations, poetry and thought-provoking quotations positioned around the room.

*“I was impressed by how well it worked with other facilitators... being so different... and having such different backgrounds and work experiences.”*

(Facilitator)

*“To be a cog in the wheel of rethinking how we do things, opportunity to shift power, equitable spaces, community in the driving seat, Consortium approach where could this lead dream strengths-based alliance commissioning.”*

(Facilitator)

**Invited guests** As part of the commission guests were invited when there were specific issues to be addressed but are not in the remit of the civic commissioners. These included: various council officers from the Housing department, and a representative from the Trauma Informed City initiative. The process was helpful to guests who realised that some of their assumptions about what worked well were not always working in practice:

*“Looking at the confusion in their [guests] faces was quite nice... (When discussing their ‘solutionist’ approach, and that they have usually looked at individual problems rather than bigger picture, sometimes being quite defensive) the realisation of what they thought was happening, was not happening.”*

(Facilitator)

**Poverty Truth Network** representatives who have supported and mentored the facilitators were asked about their expectations of the HPTC (before it started)

*“My expectations are not outside of the ordinary expectations of a PTC – but hopes would be that it followed the PTC pattern with its underlying belief in the brilliance of commissioners themselves and interesting things emerge. Hope for the bottom line that community commissioners would feel worthwhile not just heard but shape the way the city responds to poverty. It isn’t just about hearing the stories it is about the wisdom that is applied.*

*For civic commissioners – a sense of change in how they understand what poverty is and how best to make decisions. This is about less tangible change but more about culture change, which is way more powerful.”*

(PTN lead)

*“Similar to elsewhere but with nuances. I was intrigued by the consortium approach.”*

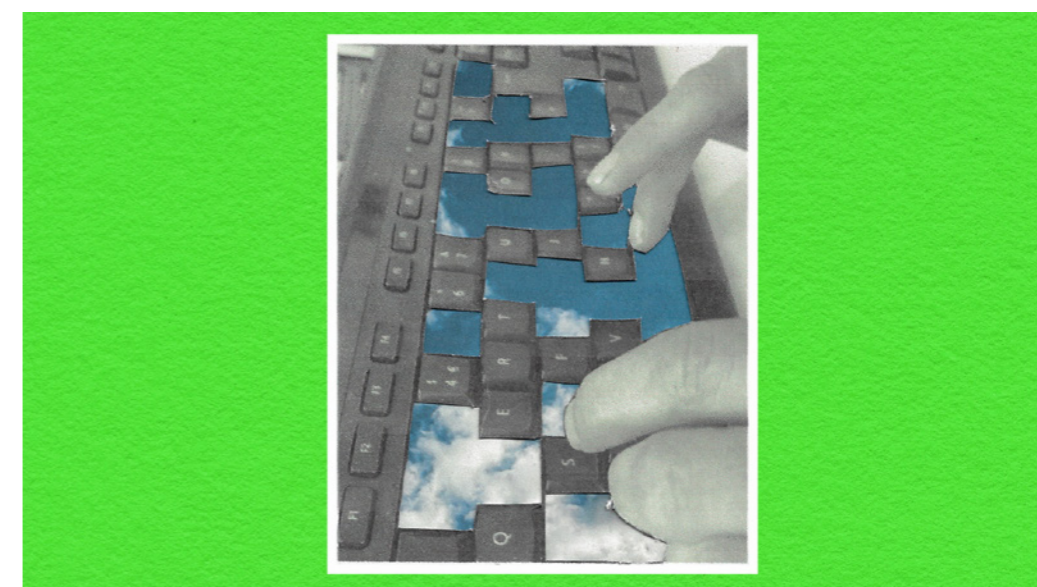
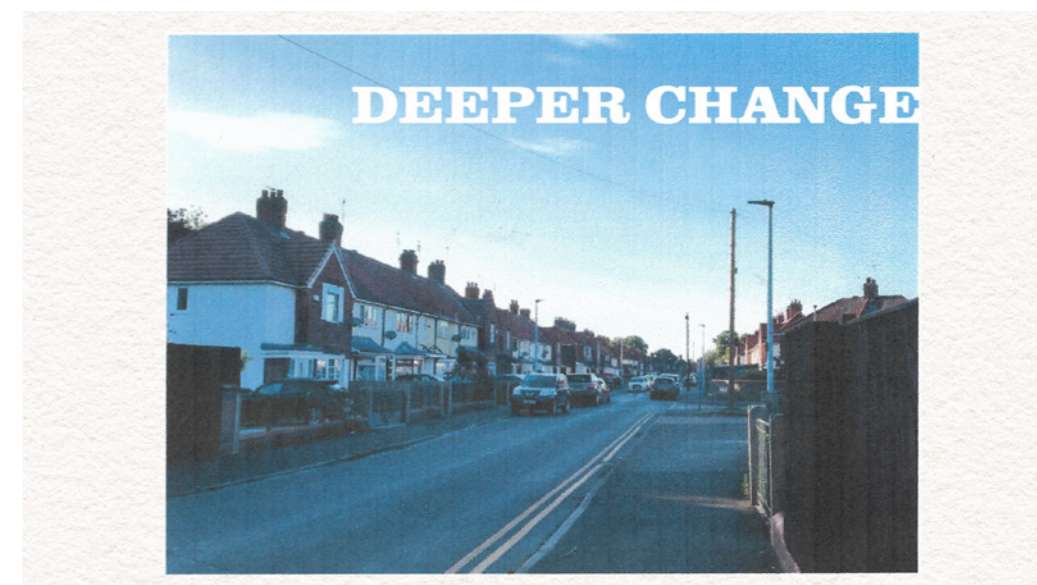
(PTC lead)

*“I have no expectations. Each area is unique.”*

(PTN representative)

**Summary:**

- The first HPTC arrived when the UK had been experiencing years of factors that contributed to the increase in poverty, including the financial crash (2008) and austerity policies (2010)
- The catalyst for the HPTC was the passion for addressing poverty in the city.
- In August 2021 a tender was commissioned to convene the HPTC by a VCSE consortium to address poverty in the city. Forum convened 13 VCSE groups to win the tender.
- The people involved in the HPTC included the community commissioners, civic commissioners, the facilitators, the Advisory Group, the Consortium, evaluators, and guests. Supported by the PTN lead and mentor.



(Stills from short film: My Pockets)

# Chapter 4. Time to build relationships and culture change:

“The lack of lanyards has been important”

Setting the scene with the principles unfolds into the process that supported the core feature of the HPTC – relational engagement and subsequently a move to transformative systems change and progress. Hull, as a city, has been engaged in participatory practices for many years, which we (evaluators) have conceptualised here into a model to explain the ‘how’. This chapter is divided into four sections – it is here that we present the evidence for culture change, which has been derived from the facilitation process. The first part presents the principles adopted for the HPTC. The second part briefly addresses facilitators’ crucial role in the HPTC. Their knowledge and skills helped facilitate the process, build trust, and get the most out of each session. The third part introduces the Lundy Model, of participation, which was first designed to promote children’s and young people’s human rights. The last part explains how these participatory elements combine towards transformative and inclusive systems change – which we termed TTREEE.

*“I have gained huge insight into the way poverty may affect people’s ability to access our services and we will use this as part of ongoing co-production when we design new services.”*

(Civic commissioner)

## 4.1 Principles adopted for the HPTC

The HPTC set out to embed a set of core principles in its approach to engagement, which can be seen evidenced through the process below. Lived Experience – Amplifying Voices

**Lived Experience** – people with experience offer expertise.

**Humanizing Everyone** – titles left at the door and meet as human beings to collectively reflect on their experiences.

**Paying Attention** – deep listening with hearts, heads and hands for action through honest debate

**Powerful Relationships** – built through time and trust through friendship, recognition of power, and co-owned and produced.

**Seeing More Clearly** – commitment to change as perceptions are reframed of all involved

Recognition of context, not quick fixes, systems not just symptoms together with practical change.

(Abridged version)

### Lived Experience – Amplifying Voices

The core of PTCs is the inclusion of people who have experienced poverty and are willing to share their stories – this enables the community commissioners to have their voices amplified.

### Humanising Everyone - Being Human and Hope

Stigma and dehumanisation were terms constantly used during the HPTC as to how community commissioners felt. Tyler (2020: 7) citing Stephanie again ‘(y)ou end up not feeling human, like you don’t have the right to be part of society’. As part of the core principles there was a commitment to humanising, which is conveyed in the My Pockets’ film both sets of commissioners developed their relationships through trust to see each other as ‘human too’ - not ‘purveyor’ or ‘user’ of a system.

*“The lack of lanyards has been important – taking those off we are human together.”*

*“See human issues not financial problems.”*

(Community commissioners)

The power of storytelling deconstructed the stereotypes and stigma, which fall away when relationships of trust manifest and humanity is revealed.

Alongside amplifying voices and humanizing, **paying attention, powerful relationships and seeing more clearly** the core principles are more than met and will be articulated in the discussions below. The HPTC did create safe spaces to listen deeply and learn together – heart/head/hands did come into play. Honesty and engagement in discussion became a staple approach of the safe and brave space.

The next section explores more deeply how the process of developing trusting relationships that lead to change can be facilitated.

### 4.1.1 The Facilitators and Facilitation Process

*“The team approach was accidental but effective – it wasn’t planned but we brought different skill sets and perspectives, so it was well rounded. It would have been difficult if just me.”*

(Facilitator)

The facilitators took the core principles and put these into practice. As noted in this quote, the facilitators had different strengths. One had a more strategic role in the VCSE and, as such, brought essential organisational skills to ensure the commission was well organised, dates were secured, and support mechanisms were put in place for the commissioners. Two facilitators were from community development backgrounds, with experience in relational, participatory facilitation and systems change and at the centre of their practice for many years. The fourth had a role within an advice organisation, bringing knowledge relevant to the discussions. This made for a very effective mix.

There were many comments on the process, which will appear in various places in the report because they may relate to other aspects of the commission. However, it is important to recognise how their role was key to facilitating the processes that allowed trust to develop and relationships to be built.

This selection of quotes demonstrates recognition of the approach:

*“Pippa, Karen and Kate (facilitators) have been good they work in services, but they have been in the process and honest about their views and made an inclusive and safe process.”*

*“The facilitation carefully demonstrated supporting community commissioners, who were in place and with us newbie civic commissioners.”*

(Civic commissioners)

*“The team didn’t know each other incredibly well initially – each brought strengths and passions to facilitate, and the team approach is unique to Hull. Pippa held everything together amazingly coordinating and driving the commission forward.”*

(PTN mentor)

However, as will be shown below – the approach of the facilitators was such that it helped to develop the connections between the commissioners and was the most talked about element of the evaluation process.

*“Investment should be put into the facilitation it is really important.”*

(PTN mentor)

## 4.2 Welcoming hospitality and storytelling – in safe and brave spaces

One of the critical elements in any engagement process is the environment – creating a safe or brave space emotionally is enhanced by the physical space and the comfort that it provides. Westoby and Dowling (2009) argue that hospitality and dialogue are key elements when working towards transformation and social change. The facilitators arranged initial meetings at the Oasis Church on Newland Avenue, with some sessions at Marfleet Community Centre, but for the most part, a permanent home developed at the Jubilee Church in the city centre, as a convenient central place but also with excellent facilities and generous buffets. This was also the site of the launch (date) and the awakening event on the 21.10.22. Hospitality provides a welcoming and accepting space and is critical to recognising and valuing the time commitment that both sets of commissioners gave to the process.

The importance of storytelling was embedded into the facilitation of the HPTC for the first six months, when the community commissioners came together with the facilitator’s tools offered the opportunity to share and listen to each other. Bell’s (2020: 1) book *Storytelling for Social Justice*, related to ‘challenging stock stories that are presented as Truth, posing as seamless narratives that

are part factual, but are portrayed as the whole story’. Bell (2020: 2) spoke of ‘counter-stories, (which she refers to as) concealed, resistance and emerging/transforming stories – speak to broader truths about social conditions’. She saw this to ‘counter’ and ‘act toward justice’. This aspect was important to the community commissioners, who, at the beginning of the process, identified the dominant narratives they had experienced. In one activity with writer Dave Windass, the community commissioners were offered wishes:

*“I wish people would see that I’m not there to be bullied or taken advantage of.”*

*“I wish people would see that I need help to get out of the black hole.”*

*“I wish people would see the everyday life through my eyes because it is not a breeze.”*

*“I wish people would see that I’ve been beaten down a thousand times.”*

*“I wish people would see that I’m somebody who makes people laugh and go on stage and not fall through that trapdoor – the system.”*

To address this ‘the answer lay in storytelling in direct and persuasive ways emanating from the people who experience poverty, which is authentic and powerful to challenge those in power, by illustrating the impacts of ideological decisions in the real world’ (Hughes and Knight 2023: 106).

The approach of speaking truth to power with evidenced experience was a powerful feature of the HPTC – it enabled the civic commissioners to feel the experiences first hand from those who have experienced poverty and systems that exacerbated the situation. This led to very different boards about feelings at the end of the process.

Despite the often emotional and deep discussions that took place within the commission, and as people got to know each other – there was space for fun, gentle banter and shared laughter. commissioners were often amused by one of the facilitators who would bring rolls of wallpaper to record the sessions.

## 4.3 The Lundy Model: It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it (Oliver and James 1939)

The facilitators link into a long tradition of participatory practice in Hull. In the 1990s when Tilly Sellers joined the University of Hull in Public Health, she brought with her experience from her work with Prof Robert Chambers in international development. She trained local communities, activists and practitioners in Participatory (Rural) Appraisal (including facilitator Karen Tozer, evaluator/ advisory group member Gill Hughes and consortium member Tish Lamb – who also became trainers) (Hughes and Knight, 2023). A central focus was the respect for people who are the experts in their lived realities and, as such, can identify issues and solutions rather than have them prescribed by services and academia.

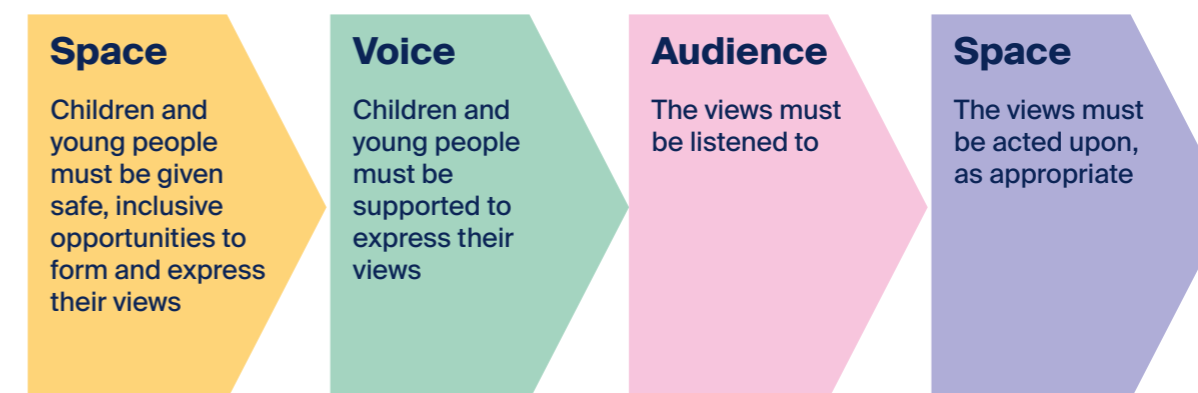
These participatory practices still inform much of the engagement work in Hull. Currently, the Hull City Council Young People’s Voice and Influence team has been working with the city-wide Voice and Influence Partnership to roll out the Lundy model of participation (2007), which was designed to promote children’s and young people’s human rights.

This model resonates with the way of working in the HPTC with four simple components—Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence. Facilitators provided a safe space, the community commissioners’ voices grew, and the audience came in the form of civic commissioners who had influence. As the process unfolded, the distance between the community and civic commissioners grew closer, and they each became the audience and influencer together with equitable voices in their safe space.

