

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – Project Brief
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 11 September 2012
Cabinet Member: Councillor Penberthy
CMT Member: Carole Burgoyne, Director for People
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Ref:
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

This project brief outlines a proposal to develop a three year local child poverty strategy and action plan by April 2013 following a comprehensive needs assessment which forms part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This process, it is also proposed, will be led by the cross party child poverty working group.

Child poverty matters because it means children suffer both now and in the future. While a central part of the problem, child poverty is not simply due to a lack of money in the family. It is the outcome of economic, environmental and social factors and can damage a child's development and limit or prevent children and young people from having many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted.

The most recently available national data shows that families earning less than £214 per week are classed as living in poverty. In Plymouth this equates to 11,700 children living in poverty, of which 10,380 are aged under-16. Within an environment of significant welfare reforms, the rising cost of living and a double dip recession, we are now seeing these numbers start to rise again.

In 1999, the Government made a commitment to end child poverty by 2020. The Child Poverty Act was published in 2010 to deliver on this and places a number of duties on Local Authorities and other local delivery partners to work together to tackle child poverty. These include development of a local Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Joint Child Poverty Strategy which sets out the measures partners propose to take for the purpose of reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty. In addition, the Act also requires local authorities to take their responsibilities to tackle child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Community Strategy.

The development of a local child poverty strategy will seek to recognise and provide greater visibility and accountability that tackling child poverty is everyone's business. Actions to address both the causes of and the effects of child poverty are already integral to a number of key local plans and strategies such as the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 and the Housing Plan 2012-2017 and will need to link closely

with the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy alongside activities for prevention and early intervention, families with a future, mitigating the impact of impending welfare reforms and other priorities outlined within the Corporate Plan 2012 -2015.

The child poverty strategy will seek not to duplicate but to reinforce existing and upcoming plans and activities while highlighting key gaps in service provision and/or areas of underperformance.

Tackling child poverty effectively will require a concerted and unified approach. To achieve our desired impact, this strategy will need to enable services and agencies to collectively understand how they can contribute to reducing levels of child poverty, both in the short and longer term.

Corporate Plan 2012-2015:

The Council has committed to developing ways of effectively addressing child poverty as part of its overarching commitment to becoming a Co-operative Council.

Tackling child poverty is identified as a level 1 performance indicator within the Corporate Plan which supports the delivery of one of the city and Council's four priorities – reducing inequalities.

Reducing child poverty is considered as integral to addressing medium term issues to address the financial and external challenges faced by the Council and to move forward on its long-term vision and priorities, and is identified as an area where it is critical that we work successfully across the whole council and city partnership.

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

Effective delivery of the child poverty strategy is highly dependent on having a comprehensive understanding of how resources are currently being commissioned against child poverty outcomes. In addition the strategy will identify areas and opportunities where further pooling and alignment of resources may be required around common outcomes, for example within the early intervention and prevention strategy commissioning processes.

For existing plans and strategies, it is expected that commissioning of services to support child poverty outcomes will take place based on agreed priorities within approved budgets and resources.

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

This project directly contributes to reducing child poverty. Furthermore, as a result of efforts by the cross party working group, child poverty will soon feature as part of the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be undertaken as part of the strategy development process.

The primary risk of not addressing child poverty is that the numbers of children, young people and parents affected across the city will continue to rise during a time of austerity, rising unemployment and significant welfare reforms that are estimated to affect 20% of Plymouth's population. Such increases in child poverty levels will have a negative impact across the city, in terms of meeting our key performance

indicators, additional pressures on already stretched service areas and a lower quality of life for our families.

Inter-generational child poverty represents a deeply rooted social problem that is not easily resolved and requires sustained efforts by agencies and partners as well as within communities themselves to effectively break this cycle. To this end, it is essential that the strategy engage in a child focused approach that mitigates the effects of poverty while simultaneously meeting the needs of parents to provide the best for their children.

