

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Child Poverty Strategy 2013-2016: Consultation Draft

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 11 December 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 presents Plymouth's draft Child Poverty Strategy for consultation during December 2012 and January 2013. The accompanying engagement and consultation plan (Annexe 1) demonstrates how the strategy and action plan will be developed with full and inclusive involvement from stakeholders and the local community. The strategy development process was endorsed by Cabinet on 11th September 2012 and is being led by the Cross Party Child Poverty Working Group.

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 the 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. The Act also requires local authorities to take their responsibilities to tackle child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Community Strategy.

Child Poverty in Plymouth is being taken seriously. Tackling inequalities is a shared priority for Plymouth City Council and its partners of which child poverty is a key outcome measure for which there is collective responsibility across all partners. Plymouth City Council has also acknowledged the need to develop a child poverty action plan as one of its priority commitments laid out in its Corporate Plan. As part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a comprehensive child poverty needs assessment has now been completed to establish the local picture of child poverty and develop a clear understanding of the extent and nature of the local problem.

This is an opportune time to develop a local strategy for child poverty in Plymouth amidst immense change and upheaval for many of our poorest households. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced fundamental changes to the way welfare assistance is provided including changes to Tax Credits and the Local Housing Allowance. This comes at a time when the rising cost of living is already having an impact on income across the socio-economic spectrum with many people facing redundancy or finding their work hours reduced. Within such a challenging environment, the development of a meaningful set of

indicators with clear targets will be essential to monitor our progress in tackling child poverty and to measure the impact of activities included in the child poverty action plan.

Development of a local child poverty strategy seeks to recognise and provide greater visibility and accountability that tackling child poverty is everyone's business. While currently a stand-alone document it will ultimately become a corner stone for the upcoming Plymouth Plan, due in 2015, which will lay out the integrated and holistic long term plan for the city up to 2031.

The draft Child Poverty Strategy outlines Plymouth City Council's proposed approach to tackling child poverty over the next three years. It has been developed based on a comprehensive child poverty needs assessment and incorporates feedback from a child poverty strategy kick start event on the 15th October 2012. The final needs assessment has now been published and is available on the Council's website [Plymouth City Council - Child Poverty](#).

The strategy seeks 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. It will not duplicate but 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 needs 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. 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.

The child poverty strategy development process will be resourced within the Chief Executive's budget including workshops, consultation and small numbers of the final strategy being printed.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to identify if the strategy or action plan will have any negative impact on any of the protected characteristics. If this is found to be the case then further work will need to be carried out to mitigate as far as possible the issues identified. The assessment will take place once the documents have been published for public consultation.

The result of this assessment will be used by the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic. A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Act as age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

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:

Cabinet are asked to:

- Agree the draft Child Poverty Strategy as the basis for consultation in December 2012 and January 2013.
- Agree the approach for engaging and consulting with citywide stakeholders throughout December 2012 and January 2013 as set out in Annexe 1.

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 joint child poverty needs assessment and strategy.

Background papers:

- The Child Poverty Needs Assessment can be found at [Plymouth City Council - Child Poverty](#).
- [Child Poverty Act 2010](#)

- National Child Poverty Strategy 2011

Sign off:

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| Fin | SA-CXF PC1213 001-20- 11-2012 | Leg | 1541 5 | HR | | Corp Prop | | IT | | Strat Proc | |
| Originating SMT Member: Pam Marsden | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes | | | | | | | | | | | |

I. CHILD POVERTY MATTERS

I.1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty can be such a destructive force because of its long-term grip on families and communities, holding them back generation after generation. The disadvantages and barriers that parents experience are the source of this long-term impact. These barriers have a detrimental effect on children's progression and well-being, which can impact right through into their adulthood, in turn affecting the subsequent generation. The way that disadvantage perpetuates is shaped by the experiences, attainment and outcomes of children growing up in socio-economic disadvantage and by the way that negative parental activities experienced through childhood may repeat in adulthood¹

- I.1.1 Child poverty matters because it means children suffer both now and in the future.
- I.1.2 While essentially a result of poverty in families, child poverty is not simply due to lack of money in the family. It is the outcome of economic, environmental and social factors that 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 granted². Many children living in poverty have an unequal start in life and will become part of a perpetual cycle where they are less likely to achieve their academic potential or secure a job as an adult. They are also more likely to experience a range of health inequalities throughout their lives.
- I.1.3 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, of which 10,380 are aged under-16.
- I.1.4 Helping children overcome poverty will make a huge difference not only to their lives but to the lives of their families, communities and to society as a whole. Ending child poverty means tackling a wide range of complex issues to improve children's chances in life and empowering families to move themselves out of poverty for good.

I.2 PLYMOUTH'S COMMITMENT TO TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

- I.2.1 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. These include the 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. The Act also requires local authorities to take their responsibilities to tackle child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Community Strategy.
- I.2.2 Child Poverty in Plymouth is being taken seriously. Tackling inequalities is a shared priority for Plymouth City Council and its partners of which child poverty is a key outcome measure for which there is collective responsibility across all partners. Plymouth City Council has also acknowledged the need to develop a child poverty action plan as one of its priority commitments laid out in its Corporate Plan. As part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a comprehensive needs assessment has also been completed to establish the local picture of child poverty and develop a clear understanding of the extent and nature of the local problem.

¹ Allen, G (2011) 'Early Intervention: the next steps' An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government.

² Definition taken from the Plymouth Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

1.3 CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT TO TACKLE CHILD POVERTY

- 1.3.1 This is an opportune time to develop a local strategy for child poverty in Plymouth amidst immense change and upheaval for many of our poorest households. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced fundamental changes to the way welfare assistance is provided including changes to Tax Credits and the Local Housing Allowance. This comes at a time when the rising cost of living is already having an impact on income across the socio-economic spectrum with many people facing redundancy or finding their work hours reduced.
- 1.3.2 Plymouth is not being reticent in how it works with its most vulnerable families and much work is already taking place under the auspices of, for example, the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2012-2015, Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 and the Housing Plan 2012-2017.
- 1.3.3 The challenge remains however as to how we ensure that desired outcomes and collective efforts are joined up to ensure maximum effect for our poorest families and their children.
- 1.3.4 The upcoming Plymouth Plan, expected in 2015, aims to lay out the integrated and holistic long term plan for the city up to 2031. This will include plans to sustainably address societal problems such as inequality, deprivation and poverty, all of which will severely hamper the city's ability to grow and prosper in line with its aspirations. The vicious circle of poverty, including child poverty, affects not just individual families but society as a whole and needs to be addressed as such.
- 1.3.5 The Plymouth Plan will ultimately embrace and reflect some of the city's most important plans and strategies including but not limited to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Transport Strategy.