There was a deeper element, which Arao and Clemens (2013) explored in their chapter ‘From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces – A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice’. They advocate a step on from safe spaces to create ‘brave spaces’ that enable people to have conversations that may not be easy or comfortable. They assert that creating ground rules that reflect: ‘agree to disagree’, ‘don’t take things personally’, ‘challenge by choice’, ‘respect’ and ‘no attacks’ offers support to being a ‘social justice facilitator’ enabling people involved to ‘interact authentically with one another in challenging dialogues’ (2013: 149). These elements could be seen in the facilitators’ approach to encouraging dialogue during the HPTC sessions and how, through time, trust grew to facilitate honesty:

*“Becoming comfortable being the uncomfortable.”*

## The Lundy Model of Child Participation



(Adapted from the Lundy model based on UNCRC Article 12)



### T for Time

Time is probably the most important aspect as a conduit to all other elements – development processes need time to afford the relationships to build. However, this is a luxury in most processes because of targets, monitoring and milestones. As noted at the beginning of the evaluation the city council who commissioned the HPTC, have been brave and taken a risk.

*“There is a need to slow down to then speed up to create change.”*

(Facilitator)

Author Stephen Covey’s quote **“Change moves at the speed of trust,”** encompasses this way of working. Taking time pays dividends to build trust and once established the processes speed up to create equitable relational engagement leading towards transformative change. The HPTC ensured that there were enough meetings and occasions for this to happen (see Chapter 5). As discussed throughout this document, commissioners understood that the time spent together was only the beginning:

*“It’s been a journey; we need to carry on having open and honest conversations. We’ve got a long way to go with learning.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“If we’re building a community... trust... relationships... that cannot have an end date.”*

(Community commissioner)

There is an increasing recognition that ‘... the negotiation of trusting and ... (equitable) relationships ...does take a lot of (time,) effort and planning, as participation is an interactive and complex process’ (Shubotz 2020:79).

### T for Trust

The HPTC was an eye-opener for most commissioners, as it offered a new way to do things. It was an inclusive and safe space where people felt comfortable, and change occurred throughout the process. Community commissioners recognized that civic commissioners could be part of the solution and civic commissioners made it clear that they cared about the community commissioners and the issues they identified. This created the environment for all commissioners and facilitators to trust the process.

*“I hope relationships have changed, and that community commissioners feel that we give a shit and we are not the whole system. And that we want to listen not just to people who use our services.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*I learnt to trust the process.”*

(Facilitator)

*“They (Community commissioners) were not just talking about it (their challenges); they were having the conversation with people who can do something about it.”*

(Civic commissioner)

### R for Relationships/Relational process

There have been some facilitation tools and techniques that stood out for those taking part, which enabled the relationship building process to take place and provided the safe but also brave spaces that enabled trust to grow. Both sets of commissioners mentioned the River of Life exercise, which the facilitators used. This drew out the stories of both sets of commissioners enabling them to chart their life stories, which identified some shared experiences; for example, marital issues, issues with children and support needs, which formed a bond between the group.

In evaluating the process, we heard acknowledgements for the format in that each session, which started generally sitting in circles – or around circular tables, with a check in and ended with a check out. These are rounds where everyone can speak and share. Some opening rounds were humorous, some reflecting on choices e.g. ‘what was the first record you bought’ – whilst light-hearted these still enabled people to get to know things about each other on an equitable level. Some rounds were more poignant about how people felt or what their week had been like – this opened space for people to share more difficult experiences they had encountered and sometimes joy. The end check-out enabled a closure on the session – an ethically supportive form of taking care of the participants to ensure that after some difficult conversations about the experiences of poverty people were not leaving distressed.

As evaluators observing the commission sessions it was clear that there was a change from an initial cordial engagement to a close-knit group that could enjoy friendly banter and a sense of connectedness over lunch. Both Community and civic commissioners felt that they had developed friendships through the process.

*“For me it’s been about friendships; I’ve made new friends.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“That’s why I come to this group. She (other Community Commissioner) cheers me up every day.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“It was a humbling experience – I met a group of friends. I felt they cared about me as I cared about them.”*

(Civic commissioner)

### E for Ethical ways of working

The PTC Network, which began in Glasgow in 2009, has always focused on the stories of people who have experienced poverty. As part of the recruitment process, people are told that they will need to tell their stories. This is balanced, though, without putting people in the position of having to keep re-telling their stories, which can mean reliving trauma. This is important in the prevention of exploitation and extraction—community commissioners needed to be fully aware of what was asked of them – this links into the ethical approach detailed below.

The check-out process described above was an ethical approach to ways the facilitators took care of the commissioners. In addition, the facilitators, as detailed above, maintained some community Commissioner only sessions to ensure that people offering insight into their experiences are well taken care of – and post commission there is still contact for continuity.

*“The process and how the commission was ran worked well for me. It was informal and as the weeks went by the group became more cohesive and learned about each other. People would check in on how things were going with issues they had discussed, and I feel we got to know each other better. The check ins at the beginning were a great way to relax everyone and give a bit of an insight into our personalities. It was good being on a Friday as it was a really nice way to end the working week getting together with the group.”*

(Civic commissioner)

Some of the community commissioners have had the opportunity to gain support and at times advocacy from facilitators when they have had some personal issues to address. Facilitators were available to speak with or meet with community commissioners in between the more official meetings. It was clear to see through our observations that the bond between community commissioners and facilitators are strong.

A key component for building relational engagement - of trust and through time - was the personal commitment -and moral responsibility that commissioners showed throughout the process - despite not always seeing tangible changes. This, in turn, allowed them to build on and strengthen those relationships. commissioners were missed when they didn't show up, felt bad when they couldn't attend, and the dropout levels were lower than other Poverty Truth Commissions.

*"I was impressed how serious and committed were the community commissioners."*

(Civic commissioner)

*"It felt like civic commissioners wanted to be there. They showed commitment."*

(Community commissioner)

*"We had lower levels of dropouts than other PTCs. The group that ended was almost the same group that started. Their level of commitment and appetite to continue... despite the challenge of not having (many) tangible changes after two years... and they still wanted to be part of it."*

(Facilitator)

*"I have felt a real sense of commitment to the group. If I have been unable to attend it has really bothered me and I have felt that I missed out on parts of the process due to that."*

(Civic commissioner)

*"If I was offered the most amazing job mid-way (of the PTC) I wouldn't have accepted it until the end of the process... and that never happened to me before."*

(Facilitator)

*"We were all committed as everyone else for change - reasons were different but the power - collective power in the room meant that I could go along with a community Commissioner by my side (to the Director of Housing) - I could anyway - but here there was power in the conversation and action taken as a result."*

(Civic commissioner)

During the commission we, as evaluators, were present for most meetings - we were introduced as evaluators, so everyone involved was clear about who we were, where we were from and what we were doing. We continued working with the commissioners and facilitators after the final meeting to create the film with My Pockets and have continued contact to create an exhibition to share the work of the HPTC - retaining engagement and avoiding extraction.

### E for Equitable

Surrendering power is one of the most complex and difficult elements of creating relationships that are equitable. It takes risk and courage to relinquish power.

*"For me, the bit I always come back to is the power of the truth, it started off as community commissioners but now it is a shared truth and the value of keeping the truth at the heart of the matter."*

(Facilitator)

The facilitators worked to create the environment, space and belief that this could happen, drawing on their own ethos, which led to choice of tools and processes - the key was that the commissioners were willing to participate fully, to actively listen and to reflect together on how to address the issues raised - this generated equity and that led to a power shift. In the My Pockets film the civic commissioners were keen to portray this as a reciprocal process - together they made changes. It wasn't that community commissioners identified something, and

civic commissioners then made change - they worked together e.g. on the carpet issue, formed a working group on mental health discussed below.

Prior to the commission, change seemed less than possible but throughout the process the openness and willingness to explore experiences of the community commissioners is articulated here:

*"Previously (I felt like) a minion now (we) can talk to top people - given our voices some clout - not just a pat on the head 'must be awful.'"*

(Community commissioner)

*"The entire process has given me more value of my words and opinions."*

(Community commissioner)

*"We were on the same level - no lanyards - more human."*

(Community commissioner)

### E for Engagement

Engagement is about the process and approach that enables people to come together and commit to working alongside each other. For the purpose in this case, this was to rethink poverty in Hull and how those who have experienced poverty and those whose services sometimes exacerbate it but are committed to wanting to address poverty can explore solutions together. Time, trust, relational equity and ethical considerations underpin effective engagement between partners and as demonstrated has been instrumental in creating these strong relationships, which have been documented throughout the evaluation from the voices of those involved. The My Pockets film epitomizes the process telling the story of how all the elements came together to create transformational change individually, within organizations, at systems and policy level to work towards contributing to a flourishing society via sharing and working together with the national PTC network.

### Retaining Engagement with community commissioners

This is important in terms of maintaining connections with the commissioners from the first HPTC - most especially the community commissioners, the pioneers for change who want to continue this work. They have seen how collaboration has paid dividends and during the evaluation they expressed a need to continue because the next commission will be a different set of people and different set of themes. Some of the community commissioners will be involved in the ongoing task groups detailed below but there are other possibilities to develop their involvement (see recommendations). Maintaining their involvement has also been advised:

*"This has been so powerful. We cannot lose the community commissioners."*

(Civic commissioner)

*"The community commissioners could be involved in poverty proofing."*

(Advisory group)

*"It is important to take care of the wellbeing of community commissioners as the PTC has been a massive part of their lives so what next is important."*

(PTN mentor)



Keeping the commissioners on board is crucial to prevent two other Es- extraction and exploitation. Often in engagement, whether in projects, decision-making or research the voices of communities can be tokenistic, which can lead to extraction of the information and no ongoing engagement, which in turn can lead to co-option and feel like exploitation. The quotes as part of this HPTC evaluation testify to the opposite. The community commissioners feel their voices have been heard in an equitable way - these boards demonstrate the change in how they felt after the process as opposed to the negative feelings expressed prior to the commission.

A key element, as will be demonstrated in the launch and Awakening events, was the process of coproduction. This is a term used a great deal in relation to engagement. It is not new, it was developed in the 1970s by a political economist - Elinor Ostrom, to represent the role of people who use services being involved in the decisions on producing public goods and services acknowledging the assets that people who use services offer to improving them - which is fitting for the HPTC process. It is a much-used term, however, can sometimes become rhetoric than reality; Steiner et al (2023: 1590) argue that 'co-production can fail if power is not effectively and equitably shared between collaborating partners, and if insufficient attention is given to the range of interests involved (Levelt and Janssen-Jansen 2013)'.

*"Coproduction is really powerful if done right - you know it because you can feel if it is coproduced it is somatic."*

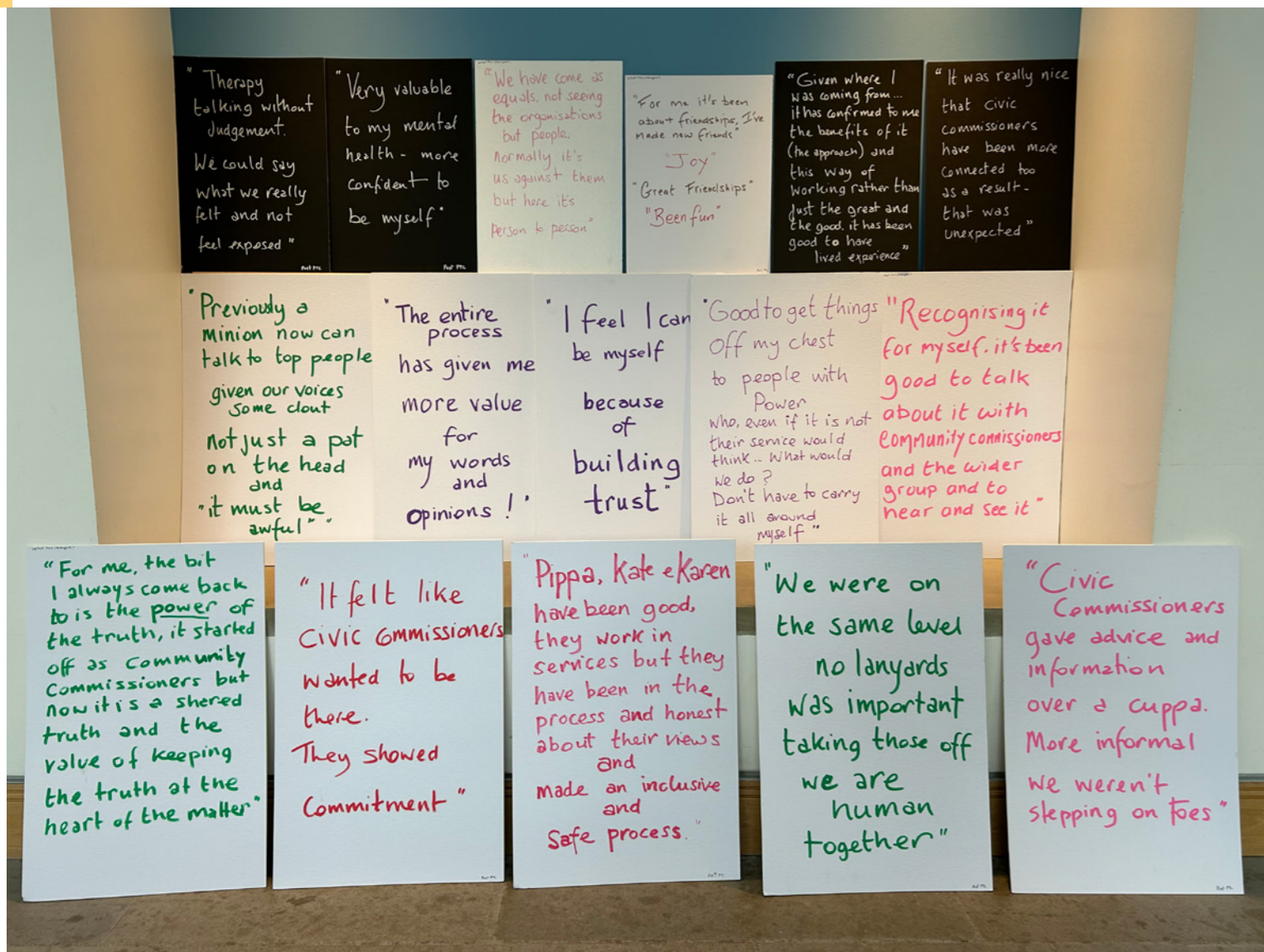
(Facilitator)

It was noted by the PTN mentor how clear it was that community commissioners had been central to organising the events. The facilitators made concerted efforts to ensure the community-led element of the PTC process was front and central. As can be seen in chapter 7 - coproduction is being explored by the new lived experience worker based at Forum to identify good practice.

### Summary:

- The HPTC set out to embed a set of core principles in its approach to engagement, including **lived experience, humanizing everyone, paying attention, powerful relationships and seeing more clearly.**
- **The HPTC facilitators** were crucial to developing trusting relationships. They brought essential organisational skills and participatory practice to ensure the commission was well organised.
- **The Lundy Model** resonates with the way of working in the HPTC with four simple components: Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence.
- We introduced the **TTREEE approach** (Time, Trust, Relationships, Ethical, Equitable, engagement to shift power and change systems) to illustrate the values and ingredients at the core of the relationships built at the HPTC.

(Photograph - Evaluator)



(Still from short film: My Pockets)

# Chapter 5. How much did we do?

“A strong foundation for moving forward”

## 5.1 The process is as, if not more, than the product

As discussed in the previous chapters, a key ingredient for a successful commission is the time taken for engagement meetings and activities—this is also a key to participatory approaches. In February 2022, there was an information meeting with the Consortium facilitated by Pippa Robson, Gill Hughes and Sally Barlow to share the history of how the PTC came into being and the ambitions for the city. Councillors Pantelakis and Bridges (see Chapter 3) gave an overview of the process to date. The session then moved into group work on the workings of the Commission going forward. A follow-up meeting in June 2022 was organised for Andrew Grinnell from the Poverty Truth Network to talk through the process.

