

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Child Poverty Action Plan
Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	13 September 2011
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sam Leaves
CMT Member:	Director of Services for Children and Young People
Author:	Claire Oatway, Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager
Contact:	Tel: 01752 307345
Ref:	CPA11-14
Key Decision:	No
Part:	1

Executive Summary:

At the 25 July 2011 Full Council meeting, the following motion on notice was submitted and accepted:

1. The relevant portfolio holder prepares a report for consideration at the September Cabinet meeting identifying what actions are already being taken to address issues of child poverty within the city and what additional work needs to be undertaken to address issues of inequality in child poverty levels between wards.
2. The Cabinet prepare an action plan to address these additional needs and either adopts it or (if required) brings it back to the October council meeting for adoption.'

Cabinet approved high level actions and aims as part of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 in March 2011. However, in recognition that tackling child poverty goes beyond the Children's Services department, a multi-agency task group was set up to prepare a more comprehensive action plan that covers activity across the whole Plymouth 2020 partnership. This is attached for approval by Cabinet.

Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014:

Tackling child poverty has been identified as a level 1 performance indicator for Plymouth 2020 Partnership and supports the delivery of one of the city and Council's four priorities – reducing inequalities. It is also a priority in the Children & Young People's Plan 2011-14.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Delivery of the action plan will be embedded within the following strategies:

- Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 (ENDORSED April 2011)
- Financial Inclusion strategy 2012-15 (Due October 2011)
- Worklessness Strategy
- Local Economic Strategy (Review of action plan ongoing)
- Housing (Due October 2011)

- Sustainable Communities strategy
- Health and Wellbeing strategy

The Child Poverty Action Plan will be delivered from existing budgets and resources as an integrated part of delivering the above plans / strategies. Any gaps identified through broader consultation will be addressed jointly by the Plymouth 2020 Executive Group and the relevant Partnership Board(s).

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the Plymouth Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-14.

The Council and its partners have a responsibility under the Child Poverty Act 2010 to reduce child poverty.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

1. Cabinet to reaffirm its approval to tackling child poverty as outlined within the Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-14.
2. Cabinet approves the attached multi agency delivery plan to cover the whole 2020 partnership.
3. Cabinet to receive an annual report to monitor progress on tackling child poverty, including the findings from an annual self-assessment engaging all partners across the city.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

A ‘do nothing’ option is not viable given the city and Council’s priority to reduce inequalities and that tackling child poverty has been named as one of the accompanying long term measures of inequalities for the city. If the target is met this will fundamentally transform the city and make a major contribution towards delivering the city's vision. The 2020 Partnership as a whole will need to work together to deliver this target.

Background papers:

Plymouth Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-14
 Equality Impact Assessment for Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-14

Sign off:

Fin	ChS03 48- SRA- 1.9.11	Leg	LT 12725	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Mairead MacNeil											

Tackling Child Poverty – Making it everyone’s business

- 1.0 Tackling child poverty has been accepted as a key priority for Plymouth. As a Level One indicator it is championed by the Children and Young People’s Trust but also relies heavily on the actions of other strategic groups and organisations across the City. Tackling child poverty is everybody’s business and this is essential if we are to effectively tackle the causes and impact of child poverty.
- 1.1 Cabinet has already approved the higher level aims and actions described in the Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-14 to tackle child poverty, and with its 2020 partners, asked a multi agency group to develop a wider plan to engage all aspects of work and agencies.
- 1.2 At the 25 July 2011 Full Council meeting, the following motion on notice was submitted and accepted:
- (1) The relevant portfolio holder prepares a report for consideration at the September Cabinet meeting identifying what actions are already being taken to address issues of child poverty within the city and what additional work needs to be undertaken to address issues of inequality in child poverty levels between wards.
 - (2) The Cabinet prepare an action plan to address these additional needs and either adopts it or (if required) brings it back to the October council meeting for adoption.’

2.0 Understanding child poverty

- 2.1 The causes and consequences of child poverty, both temporary and persistent, are multiple and complex. Child poverty is not caused simply due to a lack of money in the family - it is the outcome of economic, environmental and social factors and inequalities that can damage a child’s development and limit and prevent children and young people from having many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted.
- 2.2 This understanding of child poverty is reflected in the government’s first national child poverty strategy. This new approach considers children’s longer term development through home life, family, education and health. Building on national consultation and independent reviews by Frank Fields MP and Graham Allen MP, it also recommends a suite of additional measures that reflect family resources, family circumstances and children’s life chances.