Operational risks focus on Council and partner services not joining up to maximise available resources to effect positive change against child poverty outcomes. A detailed risk register will be developed as part of the project plan.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Cabinet to agree:

- To develop a child poverty strategy following the process as outlined within sections 2-5;
- For the child poverty cross-party working group to oversee the development of the child poverty strategy and action plan.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Under the Child Poverty Act 2010 it is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to develop and publish a local child poverty needs assessment and strategy.

Background papers:

- Annex 1: Updated terms of reference of the working group
- Annex 2: Child Poverty: local definition and measure

Sign off:

Fin	P4f ec12 13 004	Leg	LT 1541 5(f)	HR	X	Corp Prop	X	IT	X	Strat Proc	X
Originating SMT Member: Pam Marsden											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

I. BACKGROUND

1.1 Child poverty matters because it means children suffer both now and in the future. The causes and consequences of child poverty, both temporary and persistent, are multiple and complex.

1.2 While important, child poverty is not simply due to a lack of money in the family. It is the outcome of economic, environmental and social factors and can damage a child's development and limit or prevent children and young people from having many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted.

1.3 In 1999, the Government made a commitment to end child poverty by 2020. The Child Poverty Act 2010 establishes duties and targets for the reduction of child poverty. In response, the national strategy A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives was published in 2011. A number of duties are also placed on local authorities including publication of a local child poverty needs assessment and strategy, and a duty to cooperate between local partners with a view to mitigating the effects of child poverty.

1.4 The city currently has a target to reduce child poverty to 10% by the year 2020. The latest figures show that 22.1%¹ of children in Plymouth are living in poverty. The most recently available national data shows that families earning less than £214 per week are classed as living in poverty. In Plymouth this equates to 11,700 children living in poverty, of which 10,380 are aged under-16. There are also five Local Super Output Areas which have over 50% of children in poverty including Devonport, Stonehouse, City Centre & North Prospect / Weston Mill. Highest levels of child poverty are in North Prospect.

1.5 Additional findings from the child poverty needs assessment, which will be published at the end of September 2012 include:

- In Plymouth 11,700 children live in poverty, a rise of just over 600 children from 12 months earlier, of which 10,380 are children aged 16 and under in child poverty (23%).²
- Levels of poverty are highest in the west of the city, in neighbourhoods such as Devonport, Morice Town, North Prospect and Barne Barton. This is most evidenced with high levels of benefit claimants.
- Anticipated impact of impending welfare reforms include increasing levels of debt across the city with more families using pay day loans and illegal lending sources, working families seeing up to a 34% reduction in benefit income, and more than 700 children and young people in 150 families affected by the benefit cap, of which 46 households stand to lose over £100 per week.
- Development levels at early year's foundation stage are lower in the group of most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the least deprived (50.5% and 60.4% respectively)³.

¹ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, NI 116 The number of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income, 2009

² Snapshot as at 31 August 2009 compared to 31 August 2008 - most recently available data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs NI 116

³ Devonport, Stonehouse, North Prospect & Weston Mill, East End, Whiteleigh, Morice Town, Barne Barton, Honicknowle, Ernesettle, Ham & Pennycross, ONS – Indices of multiple deprivation 2010

- There are significant attainment gaps between those children eligible for free school meals and those not eligible. The gap at key stage 2 is 17 percentage points, the gap widens to 32 percentage points at key stage 4 with just 29% of eligible children achieving 5 A*-C GCSE grades.
- Areas of the city identified as having lower educational attainment and higher unemployment reappear as being among the worst performing against health indicators such as life expectancy, childhood obesity, low birth weight and breast feeding prevalence.
- According to the latest DWP statistics as at December 2011, Plymouth had 22,300 families with 39,100 children receiving child or working tax credits. A further 10,301 children aged 0-15 live within workless households.
- In 2010/11 Citizen's Advice Bureau data shows that 7,525 people received debt advice.
- Use of the food bank in Plymouth has recently increased by 40% up to 4,300 people; the proportion of whom have children has also increased (May 2011- April 2012).