The consortium, advisory group and facilitators identified the community commissioners; in most PTCs, there are around 15, but in Hull, it settled at about 7 – after 3 of the initial community commissioners left and one who joined later – TJ, JD, Sarah, Julie, Kirsti, John and Dena. After initial concerns, advice was:

*“You work with who you have – go with it.”*

(PTN mentor)

This did pay off and also influenced the number of civic commissioners recruited to ensure equity.

The community commissioners met with the facilitators for almost six months before the civic commissioners came on board.

*“In terms of the process, the time spent with community commissioners, they got that right.”*

(PTN lead)

Those meetings aimed for community commissioners to get to know each other, form relationships, and prepare to invite the civic commissioners into the HPTC. These 2–4-hour meetings were held between April and October 2022 in different locations across the city, including Oasis Community Hub, Freedom Centre, and Timebank.

The recruitment of civic commissioners was mainly done by Pippa Robson. It included meetings before and after the launch event and several workshops, information sessions, and one-to-one meetings to engage with mission, aims, and ways of working expected for the HPTC it settled with – Julia, Mike, Erica, Paul, Jenny, Julian, Dave, and Debbie.

Between February 2023 and June 2024, the HPTC included 17 joint community and civic commissioner meetings. During that period, we, evaluators, participated in almost all of those meetings, as well as meetings with each group (commissioners, Consortium, facilitators, and Advisory Group) separately.

commissioners valued the format of HPTC and the ways this was innovative for them:

*“The process and how the commission was run worked well for me. It was informal, and as the weeks went by, the group became more cohesive and learned about each other. People would check in on how things were going with issues they had discussed, and I feel we got to know each other better. The check-ins at the beginning of each meeting (led by the facilitators) were a great way to relax everyone and give a bit of an insight into our personalities. It was good being on a Friday as it was a really nice way to end the working week getting together with the group.”*

(Civic commissioner)

During the HPTC's life, there were also several PTC Network regional gatherings, which one of the facilitators attended with community commissioners. In October 2024, the evaluators and three community commissioners also attended the Staffordshire University Action on Poverty Conference 2024 to share Hull's experience as they were planning to set up a Poverty Truth Commission in Stoke.

These gatherings enabled community commissioners to amplify their voices as part of the bigger network picture across the country. They also enabled shared insight and learning, ideas, and approaches that could inform the PTC practice.

Two of the community commissioners have attended several of the Network gatherings and have drawn out issues and shared learning from the HPTC at these events (e.g. the carpet issue drawn from Tyneside).

*“Initially as PTC ‘newbies’ there was much to draw from and now as the HPTC has unfolded we are sought out to share experiences.”*

(Facilitator)

In PTCs that have around 15 community and 15 civic commissioners, there can also be task groups within the commission to explore different areas. In the HPTC, however, and according to one of the facilitators, these task groups:

*“... didn't work as well in HPTC... they weren't as applicable and necessary as in other places (considering we had lower numbers)”*

(Facilitator)

Thus, most of the work was discussed and addressed by the whole group. However, where a specific issue did come through, task groups were formed so that each could take a deeper look at the different themes. These were formed by one or two community commissioners group and one or two civic commissioners, who would then inform the rest of the group about challenges, outputs, and possible next steps on those specific topics. There were five task group meetings, including one related to housing, two to letter writing, and three to mental health (see Chapter 5). In the making of the My Pockets film, it was initially depicted that community commissioners identified issues and civic commissioners then took this forward, but the civic commissioners were really keen to say this was about both parties being involved – that having community commissioners alongside gave depth with evidence to challenge for change.

As further explained in the following chapter, inspired by the will of community commissioners, we, evaluators, commissioned My Pockets, a production company based in Yorkshire, to co-produce an animated short film. Following the participatory ethos of the HPTC, we had several meetings (between June and July 2024) with the community, civic commissioners and facilitators to represent what the story meant for those involved throughout the process. We would meet, discuss, identify ideas, and then meet again with the filmmakers, Peter and Sally, to agree on the script and images in an iterative process. The film was presented at the Awakening Event in July 2024. From then until November, we met again with the community commissioners to prepare an exhibition in the city centre to engage and present the work that had been done to the wider community. This exhibition is created by the community commissioners, and will open together with the launch of this report in November 2024.

## It takes Time to build trusted relationships to strengthen collaboration



**6** Informal gatherings community commissioners during the commission. 14 hours.

**8** Pre-launch meetings with Community commissioners. 27 hours.

**5** Task group meetings Housing meeting/letter writing session /mental health working groups. 10 hours.

**3** Meetings and interviews to recruit Civic commissioners approx. 16 hours.

**6** Meetings co-producing the short film. 20 hours.



**17** PTC Joint Community and Civic commissioners formal meetings. 38 hours.

**2** Events - Opening and Awakening. 10 hours.

- And...**
- Consortium meetings
  - Annual 2 day Gatherings - Regional meetings of the PTC Network
  - Facilitators' Monthly PTC planning pre-joint commission meetings
  - Monthly HPTC Advisory Group
  - PTN meetings
  - ... and a number of meetings with individual partners (e.g. the Warren, to record voices of young people for the launch)
  - Meetings with Community commissioners to plan the exhibition in progress.

## 5.2 Showcasing the HPTC

This chapter describes four HPTC landmarks: the launch of the event (October 2022), the awakening event (July 2024, when the HPTC came to fruition), the HPTC animated film (July 2024), and the HPTC exhibition (November 2024). The following sections detail these landmarks and address to what extent and how they were meaningful to the people involved. The awakening event, the film, the exhibition, and this report all contribute to evaluating the first Hull Poverty Truth Commission.

### 5.2.1 The Launch Event

The HPTC launch on October 21st, 2022 - at Jubilee Church from 11- 2 pm - there was an explanation of what the HPTC was; the community commissioners generously shared their stories, and the prepared tasks enabled people to think about and reflect on their own experiences. The event also acted as a recruitment process for civic commissioners.

*“I didn't expect to cry at the opening event”*

(Advisory Board)

The event began with a request to remove lanyards and turn off phones - this was about people meeting on an equitable footing and being present. The tables were arranged to have a mix of community commissioners with potential civic commissioners. One task required the table groups to create paper chains with strengths and barriers so that there was an opportunity for people around the table to share their experiences on the same level. Around 100 people took part.

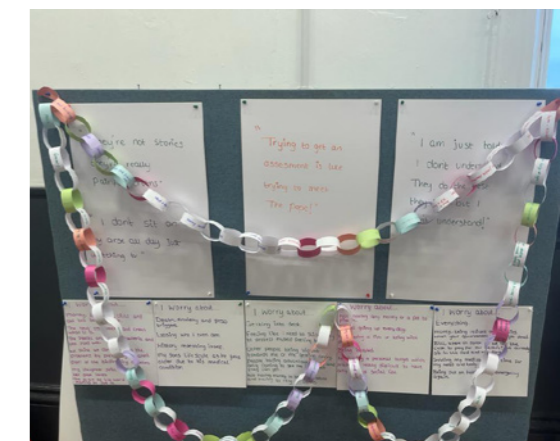
This event was coproduced between the facilitators and community commissioners. Interactive elements were identified to engage the audience, and quotes decorated the room, which expressed how the community commissioners experienced poverty - many of these related to the stigmatising impact they experienced (see photographs below). As a result of this powerful event, several local leaders came forward to apply to be civic commissioners. They were tasked with writing a short application about why they felt they were the right people to participate.

One of the civic commissioners manages a multi-issue hub and is new to the city. They felt that it was important to take part both to identify how the work of the HPTC could support the work of the hub and because this would act as a place to understand the issues of poverty and meet with people in the city to build a network.

Another was requested to come forward by two community commissioners, who worked alongside them in the east of the city and represented a major VCSE organisation.

The feelings expressed on the boards link with the earlier discussions on stigma - which hit hard at the opening event.

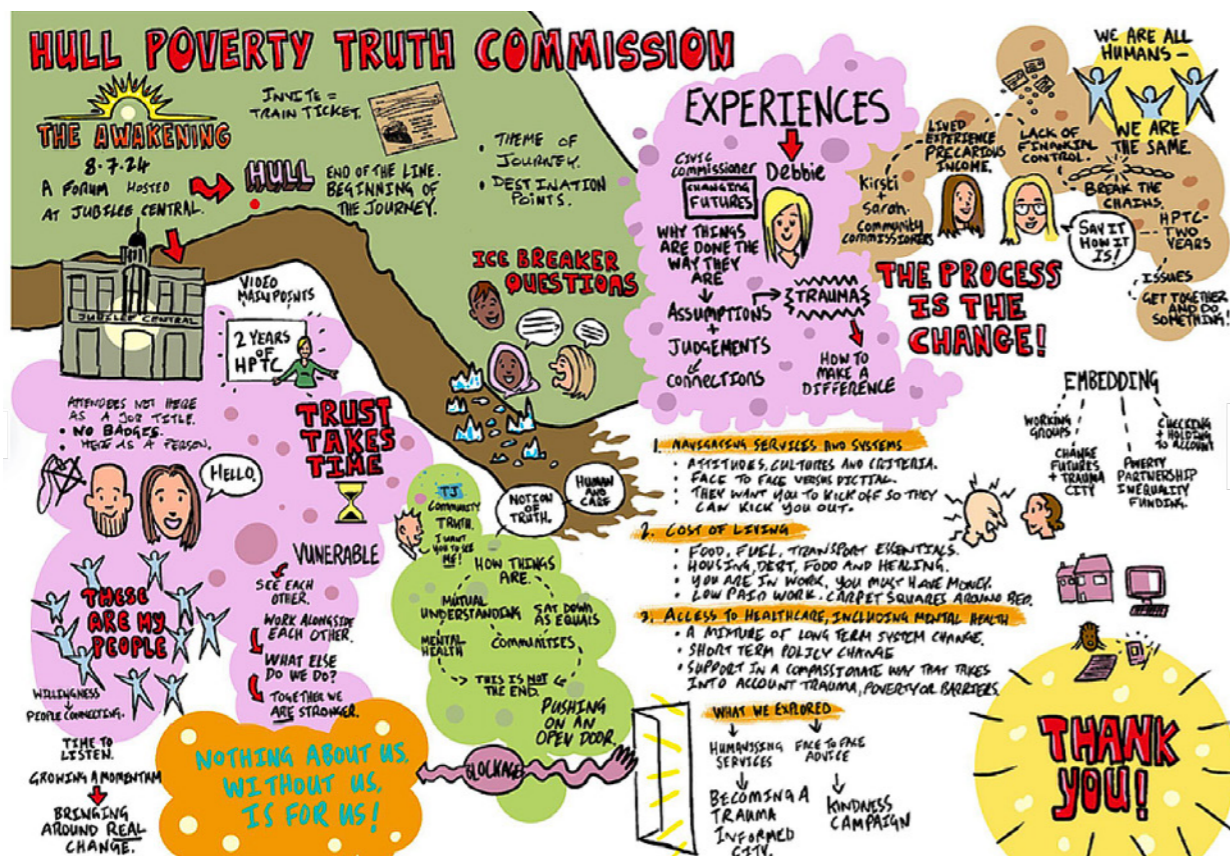
There is a distinct difference in the feelings expressed in the Awakening Event and the boards produced for the ending of the first commission. Before that, as part of the evaluation, we asked the community commissioners how they would like to represent the HPTC, and they suggested an animated film. We approached My Pockets, because of their work on animating social issues.



(Photograph shared by one of the facilitators from an activity with the local writer, Dave Windass- I worry about)



The meeting was captured with visual minutes:



(Visual minutes artist Sean Azzopard)

### 5.2.4 The Exhibition Hull city centre

(20-22 Brook Street, HU2 8LA Hull)

In November 2024, together with the launch of this report, we will open the Poverty Truth Commission exhibition. This initiative, created by the HPTC’s community commissioners, will be open for two weeks in a shop not used in the city centre, which Hull City Council let us, especially for this occasion. The

interactive exhibition showcases part of the process of the first HPTC, including personal stories, community challenges, and policy change. In doing so, it provokes attendees to reflect on the causes of poverty, visualise its impact at different levels and learn about the creative approach taken by the Poverty Truth Commission to do things differently. The exhibition, as this report, the film, and the awakening event are all part of evaluating the first Hull Poverty Truth Commission providing different inclusive ways to explore the story of the HPTC.

### Summary:

- A key ingredient for the success of HPTC was the **time** taken for engagement meetings and activities—this is also a key to participatory approaches. For the commissioners, the time building relationships were as important, if not more, than the immediate tangible changes.
- The **HPTC’s launch** on October 21st, 2022, acted as a means to explain the HPTC. The event also acted as a recruitment process for civic commissioners. Around 100 people took part.
- In discussion with the Community commissioners, it was decided to make **an animated film** about the process. This enabled all parties to reflect on what happened, and how the commissioners felt throughout the process.
- On July 8, 2024, the first HPTC came to fruition and hosted an **“awakening event”** (named in that way because it was considered to be just the beginning of working more collaboratively, putting people at the centre of what is done in Hull). Over 100 people attended the session.
- In November 2024, together with the launch of this report, we will open the **Poverty Truth Commission exhibition**. This initiative, curated by one of HPTC’s community commissioners, will be open for two weeks in a shop not used in the city centre, which Hull City Council let us especially for this occasion. The interactive exhibition showcases part of the process of the first HPTC, including personal stories, community challenges, and policy change.
- The **exhibition**, as this **report**, the **films**, and the **awakening event** are all part of evaluating the first Hull Poverty Truth Commission.

# Chapter 6. Is anyone better off?

“To listen, how a small improvement can have a huge impact for a lot of people, and how fragmented and unhelpful the ‘system’ is for people trying to set support and support others.”

(Civic commissioner)

This chapter will examine some of the tangible changes (and consequent measures) that have been established due to the HPTC. These changes are presented in response to three main themes identified by the community commissioners before the civic commissioners joined the discussions.

The three main themes (that overlink and overlap) are:

- **Theme 1- Cost of Living**  
(of which housing became the central issue)
- **Theme 2- Access to Healthcare**  
(of which mental health became the major sub-theme)
- **Theme 3- Navigating systems and services**  
(focusing mainly, but not exclusively, on attitudes and behaviours).

As the changes are in progress, it is difficult to chart the success and immediate ability to alleviate poverty and its surrounding issues, such as mental health and service provision. However, we offer some measures that can be implemented to chart the future changes these initial themes address.

Outcome Based Accountability™ (OBA) was developed by Mark Friedman (as Results-Based Accountability) (Burnby 2024) to enable service providers to reflect and act to improve the lives of communities by enhancing the performance of services and projects with a tool to measure the change. Employing the OBA principles means this

chapter will provide measures to evaluate whether people are better off because of the HPTC, with the change process in progress. The Whole Population outcome for the HPTC could be articulated as: ‘All people in Hull enjoy a flourishing life free from poverty’.

This identifies specifically that the focus is on people experiencing poverty as the -primary target group for being better off. Thus, the HPTC has been developing actions to contribute to the long-term Whole Population Outcome.

In Outcome-Based Accountability:

- “How Much did we do” addresses the quantity of effort, e.g., the number of sessions, meetings, and gatherings carried out, and provides the basis for evaluating the size and scope of the project (Chapter 5)
- “How well did we do it” addresses the quality of the effort, featuring measures that demonstrate that all the interventions were done well, such as timely and correct actions, high satisfaction levels, etc. (Chapter 6)
- “Is anyone any better off?” addresses the Performance outcomes of the primary beneficiaries of the project, capturing the impact of the changes that have occurred and their likely contribution to the stated Whole Population outcome (Chapter 6)

One particularity of Poverty Truth Commissions is that change occurs throughout the process and at different levels. Commissioners and facilitators reflected on their experiences and shared the main changes they observed and what they meant at an individual, community/organisational, and system and policy level. Their responses came from informal conversations and focused sessions (throughout the process), personal and group interviews, and open-ended surveys (after the last HPTC meeting). The relational engagement process in the commission’s work has a vehicle that drives change. Without the approach taken, it is unlikely that the HPTC would have achieved its current success. The stories of the community commissioners have informed the level of understanding of those who hold the power to create change.