“The Plymouth Plan will be a strategic document that encompasses the whole of the city, as well as considering the city within its sub-regional and wider context. It will set out a vision and path to improvement, providing strategic policies to guide future change. It will include both a ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ approach, so as to provide a context for improving the city’s neighbourhoods as well as the city as a whole. It will be a plan for both people and place. It will set out how Plymouth’s potential for long term sustainable growth, as well as its wider role as the economic hub of the far South West, can be delivered.”

- 1.3.6 The local child poverty strategy, prior to its inclusion as part of the Plymouth Plan will ultimately serve to ensure that the need to address the economic, environmental and social factors that damage a child's life chances are entwined with delivering Plymouth's long term future.

1.4 A LOCAL APPROACH TO TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

- 1.4.1 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.
- 1.4.2 Since 2010, the Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust has led the child poverty agenda as part of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14. Agreement was reached in August 2012 that Plymouth City Council, in line with its statutory duty to tackle child poverty and in acknowledgement that addressing child poverty is both an adult and child focused issue, is to lead this critical agenda, working closely with key partners and partnerships.
- 1.4.3 The Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust will continue to play a key role in advocating for children and young people with regards to child poverty.
- 1.4.4 The child poverty needs assessment has now been completed and provides a clear understanding of the extent and nature of child poverty in Plymouth on which to develop Plymouth's Child Poverty Strategy.

- 1.4.5 The child poverty needs assessment formed the basis for wider consultation about needs at a strategy kick start event held on the 15th October 2012 with key stakeholders in the city. 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.
- 1.4.6 The purpose of the Strategy Kick Start 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.
- 1.4.7 The full Child Poverty Needs Assessment and feedback from the Strategy Kick Start can be found at [Plymouth City Council - Child Poverty](#).

1.5 NEXT STEPS – CONSULTING ON THE DRAFT CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

- 1.5.1 This draft strategy has been developed based on the evidence provided by the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and feedback from the Strategy Kick Start event. This process has been overseen by the Child Poverty Cross Party Working Group.
- 1.5.2 Consultation and engagement on the draft strategy will take place throughout December 2012 and January 2013 and will align closely with consultation activity also underway for the Plymouth Plan.
- 1.5.3 The aims of the consultation are to:
- Raise the profile of child poverty in the city and advocate for increased ownership and engagement, thereby ensuring our approach to tackling child poverty is publicised, open and transparent.
 - Ensure that the views of key stakeholders, including members of the public are taken into account when preparing the final Child Poverty Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
 - Ensure buy-in from key stakeholders and local communities to enable delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy and development of the accompanying Action Plan.
 - Identify innovative activities already taking place which are successfully helping to address Child Poverty.

1.6 KEY MILESTONES

| MILESTONE | DATE |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 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 |
| Full Council debate | 22 nd April 2013 |

2. PLYMOUTH CHILD POVERTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT – KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section presents the key findings from the Plymouth child poverty needs assessment, which aims to provide a clear understanding of the extent and nature of child poverty in Plymouth drawing on both quantitative and qualitative intelligence.

2.1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENCE

Unemployment is widely considered to be one of the key drivers of poverty. As well as being a major source of income, work generally improves people's well-being and mental and physical health, with positive implications for their children³. The quality of employment rather than employment in itself is a key factor. Individuals can suffer recurrent poverty as they become caught in a low pay/no pay cycle caused by insecure low paid work. Jobs that are not of high quality in terms of pay, conditions, flexibility and sustainability will not break the poverty cycle and can be detrimental to health and well-being in the long-term.

It is recognised that for a significant number of people, employment is unlikely to provide them with an adequate household income. Recent successes in driving down child poverty show that supporting parental employment and subsidising low paid employment are effective in reducing poverty⁴.

It is more expensive to be poor! For example, people on low incomes often end up paying more for the services they need because they cannot access mainstream financial products. Households using a pre-payment gas or electric meter are more likely to be in fuel poverty than those using other payment methods⁵. Many families living in poverty live in areas where public transportation isn't readily available or affordable, and can't afford to own a car. Unmanageable personal debt can drive a cycle of poverty and distress that is very difficult for families to escape. It reduces household income available to spend, creates further pressures on parents and relationships, and in extreme cases has a significant impact on children's quality of life and life chances.

KEY FINDINGS

- One in five Plymouth children are living in poverty based on household income levels. There are areas of significant child poverty in the city – eight areas have child poverty rates in excess of 50%.
- While the majority of child poverty is located in the South West and North West of the city, there are growing pockets in more affluent parts of the city. As the majority of data predates the recession, actual levels of child poverty could be higher than reported in this needs assessment.
- Eight neighbourhoods have over 500 children living in workless families.
- Plymouth residents have a lower than average rate of pay and Plymouth has a high level of part-time workers.
- Overall, Plymouth has a lower qualified workforce, due in part to outward migration of people with higher qualifications in addition to a perceived lack of basic employability skills including literacy, numeracy and communication.
- While relatively stable, the rate of young people post 16 years not in education, employment or training remains a significant concern in light of increasing rates and distribution of youth unemployment.
- Nearly 70% of children in poverty in Plymouth live in lone parent families with Barne Barton having by far the highest rates.

³ Waddell, G and Burton, K (2006) 'Is Work Good for your Health and Well-Being?' The Stationery Office; Black, C (2008) 'Working for a healthier tomorrow: Dame Carol Black's Review of the health of Britain's working age population'

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Department for Energy and Climate Change (2011) Annual Report on Fuel Poverty Statistics. DECC, London. www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/Statistics/fuelpoverty/2181-annual-report-fuel-poverty-stats-2011. Pdf.