3.0 Our achievements so far

- 3.1 Excellent work is already being undertaken across the city, and is having a positive impact on addressing child poverty. Some examples include:
- Schools have significantly narrowed the gap between students who gain 5 or more A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths) in the most deprived and most affluent neighbourhoods. The percentage of children attaining a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage has also improved from 51% in 2009 to 56% in 2010.
 - Services delivered under the Financial Inclusion Strategy have increased benefit take up for families across the city. £2 million (22%) of the £9.1 million benefit take up in 2009/10 was in child benefit and tax credits specifically for parents, meaning they are on average £44.22 a week better off. In addition 1,130 local people received outreach support for money and benefits advice, with weekend and evening sessions for local

parents-to-be and parents to ensure they are financially and socially prepared for parenthood and managing their money.

- Approximately 12% of Children's Centre resources are dedicated to activities addressing child poverty, with spend higher in more deprived areas. A Jobcentre Plus linked adviser provides support for parents encountering barriers to work, such as literacy & numeracy deficits, and undertakes individual specific 'back to work calculations' to ensure parents are not worse off going back to work.
- A total of £44million worth of debt was dealt with by services delivered under the Financial Inclusion Strategy; this contributed to a citywide total of more than £100million of debt resolved.
- The Parents Apart project supports parents during their separation or with related issues to improve outcomes for their children. Since March 2010 the interventions have impacted on 362 children.
- An 'Opt Out' scheme has been successfully introduced to help expectant mothers and fathers to stop smoking before the birth of their child. As a result, referrals of pregnant smokers have gone from less than 25% to over 90%, leading to twice as many mothers quitting before the birth of their baby.
- The 'Safe at Home' project has been delivered to 657 families in the more deprived areas of the City through Children's Centres in partnership with health, police and the fire service. A further 2000 families have also received additional education around safety in the home.
- Partners across the City have enabled access to educational opportunities outside of school. The Allsortz package of services enables disadvantaged young people to access activities they would not otherwise be able to afford. Parents tell us about increased confidence and self-esteem, better communication and raised aspirations of those who took part. The Children's University provides 7-14yr olds with a range of exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences. A recent evaluation shows that being in the Children's University significantly improves school attendance, with achievement significantly better at Key Stages 1 to 3 for children who attended compared to those who did not.
- Progress continues to be made to reduce teenage conceptions, including 'clinic in a box' and a dedicated young person's sexual health clinic. The latest official data shows that Plymouth's rate is now 44.3/ 1000 females aged 15-17. This reflects a 19% change in the baseline rate from 1998 - higher than both England and the South West.
- The 'Streetwise' project identifies young people causing concern within the community and to offer diversion activities such as football and break-dancing. Anecdotal results for some young people reached by the project show they have less contact with police, and are more likely to stay in school.

3.2 The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14, endorsed by Cabinet in March 2011, outlines the work of Services for Children and Young People and the Children and Young People's Trust to address child poverty. Its approach embraces the four basic building blocks for tackling child poverty and reflects the new approach outlined in the government's child poverty strategy, with particular emphasis on cross cutting themes and improving children's life chances.

- 3.3 The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 provided a solid base from which to develop this whole city, multi- agency/departmental delivery plan, to be endorsed by Cabinet. This plan has been developed by key stakeholders including statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector, and in line with a whole city approach, will be delivered in conjunction with other key strategic plans such as housing, financial inclusion and worklessness.
- 3.4 A review, undertaken by the Local Government Group (May 2011), outlined the key characteristics of local authority areas where child poverty is considered to be a high priority. These include a high level of strategic commitment and understanding, a view of child poverty as a cross cutting theme across the LA area, as well as strong elected member support. Plymouth already demonstrates such features. The championing and strong direction provided by the Portfolio holder for Children and Young People on behalf of the Local Authority and Plymouth 2020 has proved essential in driving forward the message that we all have a role to play to tackle child poverty.
- 3.5 A self-assessment event will take place in October 2011 to enable the city to assess its current approach to reducing child poverty and to identify and challenge the barriers preventing progress. This will provide an excellent opportunity for elected members to engage with key partners and stakeholders in determining their roles for tackling child poverty. The outcomes of this assessment will contribute to the continuous development of the city's child poverty strategy.

4.0 Recommendations

- (1) Cabinet to reaffirm its approval to tackling child poverty as outlined within the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.
- (2) Cabinet approves the attached multi agency delivery plan to cover the whole 2020 partnership.
- (3) Cabinet to receive an annual report to monitor progress on tackling child poverty, including the findings from an annual self-assessment engaging all partners across the city.