*“I have learnt (because of the HPTC) how a small improvement can have a huge impact for a lot of people. How fragmented and unhelpful the ‘system’ is for people trying to get support and support others.”*

(Civic commissioner)

The HPTC story may not show huge concrete change **yet**, but these are in progress and unfolding. The PTC Network acknowledges that this is a long-term process. The key focal point is recognising that the process is as important as the product and that ‘relationships matter’ (Field, 2003). Commitments have been made to make changes, which is great progress towards system change and power being shifted to ensure that people who experience poverty will be part of the decision-making process to challenge and change the current situation. It is important to reiterate that the major change in the HPTC is related to attitudes and commitment to collaboration, coproduction and addressing systems change (chapter 7).

The tables below show the main changes that occur for each of these themes. Some relate directly to individual change (I), and others to organisational change (O) or policy/systems change (P/S).

## Cost of living

Local Authority Housing review of tenancy agreement relating to carpet removal in the lease – a commitment to allow floor coverings to stay if serviceable for the next tenant. (April 2024 – 105 carpets left in properties since November out of potential 1800) Current figures: awaiting details.	I, O, P, S
Action: Follow up to ensure lease changes to remove the fine for leaving carpets on the property. Communicate this change to all tenants.	
Focus groups set up to feed into government decisions on the implementation of powers to be exercised by Local Authorities under the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act 2023 – underway.	P, S (potential I, O)
Direct payments - meeting the head of Adult Social Care to discuss the mismatch of 4 weekly/monthly payments. There was no immediate solution but an agreement to review direct payments and care packages a task group is in progress.	I, S
Lack of information - Forum produced a booklet on behalf of the HPTC, detailing organisations in the city that offer support, for example, access to food providers – in its 4th reprint and available across the city.	I, O

## Access to healthcare

<p><b>A HPTC commissioner working group</b> was set up to explore issues around access to mental health services leading to changes below. A VCSE event planned in November 2024 to share issues and understand access to provision.</p>	
<p><b>A mental health working group was set up to explore the issues and examine the system-leading changes below, and an event was held in November 2024 to share issues, how to access them, and what is available.</b></p>	I, O, S
<p><b>*Investment increased funding</b> to Mind for more staff to answer the crisis phone lines.  <b>*Admin support staff</b> were moved to ensure phones are answered if a practitioner isn't immediately available.  <b>*Humber Trust</b> conducting an <b>evaluation</b> to understand the process of call handling through Mind.</p>	I, O, S
<p><b>A direct line</b> from Mind to crisis team for quicker to a crisis practitioner.</p>	I, O, S
<p><i>“We will be including more detailed economic impact assessment in our service design to ensure that accessing our services does not further impact those already experiencing poverty and find ways we can help reduce this.”</i>                  (Civic commissioner)</p>	I, O, P, S

## Attitudes and Navigating services

<p><b>The inappropriate tone of letters</b> - Local Authority Head of Customer Services will work with an HPTC commissioner task group via Forum on rewriting letters to be more supportive <b>in progress.</b>                  Humber Trust amending letters to address issues for people with ADHD with community commissioner</p>	I, O, S
<p><b>A lived experience practitioner</b> funded through Changing Futures (civic commissioner) is now hosted by Forum (convenor of the consortium) foregrounding the inclusion of unheard voices to coproduce services and decision-making processes (chapter 7)</p>	I, O, P, S
<p><b>Examining coproduction practices</b> across the city via Lived Experience worker developing good co-production practices. (See Chapter 7)</p>	I, O, P/S
<p><i>“We (Department for Work and Pensions) are now working much closer with the Council – it speeds stuff up. As a result, we now have housing in our office, and it helps resolve things much quicker for people.”</i>                  (Civic commissioner)</p>	I, O, P/S
<p><b>Kindness charter</b> - There is a commitment (from HPTC) to develop a kindness charter to ensure that everyone who uses services and those who provide them works to be kind and understanding in encounters: <b>in progress.</b></p>	I, P/S
<p><b>Supported Housing team</b> - A letter was amended with a paragraph about receiving the work schedule so tenants know the timescale and what is happening.</p>	I, O, P, S

The following sections of this chapter examine these findings in-depth, presenting some of their challenges, opportunities, and possible future actions.

## 6.1 Theme 1: Cost of living

The cost of living was a key focus when discussing challenges related to poverty, and many examples were identified. Commissioners recognised that it wasn't necessarily possible to solve something that was a national concern but that there were elements that contributed locally, which added to the impact, and equally, aspects that could alleviate it. Some of the key themes related to cost of living were:

- **Housing:** Crossed all three HPTC themes in particular ways. Housing and the approaches of services often frustrated people and, as such, impacted mental health. Housing included local authority and external housing providers, including supported accommodation.
- **Access to information:** Also became a major talking point across themes, with community commissioners commenting on how people felt they had to join the HPTC to discover many things that could have helped themselves and others.
- **Food provision** was a central focus. This included access to and provision of food, information about vouchers, and other related issues.
- **Schools** and how they incur significant costs for parents and carers
- **Added costs:** Some services create costs, e.g. phone calls eat up data.
- **Direct Payments** and disability-related financing and expenditure.
- **In-work poverty:** Many people are on low wages and precarious contracts.

## 6.1.1 Housing

*“Housing has already looked at the way they deal with private sector enforced housing repairs, but there is still work to do to make sure that this is not just tinkering round the edges.”*

(Facilitator)

Hull has 24,500 council-owned properties in the city, but the City Council is also responsible for overseeing the provision of private and voluntary sector services. Leading from the HPTC, a process to explore how change can be introduced into how the council manages tenancies has begun.

### Removal of carpets from Council properties

Two community commissioners attended a northern PTC network meeting. They identified that Gateshead PTC had begun to change systems so that when someone moved out of council property, the usual process of removal of all elements that had been put into the house/flat during the tenancy, e.g. carpets, would be removed. This meant that new tenants had to start again with floor coverings. In Gateshead, there had been a negotiation to keep the carpets and goods if they were serviceable and wanted by the new tenants, saving money for the new tenant.

The idea was brought back to HPTC, where a community and a civic commissioner (lead in the City Council) worked together to prepare an approach to the new Director of Housing. This paid dividends, as the Director could immediately see the benefits of changing this policy and put it forward for implementation.

Clearly, if the goods were in poor order, they would be removed. However, if serviceable and in agreement with the new tenant – they could be retained.

### The cost of budget carpets, underlay and fitting:

1 bed flat - £1,038  
 2 bed flat - £1,257  
 2 bed house - £1,488  
 (Courtesy of Wilson's Carpets Hull)

*“Or thick slippers, jumpers, hat and gloves.”*

(community commissioner)

Change	Example Performance Measures
New tenants will not have to pay out for new carpets/floor coverings	<p><b>(How much)</b> The number of outgoing tenants leaving serviceable floor coverings</p> <p><b>(How Well)</b> Number/% of incoming tenants taking advantage of the offer*</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Amount of money saved by use of existing floor coverings (maybe in total, and average per family)</p> <p>*This is a "How Well (quality) measure in that it could demonstrate how well the scheme was advertised to incoming tenants (it could be that new tenants could take advantage of the scheme but were not made aware of it)</p>
The previous tenant may incur less removal fees.	<p><b>(How much)</b> The number/% of outgoing tenants saving money on removals</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Total estimated savings by outgoing tenants</p>
Reduction in waste and landfill	<p><b>(Better Off)</b> Tonnage of waste diverted from landfill</p>

This has the potential for economic change, which can directly alleviate elements of poverty.

Action	Measures
Review tenancy agreement (See above)	Number of tenants who don't incur additional costs of removing or buying new carpets

The tangible changes in the way Council tenancies are managed are work in progress:

*"The carpets issue should be one. However, there is still work to do. Without working with the teams on the ground who deliver this, we risk being seen as top-down by the workers who have to implement it. We have to understand barriers, like to implement so we can remove them. We know, for instance, yes, housing has said it can and will be done, but the tenancy has not changed, so there may be other issues. This is just the*

*start of the process, and there is a risk that if we don't follow the whole thing through, the policy may just get abandoned or dropped later down the line as unmanageable."*

(Facilitator)

This was picked up on the broader commission movement and made the news, which is promising for potential systems change at a societal level.

**Supported accommodation**

Numerous issues related to housing came up, some related to local authority provision, some care homes, and some supported living. For this reason, several guests to the commission related to different forms of housing, which had links to the council department.

Supported accommodation became a significant issue, with a number of community commissioners having issues with differing forms of supported housing.

A community commissioner who joined later in the process brought a very particular issue that was not related only to themselves but was a common issue. They lived in supported accommodation aligned with specific provision for women. For over two years, the community commissioner, who has a young child, had been experiencing severe issues with dampness and mould seeping into furniture and the walls and was still awaiting action. The Local Authority inspects such properties and requires action. The tenants should receive communications that offer a work schedule. This was not the experience of the community commissioner concerned and others they knew of.

Part of the role of PTCs is to invite guests responsible for the issues raised to meetings.

*"HCC are also, as a result, looking at supported housing and the links between housing and support, identifying how these impact the most vulnerable tenants."*

(Facilitator)

The Supported Accommodation Review Team Manager of Hull City Council, wasn't aware of the HPTC before he was invited to attend a session.

*"I found the visit (to the HPTC) to be useful, providing an opportunity to hear the views of the attendees regarding their experiences of living in supported accommodation and working in/ with residents in this housing sector. It was also useful in allowing the service that my Team provides to be better understood by organisations that provide services to residents in supported accommodation."*

The box below shows the changes at individual and organisational level:

Change	Example Performance Measures
The Supported Accommodation Review Team's process for communicating with residents following a property inspection was amended to improve resident information. The Team inspects approximately 180 properties per year, and residents in these properties will benefit from the amendment to the procedure.	<p><b>(How Much)</b> Number of people receiving resident information regarding actions required by the Council to be completed by their landlord.</p> <p><b>(How Well)</b> Number/% of tenants reporting recommended remedial work being carried out by landlord within (target period) Number/% of tenants reporting understanding of information regarding required actions within their tenancy agreement</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Number/% of tenants reporting improved satisfaction with accommodation following remedial work being carried out.</p>

**Check on Progress** - Evaluation will be reviewed in 6 and 12 months to see progress.



This box shows the changes at local and national systems level:

<p>Contacts made with Forum have benefited both Forum and the Supported Accommodation Review Team.</p> <p>As a result of this working relationship, further engagement has been conducted with supported residents to consider their view of “good support.”</p>	<p>Focus Groups have been set up, which would not have happened without the HPTC and are effective (facilitator)</p> <p>Informed response to Government consultation in preparation for Government decisions on the implementation of powers to be exercised by Local Authorities under the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act 2023</p> <p>Performance Measures could be:</p> <p>(How Much): Number of Focus Groups established</p> <p>(How Well): Number/% of focus group attendees who felt their concerns were listened to and recorded accurately</p> <p>Better Off measure: Any evidence that resident input was heard and acted on regarding implementing powers.</p>
<p><b>Check on Progress</b> - Evaluation will be reviewed in 6 and 12 months to see progress.</p>	

The following box explains the purpose and process of the focus group:

<p><b>Focus group:</b></p>
<p><b>Purpose Statement</b></p> <p>The Government wants to review how supported accommodation works, its rules and regulations and the ‘Support Exempt Accommodation’.</p> <p>Currently, a range of providers in Hull receive Enhanced Housing Benefit to work with individuals in their accommodation settings. Hull City Council has a team that works with these providers to check the standard of accommodation and support offered. Because Hull City Council isn’t commissioning (buying services from) these organisations directly for the accommodation/support, it has limited powers in terms of regulating them.</p> <p>This means if the support offered is very poor, they can only impose a penalty to remove the enhanced housing benefit for the individual involved. This can make life harder, not easier, for the individual who needs support.</p> <p>This is one of the reasons the UK Government wants to review the whole enhanced housing benefit and supported accommodation system.</p> <p>What does good support look like?</p> <p><b>Question set 1 – thinking about support</b></p> <p><b>Question set 2 – the quality of support</b></p> <p><b>Question set 3 – different types of support</b></p> <p><b>Question set 4 – when things go wrong</b></p>

Initially, Hull City Council intended to have a one-day event. However, the focus group is providing much more depth and detail, which would not have been harvested without this HPTC initiative.

## 6.1.2 Food provision

Other issues related to the cost of food and fuel and the view that there are food deserts in the city. There was a discussion about the sudden change in supermarket approaches - many now have ‘Too Good to Go’ bags. Two community commissioners are part of an organisation in the east of the city, which has a community shop providing food for people struggling to cope. They suggest that this supermarket food would typically have found its way to community food provision, but supermarkets are now selling themselves.

A community commissioner noted that more opening times for food provision needed to be established for people with disabilities to align with social care support.

Community food providers are often the places where additional support needs are spotted. It was noted that it is essential that all providers have time to chat with the people who come in, as this is where issues can be solved, information shared, and services signposted.

Action	Measures
<p>Forum produced a booklet on behalf of the Poverty Truth Commission, which contained details of food provision across the city as well as other services and organisations.</p>	<p><b>(How Much)</b> Number of booklets Produced – so far, initial run for the Awakening event plus 4 additional print runs</p> <p><b>(How Well)</b> Number/% of recipients who report the booklet being helpful/easy to read, etc.</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Number/% recipients reporting access to quality food as a result of information contained within the booklet</p>

## 6.1.3 In-work poverty

Several discussions took place on this issue, which has been publicised increasingly over the last decade. With the austerity policies put in place by the Coalition government from 2010, which in turn made huge cuts for the City Council, Covid-19 brought issues with lockdown and employers having to close and scarcity of food initially, followed by the fuel crisis – and the phrase – heat or eat, which has become a significant concern alongside the cost-of-living crisis. More working people are using food banks and other food provisions and struggling to live on their incomes. This is also exacerbated by job insecurity, zero-hour contracts and an increasing gig economy.

*“You can’t deal with the money because you’re trapped in situations. Even when I’ve had work, it’s low-paid.”*

(Community commissioner)

This also played into the discussion about the lack of knowledge of what support is available, and as such, the information booklet will be helpful.

### 6.1.4 Systems and practices that cost people money

A significant issue related to how some organisations contribute to creating additional costs for people who experience poverty.

For example:

\* Asking people to hold on to the telephone line while it goes through a system of buttons to press, then a long wait listening to music—which uses up data and, thus, costs money.

\* Offering a small grant that would cost more to travel to collect it.

Disability expenditures are impacted. For example, some needs can be covered with financial support, but others, such as charging an electric wheelchair, are not covered—but this is essential for mobility.

There were discussions on how staff could be more poverty aware in their dealings with tenants – some PTCs provide mentoring to people experiencing poverty (see also section 6.3.1)

Action: See the recommendations section on developing a poverty-proofing tool for organisations to self-assess their services.

## 6.2 Theme 2: Access to healthcare

Discussions took place on access to GPs and other generic health issues, but most of the discussions focused on mental health. It became apparent that there was huge frustration from the community commissioners but equally from the facilitators who often support people who experience mental health issues and, specifically those in crisis.

This became the most discussed issue. On first examination, it does not obviously speak to poverty, but it is interwoven throughout and can often be seen as a trigger for or a consequence of experiencing poverty.

### 6.2.1 Mental health

In early November 2023, a PTC working group set up a session to understand and discuss access to the mental health system. A second session took place in March 2024. The main focus was crisis management and how community commissioners felt the system was not working well for people who needed urgent support. Facilitators also shared their experiences supporting people they work with in addition to their main roles and attempting, as practitioners, to access on behalf of people in crisis.

*“I feel lucky because I have mates, but I feel sorry for those who don’t and need to wait 60 hours for a call to tell them not to commit suicide.”*

*“I’m not better off since I was diagnosed.”*

*“Even the word suicidal has been desensitised.”*

(Community commissioners)

Discussions included understanding entry points into the mental health system, police responses and systems being trialled and tested, support for staff and the environment that crisis teams work in, prevention, and working with other agencies and primary care models.