- There is concern over lower levels of accessibility via current transport links to key employment areas of Belliver, Estover and Langan for residents from deprived areas of the city.
- Welfare Reform changes are estimated to impact 20% of the city's population, and will disproportionately affect some of Plymouth's most vulnerable families. This will lead to growing difficulty to manage household finance within an already challenging economic climate which has seen the costs of living rise significantly. While more data is required to understand the level and types of household debt across the city, there are clear indications of a growing need for workless and low income households to manage increased financial pressures including payment of bills, credit cards, vulnerability to loan sharks and personal debt.

IMPLICATIONS

- In-work child poverty poses a significant risk to the city - the income based measure of child poverty, while a significant indicator of material deprivation does not capture a large number of in work low income families. Evidence suggests that such households now at an increased risk of child poverty fall just above the 60% median rate but are struggling following substantial changes to the welfare system and rising costs of living.
- The direction and scope of the future growth of Plymouth is intrinsically linked to the city's ability to sustainably reduce its numbers of children living in poverty. Key issues that will need to be addressed include the creation of higher paid and higher quality employment opportunities in line with regional and national averages, alongside a strengthening of efforts to raise the skills levels of adults and young people in line with what employers demand. This must include a focus on basic skills including literacy and numeracy alongside other employability skills. This will also provide additional opportunities for many parents to engage with their own children's learning for example reading books before bedtime and supporting their child with homework.
- The constant number of young people from the most deprived areas who are not in education, employment or training alongside worrying trends of youth unemployment must prompt much closer dialogue and agreement between schools, colleges of further education and employers to ensure that the emerging skill sets are matched with job availability and the needs of employers.
- Financial top ups for low income families in the past has succeeded in lifting a significant number of families out of poverty. For some families it is the difference between being able to heat the home or buy food. The reduction in household income following the introduction of structural welfare reforms is likely to have most impact on Plymouth's most vulnerable families – this will severely impede the city's ability to reduce its child poverty rates and action to mitigate such impact is urgently required. It will also be essential to ensure that joined-up advice and guidance can make a real difference and enable people living in poverty to navigate their way through understanding the new benefit entitlements.
- Quantitative and qualitative data point to a growing and worrying trend of out of work and in work low income families being less able to manage their finances. With upcoming changes in the payment of benefits along with rising living costs, this is likely to result in marked increase in demand for both debt and budget management advice services. Opportunities to reduce household costs for vulnerable families including energy bills and repayment of debt should be explored, for example expansion of credit bank facilities, programmes promote energy efficiency e.g. insulation, creation of local energy cooperatives and increased installation of water meters in most deprived areas.
- The child care sufficiency audit shows that parents are generally happy with the range and cost of childcare provided across the city, links with the growth agenda need to be more closely formed to ensure that any growth in the employment market, including training and education, are matched with accessible and affordable child care opportunities. The expansion of the free entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds will add a new pressure on existing childcare places. The need to secure sufficient childcare places for disadvantaged two year olds will become part of the Local Authority's statutory duties from September 2013. It has been identified that there will be a predicted shortfall of approximately 350 places in 2013 and a further 1350 from 2014 when the offer is extended to 40 % of all eligible two year olds in Plymouth.

- The areas of greatest concern within Plymouth are the lower levels of accessibility of city residents who can reach key employment areas of Belliver, Estover and Langage. Those residents living in the most deprived areas will find it takes more than 30 minutes with their journey often requiring a change of bus to reach these areas. Those who are employed in shift work with early morning starts or late night finishes are more disadvantaged as bus services are fewer and further between at these times. A triangulation of further research and planning is required to better understand the links between, but not limited to areas of employment and training, child care provision and public transport routes.
- Children in lone parent households are more likely to be in poverty than those in two parent households, accounting for 70% of all child poverty households. Strategies to tackle child poverty will need to take account of this group, for example supporting adequate childcare options and flexibility for those who wish to work.

2.2 FAMILY LIFE AND CHILDREN'S LIFE CHANCES

Parents living in poverty are much more likely to be facing a range of issues other than material deprivation which may affect their parenting. These include low levels of education and few qualifications, lack of access to jobs and services, isolation, mental/physical ill health and domestic violence.

With regards to achievement, the successes that individuals achieve during their adult life can be predicted by the level of cognitive and non-cognitive skills that children already possess on their first day at school.⁶ While the gap is slowly closing between attainment levels of those on free school meals and other children are smaller than in previous years⁷, children growing up in poorer families still emerge from school with substantially lower levels of educational attainment⁸.

The relationship between poverty and ill-health is bi-directional: poverty contributes to ill-health and ill-health contributes to poverty. There is a social gradient in health – the lower a person's social position, the worse his or her health. Children born into low-income households are more likely to experience health problems from birth and accumulate health risks as they grow older. In addition, they are less likely to access healthcare.

KEY FINDINGS

- There is a greater concentration of families with multiple and/or complex needs living in the most deprived areas of the city. Multiple and complex needs may include lone parents, disability, health problems, parenting problems or social isolation amongst others.
- There is a significant attainment gap at all levels, from early years foundation stage, Key Stage 2 (primary schools), Key Stage 4 (secondary school) and post 16 education, between those eligible for Free School Meals and those not. Research indicates that, without effective intervention, this trend is established at a very early age and continues with the child into adulthood.
- There are inequalities in life expectancy with life expectancy lower in more deprived areas. For example the average life expectancy for people in Devonport is nearly 13 years less than those in Chaddlewood.
- Despite improvements in recent years health outcomes for families in the most deprived areas of Plymouth are less positive than their more affluent neighbours with lower rates of breastfeeding (at birth), higher rates of teenage pregnancy, and higher rates of low birth weights, smoking and childhood obesity.

IMPLICATIONS

- Children living in poorer households are much more likely to face multiple family based issues both as a cause and as a result of poverty. There is a clear need for targeted, joined up support to be provided to these families but it is essential that such support be based on the needs of the family as a whole rather than the individual

⁶ Field, F. [The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults](#), 2010, HM Government

⁷ Aldridge, H. et al, [Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2011](#), 2011, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁸ Goodman, A. and Gregg, P., [Poorer children's educational attainment: How important are attitudes and behaviour?](#), 2010, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

members in isolation of each other. Ease of access to such support will be critical to what is often a disenfranchised and isolated group of families.

