

MOTION ON NOTICE

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

Child poverty is essentially a result of poverty in families.

Child poverty matters because it means children suffer now and their future lives can be blighted.

Income is central to the lives of all families in poverty. This reflects the current national measure which classes families earning less than £251 per week as living in poverty. In Plymouth this equates to 11,560 children, of which 10,190 are aged under 16¹.

Amidst the deepening economic crisis, it is an opportune time to develop our local plan to tackle child poverty. Falling incomes, unemployment, rising cost of living, reduced economic activity and major changes to the way that welfare assistance is provided are having a real impact on Plymouth families both in the short and long term. For example, stressors such as job loss, home foreclosure, or loss in family savings can place strain on parental relationships and on the family as a whole. It can affect educational achievement of children by reducing families' abilities to provide a supportive learning environment or adequate nutrition, or by forcing a delay or abandonment of higher education plans.

Plymouth has shaped its response to child poverty based on its understanding of child poverty as 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.

Our three year strategy presents how Plymouth aims to tackle the causes and impact of child poverty, while also acknowledging the limits and challenges presented by the current economic and social environment.

Council therefore:-

- Commends the Cross Party Working Group on Child Poverty, our partners, officers, Youth Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet for their cooperation in developing a new Child Poverty Strategy for the city.
- Commits to encourage partners to work with us to deliver the Child Poverty Strategy and action plan.
- Will actively support and promote the work of the new Standing Conference on Child Poverty.
- Instructs officers to share all background information, consultation responses and thinking from the last two years of work in developing the Child Poverty Strategy and action plan with the Plymouth Fairness Commission.

¹ Based on HMRC definition (Number of children in families in receipt of either 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. Snapshot at 31 August 2010.

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

- Encourages members to act as Child Poverty Champions within their wards; working to mitigate the impact of child poverty now and take action to stop future generations lives being blighted by child poverty.

Proposed by Councillor Penberthy

Seconded by Councillor Mrs Bowyer