

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Child Poverty Strategy – progress update
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date:	14 November 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 paper provides an update on Plymouth City Council's approach to developing a three year local child poverty strategy and action plan by April 2013. It includes a comprehensive child poverty needs assessment which forms part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It also outlines the approach being taken to ensure that the child poverty strategy for Plymouth is developed with full and inclusive involvement from key stakeholders and communities. This process was endorsed by Cabinet on September 11th 2012 and is being led by the Cross Party Child Poverty Working Group.

The development of a local child poverty strategy seeks 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 and Transport Strategy alongside activities for job creation, 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.

Significantly, the Child Poverty Strategy for Plymouth will feed into the upcoming Plymouth Plan, due to be endorsed in 2014, which will review the city's adopted Local Development Framework core strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy while seeking to build on and where possible combine the city's existing plans.

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. It 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:

Child poverty now features 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.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are asked to:

- Comment on the findings in the child poverty needs assessment in appendix 2 which will be used as the basis on which the Child Poverty Strategy and accompanying action plan for Plymouth will be developed;
- Comment on the approach to the development of the strategy and action plan as set out in Section 3 of this report and appendix 3.

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:

N/A

Sign off:

Fin		Leg		HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member: Pam Marsden											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 These include the development of a local Joint Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Child Poverty Strategy which sets out the measures partners propose to take for the purpose of reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty. The Act also requires local authorities to take their responsibilities to tackle child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.3 This paper reports on progress so far and proposals for developing a child poverty strategy and action plan for Plymouth. It provides an update on:
 - Our approach to developing the child poverty needs assessment
 - Next steps for developing a child poverty strategy for Plymouth
 - Our approach to ensuring the strategy is developed with full and inclusive involvement from stakeholders and the community.

2. OUR APPROACH TO DATE

- 2.1 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. 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 child poverty cross party working group has been meeting since February 2012 to review the citywide approach to tackling child poverty.
- 2.2 While fully acknowledging the excellent work of the Children and Young People's Trust over the past eighteen months, agreement was 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 is continuing to work closely with key partners and partnerships.
- 2.3 The child poverty needs assessment has now been completed and provides us with a clear understanding of the extent and nature of child poverty in Plymouth drawing on both quantitative and qualitative intelligence. This approach will now enable the development of a citywide child poverty strategy by April 2013.
- 2.4 A draft child poverty needs assessment has been produced in consultation with key practitioners from Adults & Children's Commissioning Teams, Education, Social Inclusion, Economic Development, Housing, representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector, Jobcentre Plus, Health and Early Years. This formed the basis for wider consultation at a strategy kick start event held on the 15th October 2012 with key stakeholders in the city.
- 2.5 Approximately 60 delegates attended the event from a cross section of the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. This included representation from health, the Police, Head Teachers, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Jobcentre Plus, Careers South West and the Council.
- 2.6 The purpose of this event was to:

- agree the key findings and recommendations from the draft needs assessment as the basis on which to develop Plymouth’s child poverty strategy and;
- agree the broad strategic outcomes for tackling child poverty across the city.

2.7 This feedback has now been collated and the draft needs assessment updated to reflect the comments from this event. Appendix 1 of this report demonstrates how this feedback has been integrated into the final needs assessment. A final version of the needs assessment is included in appendix 2.

3. NEXT STEPS - DEVELOPING OUR CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

- 3.1 At the strategy kick start event on the 15th October 2012 stakeholders were also asked to consider the broad strategic outcomes for the child poverty strategy. A wealth of information came out of this session which demonstrated a clear overlap across major strategic areas. 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.
- 3.2 A draft strategy will be developed based on the feedback from this event and the evidence provided by the needs assessment, and overseen by the Child Poverty Cross Party Working Group. Key stakeholders in the city will be consulted throughout December 2012 and January 2013 on the emerging strategy and action plan. The strategy will seek to reflect a ‘whole family’ approach and address the causes and effects of child poverty on children and families both now and in the future. A plan outlining our proposed approach to consultation and engagement is detailed in appendix 3.
- 3.3 The Child Poverty Strategy for Plymouth will also feed into the upcoming Plymouth Plan, due to be endorsed in 2014, which will review the city’s adopted Local Development Framework core strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy while seeking to build on and where possible combine the city’s existing plans.

4. KEY MILESTONES

MILESTONE	DATE
Needs assessment and outline approach to strategy development to Overview & Scrutiny Management Board	14 th November 2012
Draft strategy to Cabinet to initiate consultation	11 th December 2012
Launch consultation on draft strategy	12 th December 2012
End of consultation on draft strategy	31 st January 2013
Final strategy and action plan to Overview & Scrutiny Management Board	27 th February 2013
Final strategy and action plan to Cabinet	2 nd April 2013
Final strategy and action plan to Full Council	22 nd April 2013