- Key areas to be addressed should include parental and child emotional wellbeing and mental health, domestic abuse, worklessness and skills, along with healthy lifestyle issues including alcohol misuse and smoking. The need to enable aspirations within such families will also play a key part in improving outcomes for these children. The current programme for prevention and early intervention addresses many of these concerns but service provision must not be limited to children and young people focused services only but should extend to services for adults, including health, as well as services aimed at improving housing, reducing worklessness and building adult skills. A real challenge in the current economic climate will be how to provide targeted support to those families at risk of poverty, who so often miss out on services and support that are diverted to meet more complex needs.
- While it has reduced in recent years, the significant gap in educational attainment at all levels, from early years through to post 16 education between children and young people in the least and most deprived areas of Plymouth contributes to an on-going cycle of poverty within families. It is essential that continued efforts both inside and outside the school environment are targeted towards children from the most deprived areas. Additional resources such as the Pupil Premium should be used to aid this process in collaboration with services that work alongside families in recognition of the importance of family life and relationships to enhance the learning experience of children and young people.
- There are profound and well established health inequalities across Plymouth. Health issues of concern with regards to children's outcomes include teenage pregnancy, low birth weight, breastfeeding, childhood obesity, smoking and mental health, all of which correlate directly with areas of highest deprivation.
- While interventions that target individual lifestyle behaviours can have limited impact, it is essential to also look at improving health status by addressing the social determinants of health, or the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Using this approach, the health status of children and parents can be improved through factors such as education, employment, working conditions, housing along with good quality health care services.

2.3 COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

Neighbourhoods play an important role in the socialisation of children. Individuals judge their position in society in relation to their neighbours so growing up in a deprived neighbourhood often leads to lower aspirations. Young people may copy or learn antisocial behaviour from other people in the area so that poor behaviours are normalised. The poorer the neighbourhood, the more likely it is to have high rates of crime, poor air quality, lack of green spaces and safe places for children to play⁹.

Families living in poor housing are more likely to suffer from a range of health problems including poorer mental health and cognitive development as well as respiratory and stomach problems. Those growing up in the poorest households are more likely to suffer enduring physical and mental health problems in adulthood and have increased risk of severe, long-term and life-limiting illness. Children in these households are more likely than their more affluent peers to have difficulty in sleeping, studying or playing at home which can affect their health, their school lives and their social participation¹⁰.

⁹ Marmot, M (2010) 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' p. 78

¹⁰ Hawthorne et al. (2003) 'Supporting children through family change.' Joseph Rowntree Foundation

KEY FINDINGS

- Plymouth has high levels of families with children living in overcrowded housing.
- The number of homeless families requiring temporary accommodation remains stubbornly high despite intervention to prevent this from happening.
- 33% of Plymouth's private sector stock across the city is old and considered non decent – this equates to around 30,000 private sector homes of which 9,500 are occupied by 'vulnerable' residents in receipt of qualifying benefits. There is not enough data at present to determine how many house families living in poverty.
- Social housing, located predominantly in the West of the city is often well maintained and more energy efficient than older private sector housing. The age, condition and tenure of private sector housing stock in Plymouth is of concern and may be impacting on the health of the most vulnerable families.
- Deprived neighbourhoods in the city are most likely to experience higher levels of crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. However patterns of youth offending across the city are less clear cut with less deprived areas seeing similar number of offenders as the more deprived areas.
- Further work needs to be undertaken to better understand how services currently target those groups considered more vulnerable to poverty and whether their needs have been fully considered in service planning.

IMPLICATIONS

- There are serious concerns about the numbers of families with children who are living in non- decent private sector housing. While not all will be considered as living in poverty, the waiting list for social housing remains substantial and with limited data available, assumptions must be made that a large proportion are living in the private rented sector. This may also account for the constant numbers of families presenting as homeless each month. That the majority of old housing stock in many deprived areas is social housing gives some level of assurance that these homes are better maintained.
- However, the issue of overcrowding cannot be resolved without an increased number of new and affordable homes being built that are able to house larger families in particular. However, the obstacles facing low income families from buying their own home will not be overcome in the current climate and innovative ways to enable poorer families to live in decent houses will need to be found in the short and long term.

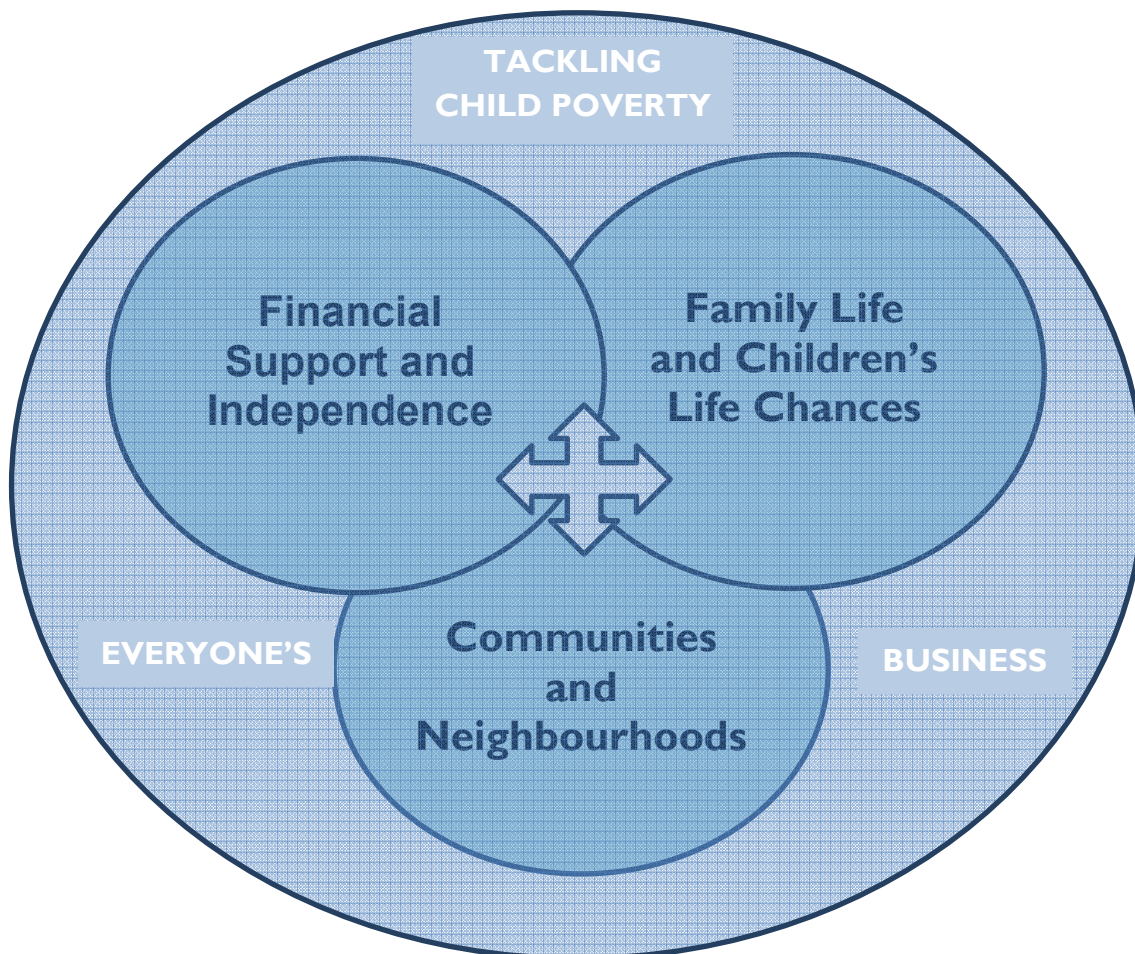
2.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