One civic commissioner – the Police and Crime Commissioner – was able to point to some changes that the Police made to try to address mental health concerns. He explained a national strategy called **Right Care Right Person**:

In England and Wales, the Right Care, Right Person approach assesses if the police are the most appropriate service to respond. While some mental health-related incidents may need the police, other services may be more suitable. Health and social care staff have the experience and training to provide the relevant physical and mental health support.

The aim of this approach is:

- to get the person or people involved the right help as soon as possible
- to prevent further distress to the person
- to allow the police to focus resources on preventing crime, protecting life and property and keeping public order

Police forces using this approach have already benefited by being able to provide more appropriate responses.

In England, police and partner agencies have signed a National Partnership Agreement. They will work together to ensure people get the right support. Their regular meetings allow knowledge sharing and improved services.

The Humberside police use the THRIVE model for triaging: threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability, and engagement. They commissioned Mind to be part of their call centre team. This civic commissioner was not able to continue in the HPTC; however, partway through, the Clinical Director for Humber Trust became a civic commissioner, and this made a huge difference to the conversations because the initial discussion had taken place with commissioners who, for the most part, did not have any power to influence change in mental health services.

All commissioners were invited to reflect on how Mental Health provision should look (points of access, information, supportive relationships, etc.). Partway through the commission, a question was posed: What does good mental health provision look like? The focus was mainly on crisis services and the inadequacy of the response.

#### HPTC suggested actions requested related to what a good service could look like:

Shortening waiting lists, speaking to someone straight away and talking to humans, not automated systems. This was in response to many stories offered in the commission about access to support, specifically when in crisis and response being poor. Long waits on the telephone, offered medication without talking, what was the system – it was not easy to navigate. The previous triage services had stopped.

#### What people wanted:

- There was a call for kindness and compassion, people-centred approaches, early intervention and prevention approaches, and a request for information on how the process works.
- A care coordinator – people who can navigate between services as systems don’t link up – e.g. GP, Hospital and Humber Trust.
- Wellbeing practitioners.
- Shared understanding of entry points.
- Explore other areas/ ways of working with triage.
- One place – one number e.g. 0800.
- A discussion took place on supporting colleagues.
- There was a feeling that there was a lot of lost learning from the past.
- There was a discussion on what a crisis was – in terms of the subjective nature of the feeling.
- There were a lot of discussions about children and young people, but this commission focused on adults in particular.

As a result of discussion within the HPTC sessions the civic commissioner from Humber Trust made some changes immediately:

- Actions because of the HPTC:**
- Funding to Mind was increased for more staff to answer the phones
  - A direct line from MIND to crisis team was set up so Mind could get through quicker to a crisis practitioner
  - Admin support staff were moved to ensure this phone was answered if a practitioner wasn't immediately available.
  - \*Humber Trust is conducting an evaluation to understand the process of call handling through Mind

\*The last point on actions is complex because it is slightly skewed by the launch of NHS option 2, the new mental health option through NHS 111.

NHS option 2 is a service that provides mental health support by connecting callers with a member of the NHS mental health team. You can call 111 and select option 2 to speak to someone if you are experiencing distress, feeling unsafe, or are concerned about your mental health.

Some figures from Humber Trust:

**September to December 2023**  
Mind were averaging around 4000 calls

**January 2024 after extra staff member joined**  
Calls up to 5000

**July 2024**  
Calls up to 5448

Caution: there is another complexity with recording time waiting for calls to be answered.

The Mind telephone system says the longest wait is 5.5 hours, but the shortest is 4 seconds. However, most calls hang up in less than 30 seconds and then ring multiple times. People often request a call back at the first ring but continue to ring, which means calls are being answered, but the time stamp doesn't stop until people receive the callback. Often, by the time they have stopped answering the multiple calls, this could be hours later, but they have already been dealt with.

The Clinical Director of Humber Trust has been proactive in engagement to create changes. Much of the conversation during the commission focused on 'crisis'.

*"The other big thing I think was that an outcome is shared expectations of what crisis is, how to access and what the response can be expected, these will be shared wider at the event."*

(Civic commissioner)

This is a subjective issue for those experiencing the crisis, people supporting those in crisis, and the required response from services – each may have a different view of crisis. Further engagement with this is crucial to ensure that people experiencing mental health crises are appropriately supported.

There were several discussions about early release from mental health facilities with inappropriate referrals for support within the community. The consortium focus group addressed this issue, explaining how VCSE organisations reported that they often receive inappropriate referrals. As such, this means that people who have been experiencing severe mental health issues are then passed on to another organisation. This impacts the person – re-telling traumatic stories and adds work to an already overstretched sector.

A mental health working group was set up with community and civic commissioners and facilitators to discuss services. The following was a result of one of the meetings:

### Quick Wins

- Create a shared understanding of entry points into the system.
- Investigate street triage mental health models. Are they right for Hull?
- Identify WHAT, WHO and HOW information for people and services for levels of mental health provision.
- Create a direct pathway for support agencies to get help
- Review older models of working that were thrown out. Are there any cases of throwing the baby out with the bath water.
- Hubs accessible to find out about mental health services for children and young people
- Stop the lost learning

To address this and other issues, an event is being planned by the Mental Health Sub-Group with Humber Trust and Forum on behalf of the HPTC to provide information about mental health services.

*"Mental Health Trust has changed policies. Mind now has a direct line on the phone systems and wants to change the way in which they engage and work with the VCSE sector."*

(Facilitator)

Stories heard within the HPTC revealed the extent of trauma that people in the city were experiencing, some emanating from their personal situations, some exacerbated by the complexity of addressing the issues they faced. Community commissioners offered examples of their own and others' experiences, which crystallised the focus on how trauma and poverty are interrelated. Hull is working towards becoming a Trauma Informed City (see following section).

Action	Future Measures
Humber Trust and Forum are planning an event that will be partly relationship-building and partly educational about how to respond appropriately to people and access appropriate services.	<p>More effective referrals from VCSE/ Public sector. In principle, the sort of performance measures would be:</p> <p><b>(How Much)</b> Number of referrals</p> <p><b>(How Well)</b> Number/% calls answered within target timescale* Number/% of referrals not requiring referral back (i.e. appropriate referrals)</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Number/% people reporting improved wellbeing as a result of referral Numbers of people accessing mental health services more speedily</p>

**Check on Progress** - Evaluation review in 6 and 12 months to see progress.

*“Mental Health Trust has changed policies. Mind now has a direct line on the phone systems and wants to change the way in which they engage and work with the VCSE sector.”*

(Facilitator)

### 6.3 Theme 3: Navigating systems and services

Under this theme, there were discussions around key elements that can be combined to how we humanise systems, face-to-face advice, a kindness campaign or charter, rethinking how official letters are presented, and the impact on people who experience poverty and those who work in support. This is also linked to alignments with the trauma-informed city programme.

#### 6.3.1 Services and attitudes

There were discussions on how people felt un-listened to and how systems were complex and challenging to navigate, especially when multiple issues were at play and people slipped through gaps. It was felt that no one agency takes responsibility – though some do work together as the exceptions.

Discussions about services focused on attitudes, cultures, and criteria. People not getting help in the first place/being afraid to ask. People who experience poverty often tell their story multiple times, which is distressing and emotionally challenging. This is especially so if the reaction from those who receive the story is not compassionate and shows disinterest – leading to how some services can create or exacerbate trauma through their responses.

Understanding the context—what each person is carrying with them, their story, and their experiences—is critical, as if not, this may create frustrations in conversations between people attempting to use services and those trying to deliver services. Community commissioners expressed their need to be treated with dignity and humanity, with compassion and without stigma, to build dependable and supportive relationships.

When attempting to address specific priorities that community commissioners were

encountering, their experience was often to be referred and signposted to various people before finding the right person to speak with. This had multiple impacts, including the intersection with the cost of living – e.g. the cost of transport between the referrals and impacting mental health. It was suggested that services should be provided when and where people need them so everyone can access them (e.g., pop-up services going to places the community already uses, such as local schools or community centres).

In discussing attitudes and approaches, community commissioners felt stigmatised, ‘belittled, confused, frustrated, stressed, or panicked’ when encountering front-line staff:

*“There’s not always an understanding of the impact of what happens to you or why can’t we solve our shit.”*

*“I just feel I’m in no man’s land.”*

*“Expectations seems to be ‘they’re vulnerable, they’ll take anything.’”*

(Community commissioners)

Community commissioners drew on the complexity of issues people face. There were often multiple unmet needs, which exacerbated the situation. This increased the trauma experienced in the process and the frustration when it felt like no one was listening, which was seemingly dismissive or unhelpful.

Beyond the community commissioners, a focus group with the HPTC consortium and facilitators drew out that they received referrals to their service that were not appropriate, which meant they had to act as a triage and refer people again – which impacted their ability to do the work they are set up to do. This was particularly an issue for organisations that work with minoritised groups. They felt that anyone not from the established Hull community, whose first language was not English, was often referred to them regardless of the issues.

During the commission sessions, the civic commissioners explained how the services were often understaffed, overstretched and underfunded, and staff were equally stressed. Many staff members are operating systems

that they can see are not working, and the people behind the desks and screens may also have complexity in their lives. The My Pockets film depicts this process as a tangled mess. It articulates how both parties are frustrated—one group has needs to be addressed, and the other is confined by restrictions, policies, and practices that are not adequately addressing these needs – but they want to make a difference. Both want things to change. A significant achievement of the HPTC was the cultural shift from ‘us and them’ to a commitment to work together to identify change.

*“We have come as equals not seeing the organisations but people, normally it is us against them but here it’s person to person.”*

(Community commissioner)

*“The film depicted that this was about commissioners – all commissioners – not just commissioners with lived experience.”*

(PTN lead)

There is a move to address the added stress put onto people and systems through becoming a Trauma-Informed City, which recognises context as a critical driver of how practitioners and organisations should take account of the lived realities of people they work with by asking a different question: **‘What happened to this person?’** rather than **‘What is wrong with this person?’**

Trauma-informed practice (TIP) is based on the understanding that trauma exposure can significantly impact individuals’ development and life chances, as well as their ability to feel safe or develop trusting relationships. TIP requires practitioners, organisations, and systems to look beyond presenting behaviour.

A Trauma Informed City trainer was invited to address the commissioners. This revealed that there are also issues related to staff and their responses, which can lead to burnout. As such, they need support to be able to work more effectively with people experiencing trauma. Training is available for staff to engage with TIP and, in doing so, receive support to take care of themselves, enabling them to work alongside people who need their services more supportively.

The commission recognised the need to address many of these issues and alleviate stress for those encountering systems and those within systems to work towards change in response. Civic commissioners were committed to being responsive to this, as evidenced by the changes being implemented in mental health systems, which are detailed in their words in the next section.

There was a commitment to develop a kindness charter, which marketing could create to ensure that everyone who use services and those who provide them works to be kind and understanding in encounters—this is in progress.

The My Pockets video helps explain the process the two sets of commissioners went through in exploring the issues raised from different vantage points – the provider and the receiver of the services. At one point, the video points to the humanisation of both parties, recognising that using and providing services can be frustrating and tied into policy and practice, which can be impenetrable. Key learning within the process was that the civic commissioners came to a point where they could openly state that they, too, could see flaws in the systems and recognise the need for change.

#### Action

##### **New ways of working and more compassionate working**

A civic commissioner (lead in the council and public health) identified the need to coproduce a kindness charter with a marketing campaign linked to the trauma-informed approach.

##### **This is an area in progress**

### 6.3.2 Committing to Systems Change

Civic commissioners reflected on hearing the stories from community commissioners, which influenced them to consider how to do things differently at their services- focusing on tackling some of the causes of poverty and working in collaboration with other services.

*“We will be including more detailed economic impact assessment in our service design to ensure that accessing our services does not further impact those already experiencing poverty and find ways we can help reduce this.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“We do co-production at Mind, but this has given me the impetus to do more of this and to do it face to face.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“We (DWP) are now working much closer with the Council – it speeds stuff up. We now have housing in our office as a result, and it helps resolve things much quicker for people.”*

(Civic commissioner)

commissioners and facilitators acknowledge that changing systems takes time and recognise that it can hardly be achieved after a year or two. However, they value the steps taken to achieve the desired change as part of a process that—their aim—is far from ending:

*“I don’t think we’ve changed the system, but we’re pushing a lot to open doors.”*

(Facilitator)

*“It’s not just what’s changed, it’s what we can continue to do to carry on from this... it’s not the end”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“We’re still a little mumble... we want to be a big roar.”*

(Facilitator)

For the commissioners, the HPTC has set the conditions for what could be a ‘game-changer’. Having the right people in the room (those experiencing the challenges and those with enough power to do something about it) is expected to set the tone for how inclusive policies can work for other services and their impact on the broader population:

*“The PTC environment has helped create the conditions for those conversations.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“How easy it is to make change when the right people are in the room... to make that happen.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“(The HPTC helped) Link people and organisations together. (It has helped) Build the model of inclusive approach within the city.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“I hope having the council there will impact their wider policies and that poverty will be on the agenda more. It will change how my organisation views poverty and how we can support people to get support without impacting them financially. We already do this for some of our services but will be looking at this more widely going forward.”*

(Civic commissioner)

There were various discussions during the commission that addressed systems change.

Service provision: There was a discussion on the co-location of services, a new hub that should house DWP, housing, homelessness, social prescribing, shared and multiple disadvantages.

Needs-led commissioning: This was discussed about the tendering of services, the environment and culture that has developed and people unlearning so that they can change and to requiring people to unlearn and come out of their silos. If people who experience the service are also involved in commissioning the service, this would add depth to the consideration of what a service needs. During the commission, there was a greater move towards engaging people who use services – people with ‘lived experience’ (see Chapter 7)

As the first HPTC is now in a phase of “what next?” These areas could be part of future discussions on how to take the learning from this commission forward regarding people-led systems change (see Chapter 9: Learnings and Recommendations).

### 6.3.3 Lack of information and joined-up services

Information sharing was a major issue in many of the joint commissioner discussions; for example, a facilitator explained that vouchers were available for fuel token meters.

*“Why is it that I find things out in these meetings – help is available, who to ring, what I’m entitled to – that I didn’t know before?”*

(Community commissioner)

A key finding in the HPTC was how much everyone—community and civic commissioners—learned about what was available. Consequently, the sharing of information was a major achievement of the HPTC.



(Still from short film: My Pockets)

### 6.3.4 Letters that impact

Aside from the pressures of brown envelopes, which bring bad news about bills, debt, evictions, and other bad news, community commissioners identified issues with letters received from organisations, specifically the tone and content that can be perceived as threatening.

There was a feeling that organisations often hide behind GDPR data sharing and that system-generated letters scare people. Discussions about how this particularly impacts people with neurodiversity—

especially when there are a few sentences in bold, which one community commissioner who experiences ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) suggested would become the focus and not necessarily process the rest of the letter.

*“I’ve been included in other groups, also I’ve managed to get involved in an ADHD group with Humber Trust to redesign a letter, with big changes.”*

(Civic commissioner)

Action	Future Performance Measures
In progress - task groups in the council and with Humber Trust to redesign letters. Community commissioners will work with council officials to amend and develop more appropriate communications. These have begun led by Forum.	<p>Residents receiving letters which are more sensitive and supportive</p> <p><b>(How Much)</b> Number of letters sent out</p> <p><b>(How well)</b> Number/% of recipients considering the content legible/sensitive/helpful, etc.</p> <p><b>(Better Off)</b> Positive feedback on the “How Well” measure/s would be the closest proxy for being “Better Off.”</p>
<b>Check on Progress</b> - Evaluation review in 6 and 12 months to see progress.	

### 6.3.5 Amplifying community commissioner’s voices

As a result of the HPTC and because organisations started to change, some community commissioners were also invited to join other groups to share their experiences and bring their knowledge to the decision-making table. The community commissioners have their voices heard and asked to engage with the task groups that

have come through the commission (e.g., Letter change task group, Supported housing task group, Mental health working group) and others regarding external programmes (e.g., one community commissioner has been invited to be part of a community panel for the Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP) (see Chapter 8). Additionally, civic commissioners have said they will be able to engage their newfound partners in other arenas because they are known and trusted.