1.6 Following a motion agreed at Full Council in July 2011, Plymouth City Council has made a firm commitment to tackling child poverty in the city and this is reflected in the Corporate Plan 2012-15. Reducing child poverty is a shared priority with partners in Plymouth and a level 1 measure under 'Reducing Inequalities' in the performance management framework.

1.7 Since 2010, the Children and Young People's Trust has led the child poverty agenda as part of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14. A cross party child poverty working group has been meeting since February 2012 to review the citywide approach to tackling child poverty.

1.8 While fully acknowledging the excellent work of the Children and Young People's Trust over the past eighteen months, agreement has been reached that Plymouth City Council, in line with its statutory duty to tackle child poverty, will now lead this critical agenda. In doing so, Plymouth City Council will continue to work closely with key partners and partnerships, including the Children and Young People's Trust.

1.9 We would like to thank the Children and Young People's Trust for their work and in particular William Woyka in his role as Champion for child poverty within the Trust.

2. PROJECT PURPOSE

To manage the process to develop a three year evidence-based child poverty strategy and accompanying action plan for the city.

2.1 PROJECT OUTCOME

The infrastructure to effectively deliver the citywide response to tackling child poverty is embedded within Plymouth City Council, partner agencies and wider partnerships.

2.2 PROJECT WORKSTREAMS

2.2.1 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Purpose: To generate leadership and ownership of the child poverty agenda at a senior level to enable the development and effective delivery of the strategy and action plan at all organisational levels.

Activities:

- The cross party child poverty working group will oversee development of the strategy and action plan, and report progress and present the draft strategy to Cabinet.

Cross Party Child Poverty Working Group Membership

- Cllr Chris Penberthy – Chair and Cabinet Member, Cooperatives and Community Development
- Cllr Nicky Williams – Cabinet Member, Children and Young People
- Cllr Sam Leaves, Vice Chair cross party working group
- Cllr Sally Bowie, Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Cllr Lynda Bowyer
- Cllr Terri Beer
- Pam Marsden, Assistant Director for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care

- Further develop the role of ‘child poverty champion’ within partner agencies and partnerships as demonstrated within the Children and Young People’s Trust.
- Develop and nurture working relationships between key strategic groups and partnerships across the city, with respect to delivering against the Child Poverty agenda.
- Review best practice of governance arrangements and supportive infrastructure (incl. monitoring arrangements) of other Local Authorities and develop local options for Plymouth City Council to agree and adopt.
- Establish formal links with the Plymouth Plan process with a particular focus on the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Transport Strategy.
- Establish links with the joint commissioning partnership to take the agenda forward by aligning resources to priorities, creating shared and pooled budgets and commissioning against child poverty outcomes.
- Propose governance arrangements for delivery of the city wide strategy and action plan.
- Outline the endorsement process to generate the authority required to deliver the child poverty strategy and action plan.

2.2.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT & EVIDENCE BANK

Purpose: To provide the evidence to develop the strategy and action plan for Plymouth. This will form part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and be reflected in the Plymouth Report.

Activities:

- Finalise the child poverty needs assessment and identify key findings and recommendations in collaboration with commissioning officers and other stakeholders.
- Review national guidance and best practice on evidence based interventions to tackle child poverty.
- Undertake an analysis of the data based around the building blocks of child poverty, including qualitative research with practitioners and service users and the findings from the child poverty consultation.
- Assess the level of service provision across the city and its effectiveness; identify the profile of the most vulnerable groups, which neighbourhoods are the most affected and where gaps exist in service provision.

- Make recommendations that will inform the development of the city strategy and action plan.

2.2.3 COMMUNICATIONS, CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Purpose: To ensure that the child poverty strategy and action plan is supported as a result of full and inclusive involvement from key stakeholders and the community in its development and that the city's approach to tackling child poverty is effectively communicated across the city.