The needs assessment has highlighted some gaps in our knowledge around key areas such as; the impact of gambling on child poverty, understanding the challenges facing lone parents and better understanding the make-up and issues faced by families that are vulnerable to falling into poverty. In addition, there are some key local data gaps in the areas of transport, skills, mental health, smoking and key stage three educational attainment. There also remains a lack of up to date intelligence regarding the make-up of Plymouth's families – for example the types of family, size of family and family circumstances. These areas need further exploration following the full release of the most recent census data over the coming 12 months.

3. PLYMOUTH'S APPROACH TO TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

3.1 TACKLING CHILD POVERTY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

- 3.1.1 This draft strategy aims to provide the overarching approach for how Plymouth aims to **reduce child poverty and mitigate its impact**.
- 3.1.2 At the heart of this overarching approach is the need to increase visibility and ownership of the child poverty agenda amongst key stakeholders, partner agencies and communities.
- 3.1.3 Our overall goal will contribute to achieving the city's vision to become one of Europe's finest most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone
- 3.1.4 Tackling child poverty is a complex issue that cannot be achieved with a single faceted approach. Responses to child poverty therefore need to be identified and organised in a way that makes sense of how child poverty impacts on the context of child, family, home & community without losing sight of the inter-relationships that exist between each.
- 3.1.5 This strategy will not by itself address all aspects of child poverty, but will look to direct attention to critical areas of need and where most impact can be made. There is already a significant amount of work being undertaken to address child poverty, and this strategy will seek to reinforce existing and upcoming plans and activities while also highlighting key gaps in service provision and/or areas of underperformance.
- 3.1.6 It is proposed to use three broad ranging themes originally used within the Child Poverty Needs Assessment to frame the city's strategic approach to tackling child poverty, as follows:



- 3.1.7 These strategic themes combine and build on two national frameworks designed to set out an overarching approach for the development of local strategies to address child poverty, and represent an understanding of the factors that have the largest and most direct impact on child poverty. These include the 'Building Blocks Framework'¹¹ developed by the Child Poverty Unit, alongside the framework outlined within the National Child Poverty Strategy: 'A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives'¹².
- 3.1.8 The underlying assumption is that to be effective, the city must focus attention on a combination of efforts to tackle child poverty, focusing on the family as a whole over the short, medium and long term.
- 3.1.9 The following section outlines some proposed objectives under each strategic theme and outcomes. The detailed child poverty action plan will then be developed that works alongside and feeds into other plans and strategies in support of our shared goal. This plan will take stock of existing activities to tackle child poverty, as well as identify where additional /future actions will need to be implemented in collaboration with other citywide plans and strategies. It is expected that some gaps in activity will be identified which will need to be collectively addressed.
- 3.1.10 The Child Poverty Strategy and accompanying action plan will ultimately form part of the Plymouth Plan in 2015.

¹¹ Child Poverty Needs Assessment Toolkit, Local Government Improvement and Development, 2010

¹² HM Government (2011) A new approach to child poverty: Tackling the causes of disadvantage and transforming families' lives

3.2 WHAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON

This section will outline what we want to achieve, and in recognition that we are not starting from scratch, also provides some examples of existing plans and activities. The proposed areas of focus represent either a gap in current activity or an issue that requires strengthening in order to achieve our outcomes.

3.2.1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENCE

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- More families in work that pays and have the support they need to progress
- Financial support that is responsive to families' situations

WHAT ALREADY EXISTS?

| | |
|---|---|
| LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY (LES) | The LES identifies the economic development priorities necessary to deliver a step change in economic growth to 2026. Its aspirations are to increase competitiveness, diversify knowledge, improve the skills base of the workforce, build sustainable, well connected and inclusive communities and intensify the overall business base of the city. This will in turn attract private investment, raise incomes and help tackle economic and social exclusion. |
| COMMUNITY ENERGY MUTUAL | Aims to generate efficient and renewable energy solutions in part to deliver cost efficiencies for residents and address fuel poverty. |
| PLAN FOR JOBS | The Plan for Jobs brings together the key actions and interventions necessary over the next two years to stimulate the city's economy and create jobs. |
| URBAN ENTERPRISE | Established in deprived areas to help create new businesses and promote self-employment, and promoting incubators for future jobs. |
| 1000 CLUB | Campaign to encourage businesses to provide some form of work placement or employment to young people. Including work experience for school pupils. |
| COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUST | Aims to support communities in the north west of the city to improve their access to employment opportunities. |
| LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) & LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) | The LDF provides the spatial planning framework for the development and growth of the city. Together with the LTP, it provides a strategic framework for the spatial development of the city. |
| FINANCIAL INCLUSION | A wide range of support is currently offered to help ensure a family's in-coming money is maximised, their out-goings are controlled and they can exercise informed choices through access to basic financial services. Key services include advice and information about benefit changes, citywide benefit take up campaigns, as well as problem debt and money advice, and strengthening credit union provision. |

WHAT WE PROPOSE TO FOCUS ON:

- More, better paid, higher quality employment and enterprise opportunities to support parents and young people out of poverty.
- Ensure that parents and young people have the right skills to meet the needs of employers both now and in the future – this includes employability skills such as literacy, numeracy and communication skills.
- Address barriers to employment including access to training, affordable and flexible child care and affordable transport to work links.
- Support families to effectively manage their household finances including debt advice.
- Promote a fairer way for families on a low income to access household services including gas, electricity and banking.