### Summary:

- The HPTC story may not show huge concrete shifts **yet**, but the changes are in progress and unfolding. However, we have set out how some of these elements could be measured in the future.
- The PTC Network acknowledges that this is a long-term process. The key focal point is the recognition that the process is as important as the product and that relationships matter.
- The community commissioners chose the HPTC themes before the civic commissioners joined the discussions. The three main themes were **Cost of Living** (including housing/carpet issues, food provision, and in-work poverty), **Access to Healthcare** (including mental health), and **Navigating systems and services** (including attitudes and behaviours).
- **Changes in the cost of living** include the Local Authority Housing Review of tenancy agreement relating to carpet removal in the lease and the amendment of letters from the Supported Housing team (so that tenants know what is happening), and the review of direct payments through task groups.
- **Changes in access to healthcare** include the setup of a direct line from Mind to crisis team, more staff at Mind to answer the phone calls, and a booklet which has details about most organisations in the city that offer support.
- **Changes to navigating systems and services** include lived experience worker funded through Changing Futures. The worker will amplify voices of those seldom heard and develop good practice in coproduction. In progress is the development of a Kindness charter, to ensure that everyone, people who use services and those who provide them, works to be kind and understanding in encounters.

# Chapter 7. Facilitating change

“It’s been an eye-opener”

## 7.1 “We’ve been humanised”

commissioners worked hard on specific outputs and outcomes related to the three main themes (cost of living, access to healthcare, and navigating the system). As with any participatory process, people involved were unsure what to expect; hence, most of the changes on a personal level were unexpected. For community commissioners, the key was building trust.

*“I feel like I can be myself because of building trust.”*

(Community commissioner)

They had been asked the same questions so many times and promised the same results that the only way to have change was if the process itself was conducted differently. They felt they had been “permanently abused by so many services.” The questions needed to be different, their needs had to emerge from them, and the way of working had to be in collaboration. Meetings required time, informal chats, and conversations between equals. No lanyards accepted, no “us” and “them”, but “we” - working together.

*“We have come as equals, not seeing the organisations but people – normally it’s us against them but here it’s person to person.”*

(Civic commissioner)

According to community commissioners,

these relationships of trust and respect created a safe space for them to experience changes in how they were to be seen and how they saw others.

*“I feel treated as human... after... I don’t know... 10 years. We’ve been humanised.”*

*“Quite a lot has changed for me, when I first arrived, I had given up and was hiding from everyone... I’d been abused by so many services I felt like keeping quiet was the safest thing to do. I am able to self-advocate. Being here has contributed to me being able to come out.”*

*“Being within a group of people in a safe space... it’s not one thing, it’s how interconnected it is, even though we have different lives. Realising how it’s made me feel, my own perceptions of myself and others’ perceptions of me. Have felt really listened to...”*

*“Learnt to listen more/ understand more and that I can have my voice heard... There is no such thing as stereotypical poverty, but there are certain commonalities to be addressed... That I have rights and that I’m allowed to express my feelings about situations... It’s a nice feeling to be valued.”*

(Community commissioners)

It was interesting to hear how community commissioners perceived the changes in the civic commissioners throughout the process. This was portrayed in the My Pockets film as civic commissioners staying for lunch and having conversations without rushing back to their professional roles.

*“I’ve noticed a pattern that people go through. Civic commissioners start out stuck and defensive. Then they realise they’re not being attacked, and they change. They come up with their own things, their own solutions. It’s fascinating and amazing.”*

(Community commissioner)

Change was also experienced by the HPTC facilitators and civic commissioners, who reflected on how the process had change their lives and opened their eyes:

*“It’s been really life-changing... the way I live... It has taken me out of my comfort zone... I didn’t work ‘with people’ before; I worked with organisations.”*

(Facilitator)

*“For me it’s been an eye opener; by having these conversations things have been changed quite easily.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“For the community I work with, they have learnt about the poverty truth. I have explained to them what happens, who attends and what we are working to achieve. They feel uplifted that this is happening, one of our participants has gone on to be a community commissioner this has made her feel empowered, in that her voice is being heard and that people are genuinely listening and that as a result the system may change for the better. The relationship I have built with some of the civic commissioners gave me the courage to speak up at a senior NHS event in front of executives and challenge the way in which they resource and view the VCSE sector.”*

*I don’t feel that if I had not developed that relationship, I would have had the confidence to say what needed to be said when I did.”*

(Facilitator)

For another civic commissioner, there was also space to reflect on individual learnings and how valuable it was to work as a group with community commissioners, learning from them and their brutal honesty.

*“I have learned a lot about how people feel when using services and the ways that we can help improve that experience. The community commissioners’ honesty and openness has been the mainstay of the group, and it has been something I really appreciated. It has been challenging sometimes, particularly when the topic was in my area, but this has allowed conversations to happen and information to be shared.”*

(Civic commissioner)

And that civic commissioners were able to bond:

*It was really nice that civic commissioners have been more connected too as a result – that was unexpected.”*

(Civic commissioner)

Community commissioners have been part of the task groups generated through the HPTC and wider initiatives, such as one who attended the Equality and Disability task and finish group to discuss Disability-related expenditure (DRE) and Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) and the way cases are assessed (case by case). There have been invitations to join a community panel with YPIP, a regional initiative (see chapter 8), amongst other initiatives. The community commissioners will hopefully continue to advise and engage in systems change beyond the life of the HPTC (see recommendations in chapter 9).

## 7.2 Commitment to organisational change

This report demonstrates the willingness and commitment to embed change in organisations as a result of the HPTC. Here, civic commissioners and facilitators point out how change is and will happen:

*“I have really learned the value of bringing people into a room together and thrashing it out. Having brutally honest conversations. Having the community commissioners say exactly how they feel and what the impact is on their lives, and having civic commissioners sit in front of them, listen and face the fact that often their services do not meet the needs, or even sometimes increase the issues people face was really a huge benefit to the process. In my work going forward I will be encouraging these types of conversations so we can do better and improve our services.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“That we can change the system it won't be quick or always easy but it can and should happen. I learnt that people will find time in their busy schedule for a meeting if they really want to and find it a positive experience.”*

(Facilitator)

*“... the learning from Hull's PTC is reflected in strategy documents and is influencing policy.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“I have been able to bring some insight into the area that I work in and hopefully change some misconceptions. I have been authentic and myself which can be difficult when in 'work mode' but I have felt comfortable sharing my own personal perspectives as well. This can be challenging because often we are constrained by the parameters of what we can provide as an organisation due to funding etc but as an individual I agree that often there needs to be more, so this conflict has been interesting for me to observe in myself.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“As a civic commissioner, I feel I made sure the organisation I was part of was involved, represented and open to the participants.”*

(Civic commissioner)

### Investment in a new post

In an evaluation interview with civic commissioners, two members suggested that their organisations operate with coproduction, but, having been through the HPTC process, they could see that they perhaps need to go deeper as their versions were not fully operating coproduction to their full capacity. This will be supported by a new post. One of the Civic commissioners leads a multiple complex needs hub as part of the Changing Futures Programme, which focuses on the MEAM Approach (Making Every Adult Matter). This is also aligned with the Trauma-informed City programme. Changing Futures in Hull secured funding for a worker who will coordinate engagement with people with varied lived experience.

The post and project will be hosted by Forum. The person in the post will develop a citywide charter/agreement on how to involve people with lived experience in co-production and how to do it well.

The Lived Experience Project will ensure people with multiple unmet needs are involved in service planning and systems change in partnership with Hull City Council's Changing Future's multi-agency team as well as the wider voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to make sure the voices of people experiencing, e.g. homelessness, addiction and mental health problems are heard and valued.

This post provides an opportunity to add to the movement building whereby HPTC sits alongside other initiatives in the city (see Chapter 8) to drive forward ways of working that complement each other, which foreground community-led practice. It will be specifically helpful to join up with the University to partner with YPERN – the Yorkshire Policy Engagement Research Network to broaden the reach of this way of working.

*“There is an increasing interest in lived experience, which is a change. My only reflection on this is that perhaps they are not valuing the contribution the whole VCSE sector could make to this.”*

(Facilitator)

### Individual Change

All commissioners suggest that they have changed within the process. Community Commissioners in particular, articulated that they have grown in confidence throughout the process. Quotations in this report demonstrate how, having their voices heard has changed their experiences, which has ensured they feel valued and validated – recognised for their contributions equitably. Being sought out for task groups within and outside of the commission, attending events and facilitating a conference session at the University of Staffordshire Action on Poverty Conference in October 2024, demonstrates the importance of relational engagement to have created a platform to challenge for change.

## Summary:

- Relationships of trust and respect created a safe space for community commissioners to experience **changes in how they were to be seen and how they saw others.**
- **Civic commissioners valued working as a group with community commissioners,** learning from them and their brutal honesty. Some saw it as an eye-opener; others, as a life-changer.
- **Changing Futures** in Hull (which focuses on the MEAM Approach-Making Every Adult Matter) was able to secure funding for **a worker that will coordinate engagement with people who have varied lived experience.**
- The person in post will **develop a citywide guidance on how to involve people with lived experience in coproduction** and how to do it well to make sure the voices of people experiencing e.g. homelessness, addiction and mental health problems are heard and valued.



(Still from short film: My Pockets)



# Chapter 8. Building a movement of system changers

It has become a common practice for academics and policymakers to seek to engage and work with communities through building strong partnerships that develop collaboration, coproduction, and power-sharing. However, communities have raised concerns about these shared learning processes when they discover that some participation is tokenistic (because decisions have already been made) or the promised engagement is extractive (with partners/academics disappearing after engagement).

This section draws together several initiatives that align with the HPTC's approach, thus building a movement to work differently within the city.

## Flipped University Model

The University of Hull (UoH) is a civic anchor institution and as such works towards being responsive to the needs of the city and beyond working towards an inclusive and democratic approach to community engagement. The UoH 2030 strategy – focuses on 'people, place and partnership' striving to ensure that engagement with partners focuses on creating equitable and relational encounters. This approach fosters a more cooperative and collaborative way of working, enabling partners to feel included and part of the process of research and knowledge exchange. As such it shifts power and culture in academia to be more responsive. The Ideas Fund (IF) generated a 'flipped university model' (Hughes and Knight 2023), where the community takes the lead in deciding on the issues to focus on and is joined by an academic to exchange knowledge, and

can demonstrate the effectiveness of this collaborative approach in generating impact and sustainability, and to explore systems that are less inclusive to partnership working. The University has been a mainstay in the HPTC as part of the Advisory Group.

## Ideas Fund (IF)

Wellcome Trust funded the British Science Association to develop a programme to reach grassroots communities to enhance mental well-being. Hull was one of four pilot areas. This programme is about building trusted relationships between communities and universities in pursuit of equitable needs-led participatory approaches to foster mental wellbeing. This created the Flipped University Model because the community hosts the project and invites researchers to work alongside them. The traditional university model of bestowing knowledge onto communities is flipped – this is 'working with' rather than 'doing to' communities – it is knowledge exchange rather than knowledge transfer. The Ideas Fund is flexible and enables the community/researcher partnership to identify needs and work from what is wanted in communities rather than drawing on funder-determined projects. The Ideas Fund allows time to build relationships through ethical engagement, which creates trust, epitomising and contributing to developing the TTRREEE model, promoting systems and culture change, and sharing this way of working with the HPTC.

## Yorkshire Policy Engagement & Research Network (Y-PERN)

A key partner in addressing the challenges of academic policy engagement and providing spaces for amplifying the voices of those seldomly heard is the Yorkshire Policy Engagement & Research Network (Y-PERN). The pilot project (funded by Research England for three years -2022-2025) is a consortium of Yorkshire's 12 universities, 15 Local Authorities and 2 Combined Authorities. Y-PERN aims to galvanise a step-change in how communities, researchers and policymakers collaborate across Yorkshire and the Humber to develop inclusive, place-based policies. By engaging with local and regional stakeholders, the project also aims to understand what works and develop training and capacity-building needs across academia and policymakers in the region. Y-PERN recognises that local authority and academic capacity to engage and collaborate systematically across the region are limited. It also recognises the challenge for policymakers in identifying evidence relevant to local, place-based policymaking. Y-PERN aims to address this by encouraging systemic collaboration through a grassroots, network-driven, academically independent, and system-thinking approach. The connection to the HPTC relates to how the issues raised connect to the need to develop or enhance policies and systems that are in place, which have impeded equity. The involvement of universities can support the development of an evidence base to underpin community-identified issues related to experiences of poverty.

## Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)

Also funded for three years (2024-2027), is the newly created Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (Y-PIP). The grant is part of a broader Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIP) initiative, with three further LPIPs in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It works with the same universities as Y-PERN and is committed to researching 'with' people rather than 'on' people. At its heart will be the YPIP community panel – comprised of 12 members with diverse experiences of being under-served or under-resourced – who will become equal decision-makers with regional policymakers and researchers. The aim is to collaboratively confront the challenges

posed by climate change, widening inequality, and left-behind places in Yorkshire and the Humber. It will extend the reach and impact of the collaborative regional infrastructure put in place by Yorkshire Universities, Y-PERN, and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission. Like Y-PERN, YPIP will support the connection of universities with cross-sector partners and communities to address inclusive growth, green, sustainable living, innovation, and skills.

Both Y-PERN and YPIP recognised Hull for its track record in community engagement, and both were chosen to drive this in each programme. It is hoped that the HPTC commissioners and its approach will be intergral to Y-PIP.

## Changing Futures

As part of the Changing Futures Programme, Hull has also brought together a network of individuals to support Hull becoming a trauma-informed city. As the HPTC began, it was clear that a number of the community commissioners had experienced trauma through their various experiences. Trauma-informed practice (TIP) relates to understanding that being exposed to trauma significantly impacts people's lives, their opportunities and how they develop. This can also affect people's feeling of being safe or the ability to create relationships built on trust. As such, trauma also impacts communities. The important element within TIP is to explore people's contexts – not make assumptions on presenting behaviour. It is critical, therefore, that practitioners, organisations and systems should ask, 'What happened to this person?' rather than 'What is wrong with this person?' As noted above, with a TIP approach, staff would consider first what might have happened before responding. The My Pockets film tells this story of how the understanding of both parties consider the context for people on both sides of systems and services.

### Hull Community Plan 2024 - 2034

Another participatory and collaborative initiative developed by Hull City Council (HCC) is the 10-year Community Plan. Before releasing the Plan for the city, HCC partners spoke to people in Hull about ‘their future hopes for the city and themselves’ and developed a questionnaire (that could be responded to online or on paper) to help find out what matters most to local people. These priorities led to six ambitions and three commitments that will be the focus of the council and other organisations in the city as they work with local residents and communities.

The six ambitions are ‘safe and welcoming neighbourhoods’, ‘a healthier and fairer Hull’, ‘reaching our potential’, ‘economic growth that works for all’, ‘responding to the climate and nature emergency’, ‘our culture, our heritage, our city’. The three commitments are ‘engagement of all residents and communities’, ‘strong, united leadership committed to improving outcomes’, and a focus on inclusion’. As stated by HCC, ‘By working together, making the views and voices of Hull residents and communities the priority, it will ensure future plans for Hull are determined by all those living and working in the city. It is a plan for the city and by the city’.

The HPTC directly – or indirectly - contributes

mainly to Ambition 1: Safe and Welcoming Neighbourhoods, through which it is aimed to “Seek out and listen to those residents and neighbourhoods who feel vulnerable or marginalised, ensuring no community or individual is left behind” (Community Plan, p. 13). By addressing fairness, poverty and inequity, it also contributes to Ambition 2: A Healthier and Fairer Hull, which “recognise the impact of trauma and adversity on health and social outcomes, work to prevent trauma happening in the first place and improve how we respond and reach out when people are suffering” (Community Plan, p. 15).

Linked to the Community Plan, Forum CIO has set up a **Community Inclusion project** towards Ambition 1: Safe and Welcoming Neighbourhoods. In doing so, the team works with different stakeholders and communities in Hull to tackle exclusion and marginalisation and encourage a sense of ownership, facilitating activities that bring people together and help them feel valued and welcomed.