A communications, consultation and engagement plan will be developed that will set out our approach for consulting and engaging key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the strategy and action plan. This will ensure that:

- The views of the public and practitioners are taken into account as part of the development of the strategy and action plan.
- Key stakeholders are involved in setting the priorities and are brought into the process to develop and deliver the strategy and action plan.
- The profile of child poverty in the city is raised through effective communication and our approach to tackling child poverty is publicised and open and transparent.

2.2.4 CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Purpose: To engage in an inclusive process to develop the strategy and action plan. This strategy will seek not to duplicate but to reinforce existing and upcoming plans and activities while highlighting key gaps in service provision and/or areas of underperformance.

Objectives:

- Collate the information from the needs assessment, evidence bank and the engagement and consultation feedback to identify gaps and formulate priorities.
- Review other child poverty strategies and identify what is working well in other local authority areas and whether these approaches could work for Plymouth.
- Facilitate a stakeholder workshop to agree draft priorities and develop the first draft of a strategy and action plan for consultation.
- Using consultation feedback, develop the strategic plan and delivery plan that aligns with other strategies and plans within the Council and partner agencies, and forms a key part of the Plymouth Plan.

3. PROJECT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 **Governance:** It is proposed that the cross party working group will oversee the strategy development process. Additional members will be identified by the Chair with support from Pam Marsden, Assistant Director for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care and SMT Lead for Child Poverty. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will provide pre-decision scrutiny. Project updates will also be provided to the People Directorate Programme Board.

3.2 Project Milestones:

Child Poverty Needs Assessment published	End September 2012
Stakeholder workshop	Early October 2012
Draft Strategy to Overview & Scrutiny Management Board	31 October 2012
Draft strategy to Cabinet to initiate consultation	27 November 2012
Draft Strategy - Consultation and engagement period	December 2012 – January 2013
Final Strategy and Action Plan to Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB)	27 February 2013
Final Strategy and Action Plan to Cabinet	02 April 2013
Final Strategy and Action Plan to Full Council	22 April 2013

3.3 Project Team: The project team will primarily be made up of resources from within the Policy, Performance and Partnership Service within the Chief Executive's Office, who will work closely with colleagues across all Directorates in Plymouth City Council and across other agencies.

3.4 Budget: Financial resources will be allocated from within the Chief Executive Office's budget to facilitate the prioritisation activities in October 2012 as well as consultation and engagement activities towards the end of 2012 and early 2013.

4. PROJECT INTERFACES

Child poverty is everyone's business if real progress towards achieving the city's outcomes is to be made. While a statutory requirement to develop a child poverty strategy, the form in which this will take is yet to be determined. However it is essential that working links are established with key citywide strategies under the umbrella of the Plymouth Plan, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Local Economic Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and the Transport Strategy.

5. RISKS

5.1 The primary risk of not addressing child poverty is that the numbers of children, young people and parents affected across the city will continue to rise during a time of austerity, rising unemployment and significant welfare reforms that are estimated to affect 20% of Plymouth's population. Such increases in child poverty levels will have a negative impact across the city, in terms of meeting our key performance indicators, additional pressures on already stretched service pressures and a lower quality of life for our families.

5.2 Inter-generational child poverty represents a deeply rooted social problem that is not easily resolved and requires sustained efforts by agencies and partners as well as within communities themselves to effectively break this cycle. To this end, it is essential that the strategy engage in a child focused approach that mitigates the effects of poverty while simultaneously meeting the needs of parents to provide the best for their children.

5.3 Operational risks focus on Council and partner services not joining up to maximise available resources to effect positive change against child poverty outcomes.

ANNEX I

Child Poverty Cross Party Working Group Terms of Reference (August 2012)

Purpose

To oversee the development of an evidence based child poverty strategy and action plan for the city for the three years 2013 – 2016.

Objectives

1. To ensure leadership and ownership of the child poverty agenda at a senior level to enable the development and effective delivery of the strategy and action plan
2. To oversee and review the needs assessment and evidence bank
3. To ensure that the child poverty strategy and action plan is supported as a result of full and inclusive involvement from key stakeholders and the community in its development
4. To oversee the development of the strategy and action plan, providing guidance and challenge where appropriate
5. To oversee the development of options for future governance arrangements and agree the option to be put in place with Cabinet and full Council following the expected dissolution of this working group.