3.2.2 FAMILY LIFE AND CHILDREN'S LIFE CHANCES

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- Ensure that poverty in childhood does not translate into poor experiences and outcomes

WHAT ALREADY EXISTS?

| | |
|---|---|
| CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2011-2014 | <p>This plan outlines how partners across the Children and Young People's Trust will work together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people under five priorities: i. Equip young people with skills, knowledge and opportunities to make a successful transition to adulthood, ii. Improve levels of achievement for all children and young people, iii. Tackle child poverty, iv. Provide all children with the best possible start to live, and v. Tackle risk taking behaviour through locality delivered services.</p> |
| PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGY | <p>This strategy seeks to deliver Plymouth's commitment to families and young people to make positive change to their lives together. It aims to reduce vulnerability and improve outcomes for children, young people and families by responding early to young people's needs.</p> |
| FAMILIES WITH A FUTURE PROGRAMME | <p>Builds on successful multi agency, early intervention work with families to help deliver priorities such as reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, helping children stay in school and getting people back into work.</p> |
| HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME | <p>A public health programme for children, young people and families, which focuses on early intervention and prevention. Focuses on screening, immunisations, developmental reviews, information and guidance on parenting and healthy choices. Aims to identify families who need additional support or are at risk of poor health outcomes.</p> |
| NARROWING THE GAP | <p>Significant progress has been made in recent years within schools to narrow the gap in attainment between students in the most deprived and most affluent neighbourhoods. In addition, three new primary schools have been opened alongside the creation of a virtual school for children in care with their own virtual head teacher.</p> |
| HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (Due 2013) | <p>This Joint Strategy will set out the overarching framework to address the health and wellbeing needs of Plymouth's local communities and citizens. It will also act as a key driver for tackling health inequalities and improving health outcomes for individuals and communities.</p> |

WHAT WE PROPOSE TO FOCUS ON:

- Child poverty is not just about improving outcomes for the child: It is about improving outcomes for the adults in the family as well.
- Adult and child focused services must work more closely together to offer a range of support for families living in or at risk of poverty to address issues such as domestic abuse, parental drug and alcohol misuse and parental mental health;
- Greater focus on support that is pro-active and offering early intervention, including low income working families whose needs are often hidden.
- Continue tackling poor educational attainment at every stage of development for children in low income families: early years, school years and the transition to adulthood.
- Improving physical and mental health outcomes and reduce health inequalities across the city.
- Target services and support at those at greatest risk of child poverty including low income working families, lone parent families and larger families.

3.2.3 COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- Creating an environment that supports children to thrive

WHAT ALREADY EXISTS?

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| HOUSING PLAN 2012-2017 | <p>This plan lays out the city's housing ambition and priority objectives for developing, improving and investing in people's homes, neighbourhoods and communities. It acknowledges that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New and improved housing supply of the right type and tenure will help the economic and physical regeneration of the city.• Improving housing standards to provide safe, secure, well designed, accessible and energy efficient homes can improve the health and wellbeing of all residents, and will, over time reduce health inequalities.• Access to good quality housing, at a price people can afford, will reduce inequality and provide the right environment in which children can thrive, get the best out of their education, and help adults get back into work.• Successful communities are achieved by working with residents to create a strong sense of place, where people feel safe, and have increased engagement and satisfaction in where they live. |
| STRATEGIC ALCOHOL PLAN | <p>Sets out how the city will minimise alcohol related harm and promote responsible drinking. Includes a focus on i. Changing knowledge, skills and attitudes towards alcohol, ii. Providing support for children, young people and parents in need, and iii. Creating safer drinking environments.</p> |

WHAT WE PROPOSE TO FOCUS ON:

- Increase access to affordable, decent housing for poorer families currently living in substandard homes in the private rented sector.
- Working with communities to identify solutions to community needs such as access to services for domestic abuse, mental health and addressing anti-social behaviour.

4. CHILD POVERTY IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS – DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

4.1 GOVERNANCE

4.1.1 Plans are currently being explored as to how to most effectively govern implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan with the aim of making child poverty everyone’s business. Lessons learned are being collated from other Local Authorities and innovative models are being reviewed with a view to developing an approach that builds ownership and momentum for this agenda whilst ensuring accountability for the delivery of activities and outcomes. A final proposal will be presented to Plymouth City Council’s Cabinet in March 2013.

4.2 CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

4.2.1 The detailed child poverty action plan with established targets will accompany the final strategy. It will be developed as part of the consultation and engagement activities to be carried out during December 2012 and January 2013.

4.3 COSTING THE STRATEGY

4.3.1 Costing of the strategy and action plan is expected to commence in January 2013. 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 across Plymouth City Council and its partners. 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.

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

4.3 MANAGING PERFORMANCE

4.3.1 The most well-known measure available at present for capturing relative low income poverty¹³ is ‘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’

4.3.2 Evidence shows that at below 60 per cent of the median income, material deprivation becomes a significant problem with families struggling to meet basic needs like food, heating, transport, clothing and the extra costs of schooling like equipment and trips.¹⁴ The links between material deprivation and living below 60% median income are strong and the correlation between poor outcome and children living on relatively low income is too strong to ignore.¹⁵

4.3.3 The problem with having a single finance based indicator for child poverty is that it cannot capture the complexities of the issue, as outlined in the Introduction. It is therefore proposed to develop a basket of meaningful indicators that would help to capture any impact on a broad range of factors contributing to child poverty locally, with some examples as follows:

| Indicator Description | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| Children's Life | Inequality gap in achievement by 19 | Family Resource | Proportion of children in poverty |
| | Free School Meals/ Non Free School Meals achievement gap | | Average earnings of employees in the area |
| | Special Educational Needs//non Special Educational | | Time to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax |

¹³ Child Poverty Act 2010 – defined by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs, 2009 (formerly National Indicator 116)