### Hull Voice and Influence Partnership

The Hull Voice and Influence Team within the City Council have been working with the city-wide Voice and Influence Partnership to embed the Lundy Model (described above in section 4.3). This group of Lundy Model advocates and practitioners works to amplify young people’s voices and influence across Hull and the local region. Membership draws from health, social care, education, academic, youth, community and voluntary sectors. It also links to the Hull Youth Parliament, the Hull Young Mayor’s Team, and the Generation Hull Arts Project. At the same time, Thrive Academy Trust approached the University of Hull (Hughes with Tricia Shaw) to identify a model to reflect school participation and engage with the Lundy model and the V and I partnership.

The Hull Voice & Influence Partnership is developing a Participation Strategy Framework to provide direction for practitioners alongside launching a wider Humber & North Yorkshire Community of Practice. The Lundy model stimulates discussion and promotes further thinking and collaboration, with interest groups emerging organically, e.g. a Lundy ‘Early Years’ team including academics, Family Hubs, schools, health and private sector child provision.

This work has already resulted in some critical work by young people, including the Young Mayor’s team, which worked with Youth Aspire Connect to create an anti-racism film and policy for schools, which gained national awards, and more recently, securing funding from the council to develop a food poverty App.

### Connecting Up

All these initiatives point to the systemic nature of contemporary socio-economic challenges and communities’ key role in shaping their futures. COVID recovery, the cost-of-living crisis, environmental challenges, and regional inequality involve complex connections between people, systems, and scales. These cannot be adequately addressed through siloed governance or services. Therefore, there is a need to draw from and apply a systems approach co-developed with various stakeholders across different sectors to put people’s needs at the centre. This approach must build on understanding and acknowledging place, the existing provisioning systems, and working together towards change because systems are interlinked. For example, housing challenges can link to mental health issues, as mental health can affect poverty. Understanding the city as a ‘system of systems’ is a way forward to address our challenges collectively – this is how the PTC network is attempting to work – This HPTC has shown how effective this can be and is a model of working that can be applied across the city.



### Summary:

- This chapter gathers **several initiatives that align with the HPTC approach (coproduction beyond tokenism and extraction)**. All these initiatives highlight the need to draw from and apply a systems approach co-developed with various stakeholders across different disciplines and put people’s needs at the centre.
- The initiatives include **The Ideas Fund**, the Yorkshire Policy Engagement & Research Network (**Y-PERN**), Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (**Y-PIP**), **Changing Futures Programme**, the **Hull Community Plan 2024 - 2034**, the **FORUM CIO Community Inclusion team**, and the Participation Strategy Framework developed by the **Hull Voice & Influence Partnership**.

# Chapter 9. Conclusions, Learnings and Recommendations

“These commissioners have paved the way.”

It has been announced that two further commissions will follow, funded through the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This first commission, which serves as a crucial working model for future initiatives, offers an important foundation from which to build.

*“These commissioners have paved the way. Their shared experiences and voices will help with the recruitment process for future commissions.”*

(Facilitator)

## HPTC Aim: To come together to make a difference

- To how people think about poverty
- To show the truth and experiences of people living in poverty
- To challenge the stigma of poverty
- To share stories and change the understanding of the wide variety of forms of poverty
- To discover solutions together that directly tackle poverty

Hull’s Poverty Truth Commission brings together business and civic leaders to collaborate with those experiencing poverty in various ways to create a powerful and solution-focused response.

The aim and objectives have been addressed numerous times throughout this report. Here, community commissioners jointly identified these elements when responding to our survey.

How well has the process worked for you? One community commissioner offered a number of insights:

*Humanisation. Being treated as people/humans. Icebreakers/ check in worked. Realising that you are not the only disabled person being treated as you are. It was a bit daunting to meet some of the people... Now we are all one big family. Building trust within a group like this (safe space, not being considered a fool, people believing in you... people opening up so quickly... from the very beginning/ launch). Brilliant process/ Therapy. Gaining respect. It has been a wonderful experience.*

Reflections from civic commissioners on what to change:

*“Sometimes a lot of talking but no action (e.g. leaving leaflets). Reminder of what people did (pros and cons of having no labels/lanyards). Maybe a short bio? Having the chance to meet people/commissioners outside the Friday meetings. 1-1 (more personalised experience). Understanding how these topics “trickled down” in their organisations.”*

(Civic commissioners)

The tender specification aimed to outline the required service elements to achieve the following:

- 1. Brings about changes for individuals, for organisations, at a policy level and in helping to alter the ways people think about poverty.**

While it is early days in terms of concrete achievements, there is an overwhelming agreement that the relational process has built trust and offered direct lines to power and influence. This is unfinished business – but as seen throughout the report there is a commitment to keep going.

*“Given where I was coming from... it has confirmed to me the benefits of it (the approach) and this way of working rather than just the great and the good... it has been good to have lived experience.”*

(Civic commissioner)

*“We thought it would operate but maybe not go past policy. Still, it has influenced policy such as health inequalities and tangible areas like housing, mental health and the letter changes.”*

(PTC Advisory Group member)

- 2. Gathers some of Hull’s key decision makers with those living at the sharp end of poverty to work together to overcome poverty.**

The HPTC has successfully built strong relationships between the community and civic commissioners – this is a major development; as detailed in the report, the community commissioners valued the space to be heard, their views validated and believed and saw commitment from the civic commissioners to act – and act jointly. This civic commissioner sums up the duality of role and the pressures of wanting to change but being constrained.

*“I have been able to bring some insight into the area that I work in and hopefully change some misconceptions. I have been authentic and myself which can be difficult when in ‘work mode’ but I have felt comfortable sharing my own personal perspectives as well. This can be challenging because often we are constrained by the parameters of what we can provide as an organisation due to funding etc but as an individual I agree that often there needs to be more, so this conflict has been interesting for me to observe in myself.”*

(Civic commissioner)

Community commissioners have presented their views and their lived reality, often with deep disclosures. There is a danger that this becomes extractive because this particular commission ends. We observed a committed group of community commissioners who wanted to continue to address the issues of their commission because they noted that the new commissions would choose their own issues and, rightly so, be able to take ownership. We discussed our recommendations with the HPTC and would like to suggest some continuance, which the group agreed they would like to pursue.

As detailed above, the facilitators consciously decided to select Community commissioners with a support network around them, ensuring they would not be left adrift. This support network is crucial, allowing the Community commissioners to focus on their roles effectively. Many of them are already and will be linked to other initiatives, such as the mental health strand event, to explore how the services should work and take account of the reality.

### 3. Impacts at a wider societal level and helps to change the public debate about poverty across the UK

All three people interviewed for the evaluation from the PTC network have committed to identifying issues from local commissions that resonate at a national level and taking these forward to address them through their amplifying work.

The HPTC My Pockets video has been shared with the full PTC family across the country. Feedback has been positive because the video represents the way of working that epitomizes the ethos of PTCs. This is a tool that will help change the debate on poverty. It addresses the deficit images and demonstrates the potential that people who experience poverty working with people who have power and influence can work collaboratively to make change happen.

#### 9.1 Learning to take forward

**Recruitment of Civic commissioners:** At the time the HPTC was developing, the PTN did not prescribe when civic commissioners should be recruited, and as such, in Hull, the recruitment of civic commissioners was after the launch. In discussing this with a PTN lead, they suggested that this can create a hiatus and risks losing momentum:

*“We would now advise that civic commissioners are in place for the launch to ensure momentum is not lost between the launch and the commission starting.”*

(PTN lead)

**The Tendering Process:** For some of the consortium, the speed at which the tendering process required submission (one month) did not suit the ability for organisations to build relationships to bid. As such 13 VCSE organisations decided to tender together because the lead – Forum, had experience and could rapidly respond to the deadline:

*“I do believe the process has worked well, overall. The main thing I would have changed is the process of tendering. This was a pilot. It is all about learning, and each new commission will only build on what has gone before.”*

(Facilitator)

**The Consortium:** The original tender idea for the consortium was to bring together the voluntary and community sectors to address poverty. This was a different approach to other PTCs.

*“I was intrigued as to whether the consortium would be a help or hindrance – hoped help but could foresee it would create additional work for the host organisation.”*

(PTN lead)

The Consortium did support recruitment for the community commissioners. It also enabled young people's voices to come through at the opening event via The Warren, a young people's centre with empowerment as its central focus. Young people created a powerful video to give their views on poverty for the launch. It was suggested that the HPTC would not be something young people would want to attend.

The Consortium provided useful information on the pressure on services from misdirected referrals and increased support for people with mental health issues.

As time went on, there was less engagement from members of the consortium, and the facilitation team, which was drawn from the consortium, was taken up with the level of work that was required in facilitating the commission itself.

In the initial tender document, the Consortium suggested a Lived Experience Panel, which was a general practice to draw out the voices of people who experienced whichever subject was the focus of discussion. However, as the HPTC unfolded, it was clear that a panel was not the approach; it was a more formal process, which would not suit the relational collaboration between community and civic commissioners, which evolved. This provided for a more equitable approach, as described in this report.

Overall, the consortium did not work as suggested in the tender, with each organisation offering added value through, e.g. employment support and training. As has been documented the HPTC was a deeper process of listening, identifying issues and using collaborative approaches to finding solutions. Going forward, it would be more productive to engage with organisations involved but not as a consortium partnership – perhaps by reporting through the VCSE Assembly and other initiatives to share information, learn, and identify support where needed.

**Diversity:** For this first HPTC, there was a concerted effort to recruit a diverse group of community commissioners – there was a geographic spread, but there was less diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender and age. There was an initial commissioner who was an asylum-seeker, but they were moved on. This is something the PTC Network picked up on, recognising that Hull has changed its profile over the last 30-plus years from 2% minoritised communities to around 11%.

*“It may have been useful to have a more diverse section of community commissioners, but I think that they covered so (many) issues that cross gender, age and other areas of diversity, such as letters, how council responds to dealing with private sector tenant issues. Perhaps also some of the civic commissioners could have been from more strategic areas within the city, but I am a believer in who was meant to be there was there. These commissioners have paved the way, their shared experiences and voices will help with the recruitment process for future commissions.”*

(Facilitator)

**Tangible change:** some would have liked to see more tangible change. One civic commissioner noted:

*“The way the sessions were hosted enabled all participants to get involved and share views. At times there could have been more discussions of possible actions rather than just experience.”*

(Civic commissioner)

Some who set up the HPTC suggested they would have wanted to see more specific tangible change:

*“What we want to see is things that are more tangible... that can unlock... to overcome poverty.”*

*“In HPTC, people had their voices heard. It has been a positive journey, with good intentions. However, it has not changed the structural problems of poverty or their financial situation.”*

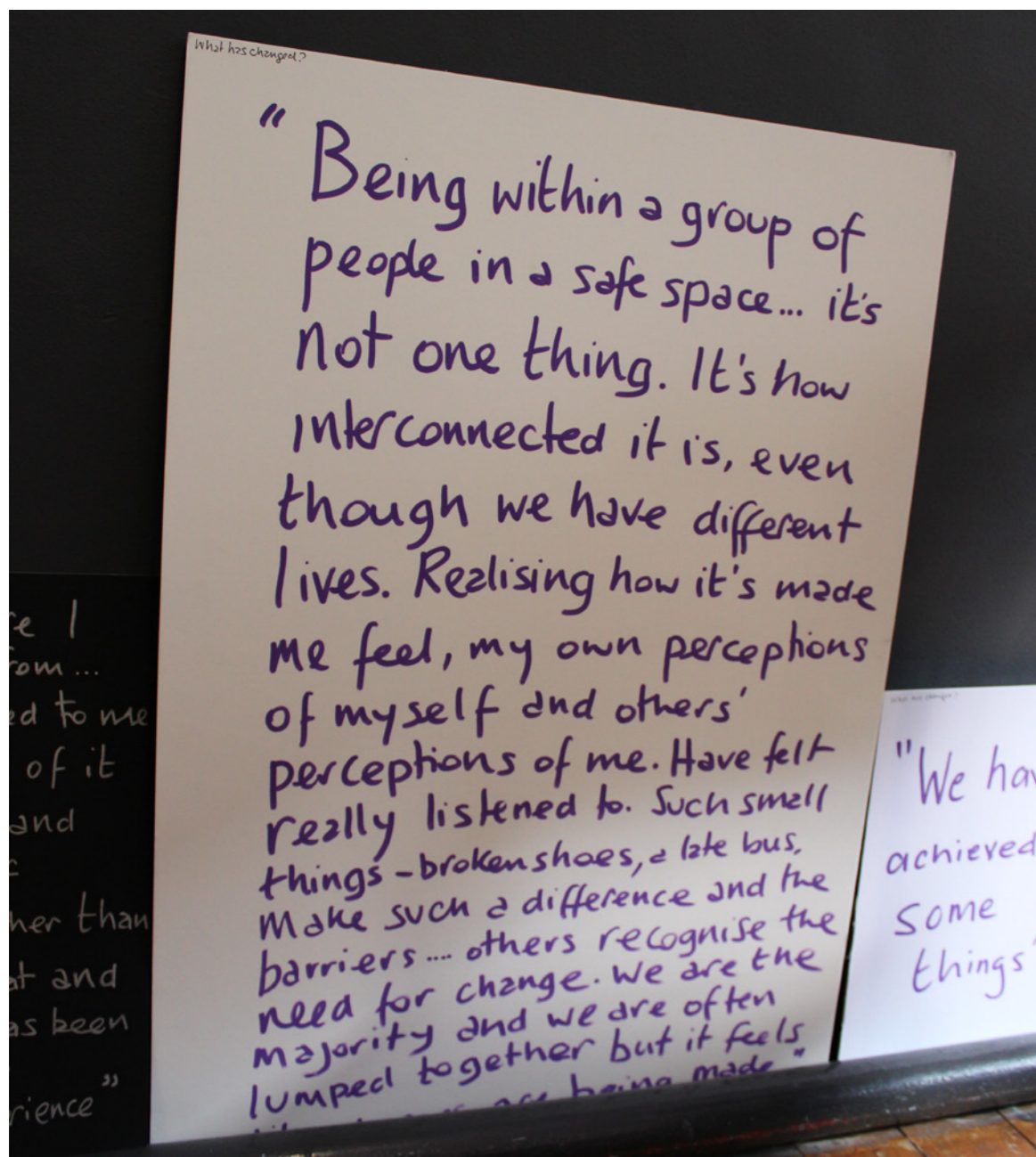
*“There is a need to deal with problems around benefits, work and volunteering, and transitions from benefits to work that the PTC didn't address.”*

(Advisory group)

However, the PTC movement is founded on themes being identified within the commission as such, actions will reflect the issues raised.

This report does identify the start of tangible change, with some actions already taken and others in progress. The PTC process is about establishing the relationships to bring about change – in some sense, this may seem like intangible change and cannot be fully seen – but it is a crucial ingredient in forging tangible change. The test will hold the changemakers accountable. From the evidence presented in this report, the civic commissioners are ready for change and committed to wanting to take forward their learning into their roles.