CYPP 2011 - 14 Delivery Plan

Priority 3	Tackle Child Poverty	William Woyka
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Objective	Lead	Action	Link	Key Milestones
3.1 Make child poverty everybody's business;	Children's Trust	3.1.1 Raise the profile of child poverty across Plymouth 2020 and all theme groups, with a specific focus on the Growth Board and Health and Wellbeing Board;	Candice Sainsbury, PPP	Recognition of child poverty within relevant strategies and theme groups plans. Child poverty strategy developed. Child poverty is acknowledged within delivery plans for worklessness, housing, economic development and financial inclusion. Gaps and challenges are identified.
		3.1.2 Develop a citywide Child Poverty strategy that is underpinned by key delivery plans such as worklessness, economic development, children and young people's plan, housing and financial inclusion;	Candice Sainsbury, PPP	
		3.1.3 Generate high level local engagement with the South West regional child poverty network, taking full advantage of collaborative links and opportunities both regionally and nationally.	William Woyka, Routeways	
		3.1.4 Undertaken a city wide self assessment on child poverty and identify key gaps and barriers to be addressed within the child poverty strategy	Candice Sainsbury, PPP	
		3.1.5 Capture and share local successes and lessons learned based from the incorporation of child poverty indicators within commissioning processes across the City	Jo Hall, Early Years & Fiona Fleming, Children's Commissioning	
3.2 Reduce the number of children living in workless households;	Plymouth 2020 Executive Group	3.2.1 Promote the targeting of 18-24yr olds and parents as priority groups within the draft Worklessness strategy;	Mark Looker, Economic Development	TBC
		3.2.2 In collaboration with the Worklessness and Financial Inclusion groups, identify and tackle the key barriers to lone parents' ability to access high quality employment, and develop recommendations to address this.	Lucy Stapleton, Job Centre Plus	

		3.2.3 In collaboration with the Worklessness and Financial Inclusion groups, establish a task and finish group to fully understand and tackle the impact of welfare changes on both in-work and workless families, and provide recommendations to ensure parents are fully able to engage in economic life.	Jo Hambly, Social Inclusion	
		3.2.4 Engage with the Worklessness group to promote self employment as a route out of unemployment for families with children;	Mark Looker, Economic Development	
		3.2.5 Through commissioning and procurement processes champion the development and maintenance of a local workforce	Fiona Fleming, Children's Commissioning	
3.3 Reduce housing related child poverty;	Housing Strategic Group	3.3.1 Ensure city wide partners deliver effective and responsive solutions to young people negatively affected by housing benefit changes;	Jo Hambly, Social Inclusion	Smooth Migration to 2014 Universal credit when introduced Further explore imaginative ways of meeting the housing need of vulnerable groups with developers, registered so
		3.3.2 Promote increased access to decent and affordable housing for families with children through the upcoming housing strategy, with improved housing options for larger families to combat overcrowding;	TBC	
		3.3.3 Reduce the incidence of homelessness, amongst young people and families with children, through access to good quality supported and independent housing choices and with advice and support for the most vulnerable.	Matt Garrett, Housing	
3.4 Reduce the inequalities that have the most negative impact on children's life chances;	Early Years Strategic Partnership	Increase the number of children who achieve a good level of development and school readiness by:	Alison Mackensie, Public Health & Jo Hall, Early Years	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data: August 2011 and 2011 (new assessment will be statutory after this) Increase in uptake of evidence based parenting programmes Increase % settings deemed good/better by Ofsted
		3.4.1 Providing effective support for parents to develop good parenting skills.		
		3.4.2 Increased access to universal high quality early years education, with additional focus on disadvantaged 2 year olds.		

		<p>3.4.3 Ensuring all children have good communication and language skills and social and emotional development, with effective early intervention to improve outcomes.</p> <p>3.4.4 Targeting interventions to the most vulnerable families and sustaining contact.</p> <p>3.4.5 Addressing health inequalities that will impact on child's later intellectual development: i. maternal mental and physical health, ii. parental mental health, iii. low birth weight, iv. breastfeeding</p>		Increase number of free nursery places
3.5 Improve young people's capability to manage finances sensibly	Children's Trust	<p>3.5.1 Identify and address the gap in support services for children and young people, which are able to deliver financial capability support in schools and other settings.</p> <p>3.5.2 Provide opportunities for young people to learn how to manage their finances through access to Credit Union Banks within schools.</p> <p>3.5.3 Engage with private sector partners to develop imaginative ways to deliver financial capability sessions in schools.</p>	<p>Karl Sweeney, Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Jo Hambly, Social Inclusion</p> <p>Karl Sweeney, Lifelong Learning</p>	TBC