¹⁴ Child Poverty Map of the UK, March 2011, Campaign to End Child Poverty

¹⁵ The importance of income in measuring and tackling child poverty, Save the Children, June 2012

| | | |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Needs achievement gap | Family Circumstance | Benefit new claims |
| Proportion of children achieving the expected level of achievement | | Proportion of households on waiting list for social housing |
| Under 18 conception rate | | Amount of new affordable housing |
| Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 | | Working adults seeing mental health services |
| Percentage of live births under 2.5kg | | Overall employment rate |
| Life expectancy at birth | | Proportion of children in workless households |
| Proportion of obese / underweight children | | Proportion of take up of child care by low income working families |
| Proportion of persistently absent children | | Working age people with access to public transport |
| Rate of children in need per 1000 children | | 16-18yr old young people not in employment, education or training |

- 4.3.4 This basket of indicators alongside clear targets will be developed at the same time as the child poverty action plan to enable the monitoring of overall progress of the Child Poverty Strategy.
- 4.3.5 The Government recently launched a public consultation on measuring child poverty which makes the case for a multidimensional measure of child poverty, potentially with a mix of ‘current poverty’ and ‘life chances’ type measures. While local targets will be established with the development of the Child Poverty Strategy, some of the indicators may change based on the outcome from the national consultation which is expected in Spring 2013.

ANNEXE I: ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Involving and consulting with the community is key to preparing and delivering an effective Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. Working in a coordinated way as an organisation and with our partners as part of a whole plan approach also makes sense when it comes to addressing a cross-cutting issue that affects everyone. Dovetailing with the Plymouth Plan is an obvious and sensible approach because it describes itself thus: “A plan for Plymouth can achieve the vision in an ambitious but realistic way, and is signed up and delivered by businesses, investors, the public sector and local communities”.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 This communications and consultation plan sets out the approach for consulting and engaging key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.2 The key aims of the consultation will be to:
- To support the delivery of the Plymouth Plan and its various themes, in particular: prosperity and affordability, local community, living and housing, health and care, education and learning, and getting around.
 - Raise the profile of child poverty in the city through effective communication and engagement, thereby ensuring our approach to tackling child poverty is publicised, open and transparent.
 - Ensure that the views of key stakeholders, including members of the public are taken into account as part of the developing the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.
 - Ensure buy-in from key stakeholders and local communities to enable delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- 2.3 To achieve these aims, the consultation will:
- Work with Elected Members and key stakeholders to agree the strategic vision and objectives for the Child Poverty Strategy and in so doing support the development and delivery of the Plymouth Plan.
 - Develop a detailed child poverty action plan based on full involvement and input from the local community and other key stakeholders.
 - Manage consultation resources efficiently by dovetailing where possible with consultation and engagement activities as part of the Plymouth Plan in a way that obtains the most useful comments.
 - Ensure that a wide range of people have the opportunity to get involved and are able to put forward their views and that these views are incorporated in so far as is practical and appropriate to do so.
 - Ensure that the consultation and community engagement activities and materials are fully accessible.
 - Ensure that feedback is provided in an effective way to those who participated.

3. OUTCOMES

- 3.1 It is intended that the communication and consultation with all stakeholders will bring about the following:
- A local Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan which sets out the measures that contributing partners will undertake as part of a coordinated approach to reduce and mitigate the causes and effects of child poverty.
 - A local Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan which is widely supported by all stakeholders as part of the Plymouth Plan as the city's approach to tackle this issue.
 - Acknowledgement and reinforcement of existing/upcoming plans and activities that address Child Poverty as part of the overall Action Plan.
 - Identification of gaps in service provision and/or areas of underperformance along with measures to address these.
 - A wide understanding of what Child Poverty is, how it affects families and what its causal factors are.

4. FOCUS

- 4.1 The consultation will focus on three main points:
- To confirm whether the draft strategy has adopted the right approach for the city to tackle Child Poverty.
 - To inform and build an action plan which underpins delivery of the Strategy.
 - To identify innovative activities already taking place which successfully help to address Child Poverty, and which can inspire other new projects and activities to develop and start.

5. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 A full and inclusive consultation will take place throughout December 2012 and January 2013. In order to achieve the outcomes highlighted above a wide range of stakeholders will be invited to take part in the consultation exercise; a detailed list of stakeholders has been identified. This list overleaf provides an overview of these key stakeholder groups:

| Stakeholder/ Organisation | Interest | Method | Contact |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Plymouth City Council – CMT/SMT | Strategic leads in delivery of parts of the Strategy | U-Create Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email |
| Plymouth City Council – Identified officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past involvement or respondents to development of the Needs Assessment or the kick start. • Potential involvement in delivery of parts of the Strategy or Action Plan. | U-Create Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email |
| Members | Democratically elected representatives of the city and its wards | U-Create Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| MPs | Democratically elected representatives of city's constituencies | U-Create Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email |
| Strategic Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Trust Executive • Safe and Strong / Community Safety Partnership • Culture Board • Growth Board • Health & Wellbeing Board • Plymouth Better Together • Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Board • Regional partnerships e.g. Local Economic Partnership | While some of these partnership groups have a greater interest than others in child poverty. Child poverty is a cross-cutting issue where all partners should be involved and have the opportunity to influence the strategy and action plan | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |
| Voluntary & Community Sector; including CAB, debt advice, credit unions | Organisations and groups based locally in the community and who work directly with families or individuals affected by child poverty and other issues that lead to child poverty. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |
| Educational establishments and organisations; head teachers, schools, early years settings | Working with children and young people to support their educational needs | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email via host organisations Press releases Displays/posters in schools and colleges |
| Social care support and advice organisations | Working with families including those affected by child poverty | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email via host organisations Press releases |
| Housing associations | Provide housing, support and advice to families and individuals in greatest need | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases Displays/posters in housing offices and venues |
| Youth Parliament/Council | Local voice for young people in how services are delivered | Attendance at Parliament/Council sessions U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Health | Families affected by child poverty often have the greatest health needs | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases Displays/posters across NHS Plymouth venues |
| Police, Probation & Fire & Rescue Service | Community Safety, youth offending and diversionary youth activity | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases Displays/posters across venues |
| Business and employment; private sector, Jobcentre Plus, Careers South West | Larger sized employers within the city along with business support, apprenticeships, employment support and business start-ups can all factor in work to address child poverty. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases Displays/posters across venues |
| Utility companies | Families affected by child poverty may often struggle to pay bills such as utility bills. Support or advice from utility companies may ease the burden. | U-Create | Direct invitation by letter/email |
| Faith groups | Part of the community support network and community hubs. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |
| Hard to reach groups | Part of the community support network and community hubs. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |
| Armed forces / community covenant | A key employer and part of the city's heritage. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases |
| PCC staff in general | PCC not included in the list of those officers specifically invited to comment will still be able to comment on the strategy. Officers delivering front line services will likely have views about the Strategy and its approach. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Direct invitation by letter/email Press releases Displays/posters a PCC/civic offices and venues |
| Public | Child poverty is everyone's business. All members of the public are invited to comment about the Strategy. | U-Create Sofa events/pop up cafes Twitter debates | Press releases Displays/posters a PCC/civic offices/housing offices and venues |