The PTN is interested in what happens next in terms of if people do activate change or move roles and take the ethos and approach with them – which they are anecdotally hearing. The community commissioners are equally primed to want to maintain engagement in addressing issues, and as such, their passion needs to be harnessed and utilised to help with the forging of change. Follow up evaluations will provide more detail about the ‘what next?’ process



(Community commissioner)

## 9.2 Recommendations

The table below shows our recommendations from the first HPTC, with some specifically relating to the convening of the second and third versions of the HPTC:

### For the 1st Hull Poverty Truth Commission

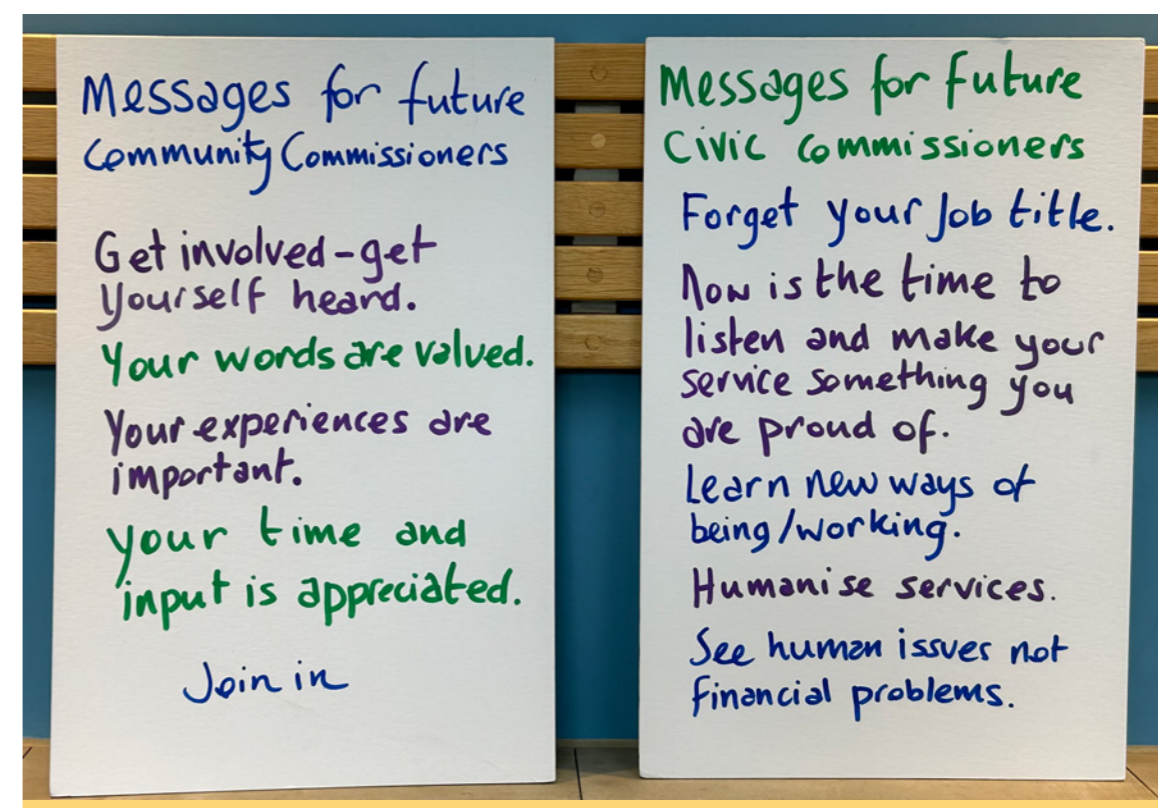
Recommendation	Description
<p><b>1. Develop a task group from the current – community and civic commissioners – to embed the emerging new approach for power sharing in inclusive decision-making across service provision in major institutions – LA/NHS/Public Health, etc</b></p>	<p>Returning to the report’s opening, the leader of Hull City Council suggested this way of working should become the new ‘business as usual’ to ensure that listening to the voices of people who have experienced varied issues and services should inform decision-making to co-design policy and services.</p>
<p><i>“I hope that 6-12 months down the line, people do not forget the feelings they got from working this way... I hope civic commissioners adopt a relational way of working within their own areas and look for ways to embed and implement the needed changes... I hope community commissioners are not forgotten... (and) that life does not just return to normal for them, that they can continue to be involved in bringing change in some way.”</i></p> <p>(Facilitator)</p>	
<p><b>2.1 Maintain engagement with community commissioners, complete tasks, and build on what has been achieved so far</b></p>	<p>2.1 As evidenced in this report, community commissioners feel they have just started to see change. Civic commissioners and advisory board members do not want to lose the current community commissioners, with their knowledge and experience gained throughout the process. Community commissioners want to pursue issues to retain their involvement, e.g., as task and finish groups, for example, housing, letter writing, and kindness charter. Forum is supporting this work.</p>
<p><i>I think the next (commission) should not just lose all the knowledge generated but build on achievements. I would like to be involved again if possible. I have enjoyed doing the process and working with everyone. (The HPTC) enables people to learn about each other and look for connections and relationships, which is an integral part of the poverty truth process.”</i></p> <p>(Facilitator)</p>	

Recommendation	Description
<p><b>2.2 institute a Task and Finish Group or direct community commissioners into work on domestic violence</b></p>	<p>2.2 In the evaluation, one area the community commissioners were passionate about following up on was domestic violence and coercive control. This was interwoven in all themes but was not chosen as a core theme. Those who have disclosed deep, sensitive issues would like to be part of a group to explore what could change specifically in this arena.</p>
<p><i>“I was abused for 25 years, and I didn’t know it.”</i> (Community commissioner)</p>	
<p><b>3. Develop poverty-proofing tools with commissioners for self-assessment or a team of poverty-proofers/mentors</b></p>	<p>During the commission, it became clear that some organisational practices cost people in poverty extra money. At the beginning of the commission, Hughes proposed that following on from the HPTC, working with commissioners to develop a poverty-proofing tool that could allow organisations to self-assess would be helpful. The experiences of the community commissioners could also be mobilised to create a team of poverty-proofers or mentors to advise organisations.</p>
<p><i>“Sally Barlow (Advisory group chair) is exploring poverty-proofing tools.”</i> (Advisory group member)</p> <p><i>“Remember, poverty is not a one-issue thing. It is multiple things.”</i> (Community commissioner)</p> <p><i>“Poverty is an intergenerational problem. It is hard to overcome that trap.”</i> (Community commissioner)</p>	
<p><b>4. Plan a Communication Strategy (Internal and External) to foreground the HPTC’s achievements and foster opportunities for residents to hear about changes, e.g. the carpet removal issue be publicised widely, mental health provision access, and this furthers knowledge exchange throughout the process.</b></p>	<p>Change occurs throughout the process in PTCs. There needs to be a strategy for sharing the HPTC findings – in progress. The Consortium and Advisory Group’s recommendations for future commissions include planning a communication strategy, increasing communication, highlighting the great work done, and sharing opportunities to gain support locally for residents and sharing with the broader network and other stakeholders regionally and nationally.</p>
<p><i>“Far better communication is needed so that all consortium members know what is happening, regardless of their level of involvement.”</i> (HPTC Consortium)</p> <p><i>“It is vital to show people what is being done... and opportunities to get involved. (We need to) shout out more from now.”</i> (HPTC Advisory Group)</p>	

Recommendation	Description
<p><b>5. Follow up on the progress of the first HPTC evaluation in 6 months/12 months</b> As evaluators, we will follow up to identify changes after 6 months.</p>	<p>commissioners, facilitators, the Advisory Group, and Poverty Truth Network representatives have highlighted the need to continue the evaluation process and potential changes that might happen within the following year. As explained in this report, the HPTC concrete shifts and tangible outcomes are not all fully implemented, but the changes are in progress and will take time, so they require follow-up in 2025. Change moves at the speed of trust (Covey, 2008), and accountability to community commissioners is critical for trust to endure.</p>
<p><i>“(I hope that) the current group will follow up maybe in 6 months to see what has changed. Check if the changes implemented are still happening. (Having a newly elected government) may change the landscape in some ways, hopefully for the better, and it would be interesting to see if this is the case.”</i> (Civic commissioner)</p> <p><i>“We want to follow up in 6 and 12 months to assess change as it is not immediate.”</i> (PTN learning and evaluation officer)</p>	
<p><b>6. Take time to build relationships.</b></p>	<p>Whilst recognising that each new commission will have new commissioners and new themes, if this ongoing change is to work, the model of this commission should influence the preparation and initial stages of any new commission in terms of affording time to build relationships, which, as noted above, will pay dividends in creating trusting relationships that will achieve more significant outcomes.</p>
<p><i>“(To community commissioners) Get involved. Get yourself heard.”</i> (Community commissioner)</p> <p><i>“(To civic commissioners) Forget your job title/Humanize services.”</i> (Community commissioner)</p>	

Recommendation	Description
<b>7. Create conditions to ensure new commissioners retain openness to reflect on a change in ways of working</b>	Honesty, openness, and the willingness to be challenged and change were all suggestions for building trust and doing things differently and for good.
<p><i>“Just enjoy the process, be authentic and be honest. And as a civic commissioner, be open to the reality that what you do, and how you do it, may not be working, but it’s OK to hear that... and change it!”</i>                      (Civic Commissioner)</p> <p><i>“Now is the time to listen and make your service something you are proud of.”</i>                      (Community commissioner)</p> <p><i>“(To civic commissioners) Learn new ways of being/working.”</i>                      (Community commissioner)</p>	
<b>8. Maintain a team of facilitators</b>	Each facilitator brought something different to the approach, and as such, this offered a well-rounded team that could organise, be creative, and bring extensive experience in engaging with communities. There is potential for some of the community commissioners to be involved in the process.
<p><i>“The team didn’t know each other incredibly well initially – each brought strengths and passions to facilitate.”</i>                      (PTN mentor)</p>	
<b>9. Additional engagement is needed to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion by inviting minoritised ethnic groups, young people, and other groups across Hull to participate in the next HPTC.</b>	As described in Chapter 2, Hull is a vibrant city that has grown in diversity and welcomes people from different ages, genders, and ethnicities. In round 1, there was an intent to engage across communities, wards, and generations, so for rounds 2 and 3, additional engagement will be necessary to destigmatise conversations about poverty and ensure people from different contexts can shape the themes.
<p><i>“Next round, I would like to see young people as part of the commission.”</i>                      (PTC Advisory Group)</p> <p><i>“We need to think about how new commissions engage with ethnicities as Hull is not as it was, but we need to recognise the difficulties. It is often easier to engage asylum seekers and refugees but harder to engage established new communities often issues related to culture and seeing poverty as stigma.”</i>                      (PTN Lead)</p>	

Recommendation	Description
<b>10. Have all commissioners in place before the launch</b>	Ensuring momentum is not lost in the gap between the launch and the start of the commission
<p><i>“We would now advise that civic commissioners are in place for the launch to ensure momentum is not lost between the launch and the commission starting.”</i>                      (PTN lead)</p>	
<b>11. Strengthen the Advisory Group</b>	The advisory group was a good way to keep an overview of the HPTC. To strengthen it, there is an opportunity to include representatives of the first HPTC community and civic commissioners.
<b>12 Keep the participatory approach for the evaluation of future commissions</b>	Finally, because the HPTC process was emergent, it was important to witness it unfold. We, evaluators, firmly believe that the next HPTC should follow the participatory approach and ethos followed in this evaluation report, animated film, and exhibition. That way, future evaluations will keep the commissioners at the centre, provide a space to amplify their voices and highlight their role and ownership in the project.



(Photograph taken by the evaluators)

### 9.3 Conclusion

The HPTC has been successful in its commitment to examining the everyday, real-world issues of poverty in Hull, which community commissioners identified as representative of the experiences of the wider community. The issues regarding access to services, systems, and practices that could lead to change were reviewed with civic commissioners. This was catalysed by the relational approach taken by the facilitators to enable both sets of commissioners to co-create solutions.

The ambitions of the HPTC have been met. The HPTC has amplified community voices, humanised relationships with people who have power and influence, all commissioners recognised that there are things that need to change within the services, practices and provision currently on offer. This will help to change the way people think about poverty, which in turn challenges the stigma attributed to people who experience poverty - the experiences and stories told are those that many people can relate to. The boards that community commissioners wrote before the HPTC are a complete contrast to those written at the end showing clearly this approach has changed perceptions and reality. This approach has led to commissioners and facilitators working together with services to directly tackle poverty in Hull - demonstrated by the commitment from both sets of commissioners who gave their time, creativity, insight and passion to create change.

*“[the commission was] people from different sections coming together as equals, whilst this is not new or innovative it is special that it is not often encouraged, supported or valued. The commission does this it values, promotes and supports this collaboration.”*

(Facilitator)

The facilitation process is conceptualised in this report as TTREEE, which identifies the ingredients required to shift power and create transformative systems change to address poverty within the city. The HPTC addressed all elements in its approach, demonstrating that the time given to the HPTC has paid dividends in building trusting and ongoing relationships. Future commissions can build from this successful facilitation approach to create new commissioner relationships and themes to maintain the momentum of change, targeting other areas awaiting scrutiny.

The HPTC is not alone in its commitment to change; as such, it will be helpful to join up initiatives and enable the TTREEE approach to spread and grow across these initiatives to create a more consistent way of working that promotes collaboration. This will be enhanced with the new Lived Experience role dedicated to working to ensure the voices of people often unheard in the city will be listened to and included:

*Nothing about us, without us, is for us*

Tangible changes are well in progress. In the follow-up review, it will be possible to quantify these changes as they come to fruition. A major achievement from this first HPTC was the generation of commitment to re-evaluate and address the issues that community commissioners found wanting and, in turn, an enthusiasm for the current commissioners to keep working together in collaboration - with the creation of a ‘new business as usual’ approach - this is culture change, which should lead to more inclusive, asset-based service co-design and delivery to address poverty in Hull.

*“In terms of Hull, I knew it would be good and delighted at the energy it is creating... noted ‘is’ rather than ‘was’ – key as it is still generating the energy.”*

(PTN Lead)

(Photograph taken by Claire Taylor)



*And as we started, a huge thank you to everyone involved especially the community and civic commissioners and facilitators pictured here*



(Still from short film: My Pockets)

**The project was an engine switch, not a paint job.**



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Hull Fishing Heritage: <https://www.hullfishingheritage.org.uk/educational-hub/>

Census (Kingston Upon Hull Data Observatory): <https://data.hull.gov.uk/release-2-demography-and-migration/>

DWP, 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2>

HJSNA, 2024: <https://www.hulljsna.com/population/>

House of Commons Library, 2024: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07096/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022): <https://www.jrf.org.uk/a-minimum-income-standard-for-the-united-kingdom-in-2024>

ONS, 2023: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000010/>

Poverty Truth Network website: <https://povertytruthnetwork.org/>

## Film Links

Launch event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPB4yEJqIsM>

Awakening event: <https://vimeo.com/997127971/fd1a115322>

MyPockets Animated film: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dl-fmxZ\\_2Js](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dl-fmxZ_2Js)

# Appendix: HPTC Terms of Reference (Advisory Group)

## Purpose

The Hull Poverty Truth Commission seeks to examine and challenge poverty and inequality within the city of Hull.

The HPTCAG will offer mentorship, advice and support on the strategic direction of the Poverty Truth Commission process through non-partisan recommendations for delivery across the life of the commission. The HPTCAG membership will offer 'in kind' support in the spirit of making a collective contribution to the success of the Commission.

## Aim

To support the development, design, delivery, and implementation of Hull's Poverty Truth Commission

## Objectives

The HPTCAG will:

- approve a specification, which invites a community collective (the "host") to bid, in an open tender exercise, to be the delivery partner of Hull's Poverty Truth Commission;
- advise on strategic direction of Hull's Poverty Truth Commission;
- contribute expertise, support and mentoring to the delivery partner;

- share connections and networks across communities to ensure inclusive engagement and identification of the broadest testimonies of poverty and inequality, which will assist in determining the commissioners to represent their communities;
- support and mobilise conversations to strengthen the connection between the Council and its citizens and city partners building relationships and trust to enhance collaboration;
- contribute to identifying appropriate civic and business commissioners to hear and act on the testimonies of community commissioners;
- explore further funding opportunities and access additional resources to expand the scope of the Poverty Truth Commission;
- play a role in supporting the delivery of the Poverty Truth Commission recommendations;
- determine the scope of, and monitor the arrangements for, the delivery of a robust ongoing evaluation of the Poverty Truth Commission;
- develop a succession plan for future rounds of the Poverty Truth Commission
- adhere to the core principles of Poverty Truth Commissions (see Appendix 1)

## Outcomes

These include, but not limited to:

- identify a host organisation;
- develop a Poverty Truth Commission engagement strategy for the city;
- secure future funding;
- undertake robust evaluation;
- produce a succession plan

## Membership Quorum

The meeting will be considered quorate when at least three members from separate organisations are present, including the Chair.

## Reporting arrangements, operation & administration

The HPTCAG will meet bi-monthly.

Organisation and co-ordination of meetings will be the responsibility of Hull City Council.

Agenda and papers will be produced 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

**Date agreed: June 2021**

**Date updated: April 2023**



**AND THAT  
WAS JUST  
FOR STARTERS**