Membership and Resources

- Cllr Penberthy (Chair)
- Cllr Sam Leaves (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Nicky Williams
- Cllr Lynda Bowyer
- Cllr Sally Bowie
- Cllr Terri Beer

At least one member of the group is to be a Cabinet member. The working group is quorate when at least one member is present from each political party.

CMT Champion: Carole Burgoyne, Director for People

SMT Lead: Pam Marsden, Assistant Director for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care

Officer support: Candice Sainsbury, Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Advisor and Lucy Davis, Policy and Business Planning Officer.

Activities and timescales

1. Review and agree project brief, findings from the needs assessment and updated Terms of Reference (August 2012)
2. Review the findings from the Literature Review and best practice (September 2012)
3. Undertake prioritisation exercise with key stakeholders as a result of the findings from the needs assessment and evidence bank (October 2012)
4. Oversee and agree the draft document for consultation (October 2012)
5. Undertake consultation with key stakeholders (December 2012 to January 2013)
6. Oversee the development of the child poverty strategy and action plan (September 2012 to February 2013).

Governance and reporting

The group will report on progress as follows:-

Document(s)	Committee	Date
Project plan and needs assessment	Cabinet	11 th September 2012
Consultation document	OSMB	31 st October 2012
	Cabinet	27 th November 2012
Final draft strategy and action plan	OSMB	27 th February 2013
	Cabinet	2 nd April 2013
	Full Council	22 nd April 2013

The working group will be convened by Candice Sainsbury and meet in⁴:-

- September 2012
- October 2012
- November 2012
- February 2013
- March 2013

Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary. Stakeholders may be invited by the group to attend meetings.

⁴ Appropriate dates and times to be scheduled in these months

ANNEX 2 - TACKLING CHILD POVERTY IN PLYMOUTH

In 1999, the Government made a commitment to end child poverty by 2020. Child poverty matters because it means children suffer both now and in the future. The causes and consequences of child poverty, both temporary and persistent, are multiple and complex.

Tackling child poverty is a top priority for Plymouth and there is strong cross party commitment to addressing it. A cross party working group has been established to oversee the development of a strategy and action plan to tackle child poverty in Plymouth. As part of this work a city wide consultation was undertaken throughout June and July to better understand the situation in Plymouth and agree a local definition of child poverty.

Our local definition of child poverty

'Child Poverty is essentially a result of poverty in families. Child Poverty is not simply due to a lack of money in the family. It is the outcome of economic, environmental and social factors and can damage a child's development and limit or prevent children and young people from having many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted.'

Plymouth Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14

How we will measure child poverty

In order that we are able to continue to measure our progress against other local authority areas we will continue to use the national measure:

'The proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of median income'.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, 2009 (formerly National Indicator 116)

The most recently available national data shows that families earning less than £214 per week are classed as living in poverty. In Plymouth this equates to 11,700 children living in poverty, of which 10,380 are aged under 16. This measure is currently based on income and does not take into account other factors such as life chances and family circumstances. This is acknowledged by the government who will be going out to consultation to develop a broader measure in October 2012. Locally we are already using a number of supplementary indicators to better understand the profile of child poverty in Plymouth.

Our challenge

Plymouth has a higher rate of child poverty than the national average (22.1% compared to 21.2% nationally and 16.5% in the South West region). In Plymouth 11,700 children live in poverty, a rise of just over 600 children from 12 months earlier, of which 10,380 are children aged 16 and under in child poverty (23%)⁵. Our target is to reduce child poverty to 10% by the year 2020 and we need to work together across the city to do this. We cannot afford to be complacent about this issue.

⁵ Snapshot as at 31 August 2009 compared to 31 August 2008 - most recently available data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs NI 116