6. HOW WE WILL CONSULT

- 6.1 To ensure that the consultation is as wide and inclusive as possible a variety of methods and media will be used to capture stakeholder viewpoints and their contribution to addressing child poverty.
- 6.2 The consultation will seek to obtain views and opinions about proposed themes and areas of focus i.e. are they fit for purpose, what is missing, what needs to be changed, are they realistic and achievable? It will also ask contributing partners and organisations to state what actions and activities they will be undertaking to address child poverty.
- 6.3 For the wider public, their opinions are also sought on whether the proposed Strategy will make a difference to those most at risk from child poverty.
- 6.4 A range of methods will be used as part of the consultation:
 - U-Create will be used as the online survey tool to enable the public and partners to feedback their comments and contribute their views about the draft strategy. A children and young people's version will also be available online;
 - The PCC Child Poverty Webpage will be used as the host for the online survey.
 - A leaflet based 'survey lite' will enable those without access to a PC to feedback their comments;
 - Sofa events: as part of the Plymouth Plan consultation process, a number of face to face sofa events will be hosted across the city where consultees will be invited to comment on different parts of the draft strategy;
 - Tackling Child Poverty inbox: can be used as an alternative to the online portal or survey lite if respondents choose to submit their comments and additional information via email;
 - Social Media will be used to raise the profile of child poverty and increase awareness of the ways in which to comment on the draft strategy. This will include weekly debates on PCC Twitter feeds and Facebook page.

7. COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

- 7.1 The online consultation and dedicated webpage will be the primary tool for consultation, communication and feeding back information and progress to stakeholders throughout the development of the strategy and action plan.
- 7.2 To publicise the consultation and raise awareness of how to take part, it is intended to do the following within the resources available and timescales:
 - Letter/email – inviting identified stakeholders to take part in the consultation. This group will include those people and organisations that have already fed their comments into the development of the needs assessment or attended the kick start launch. They will also include officers and leads who will have a strategic or operational role in activities which will help to address child poverty. They will be invited to provide their views on the draft Strategy and their organisations contribution to the Action Plan.
 - Attendance at identified partnership meetings – informing those partnerships about the consultation and inviting their members to take part.
 - Press releases – to inform the wider public about the consultation and inviting them to take part. This will include local newspapers as well as our pages on Twitter and Facebook to inform the wider public about the consultation and inviting them to take part.
 - Use of PCC Twitter feeds and Facebook as a forum for debate and to raise awareness about the consultation. Weekly questions can be posed to generate discussion and debate.

- Direct engagement with stakeholders and the public (face to face) – as part of the Plymouth Plan, sofa events will be held across the city as an informal but fun way of engaging with people and interested parties.
- Use of the Plymouth Plan consultation newsletter where comments and feedback can be recorded and captured at sofa events.
- Displays/exhibitions – set up in Civic offices and public settings – to inform the wider public about the consultation and inviting them to take part.
- PCC website/Staffroom/Schoolroom – to inform all PCC staff and the wider public about the consultation and inviting them to take part.
- Posters/leaflets – distributed to Civic offices, libraries, housing offices – to inform the wider public about the consultation and inviting them to take part.
- Newsletter articles – public, health, schools, voluntary and community sector journals may be used to insert articles promoting the consultation and inviting readers to take part.
- Neighbourhood meetings – information including posters and leaflets will be shared with NLOs whose neighbourhood meetings coincide with the consultation period. This can be shared with attendees of the meeting to encourage them to take part.
- Schools/nurseries/governors/head teacher associations – information will be sent to key contacts to distribute on our behalf to all schools, nurseries and educational establishments.
- Voluntary and community sector – information will be sent to key contacts to distribute to voluntary and community groups on our behalf.

7.3 Campaign branding for the consultation and engagement activities will be developed in partnership with the Corporate Communications Team, in line with the Corporate identify.

8. KEY MILESTONES

8.1 Beyond the key milestones highlighted below, a detailed project plan has been developed and can be viewed as an appendix to this document.

| Milestone | Date |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Plymouth Plan – The Conversation | September 2012 – May 2013 |
| Draft Child Poverty strategy to Cabinet to initiate consultation | 11 th December 2012 |
| Official launch of consultation | 12 th December 2012 |
| Consultation deadline reminder | 14 th January 2013 |
| End of Consultation period | 31 st January 2013 |
| Final strategy and action plan to Cabinet | 2 nd April 2013 |
| Full Council debate | 22 nd April 2013 |

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risk Description | Likelihood | Impact | Risk Rating | Mitigation |
|--|------------|--------|-------------|---|
| Low response by stakeholders to consultation | 3 | 5 | 15 | Use wide variety of methods to consult with stakeholders. Allow time in the plan for frequent reminders / additional consultation events to be carried out. |
| Negative response to Strategy by press which could bias stakeholder response | 3 | 4 | 12 | Manage media relations to ensure a positive message is promoted. |
| Negative response to Strategy by stakeholders | 3 | 3 | 9 | Key stakeholders have already been involved in the development of the needs assessment. |

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to identify if the strategy or action plan will have any negative impact on any of the protected characteristics, if this is found to be the case then further work will need to be carried out to mitigate as far as possible the issues identified. The assessment will take place once the documents have been published for public consultation.
- 10.2 The result of this assessment will be used by the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
- 10.3 A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Act as age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.