Appendix 4

Priority area: Improving Services for Young People (Child Poverty)

Background Information: Poverty is not a new issue, and its causes and effects have been explored in a range of recent research and evidence-based work, including the national Review of Poverty and Life Chances led by Frank Field MP in 2010 which concluded that life chances are dependent on development in the first 5 years of life. The 2010 Marmot Review, and the 2011 reviews of early intervention and the early years foundation stage reached similar conclusions about giving every child the best start in life. The collective evidence suggests that the following are key challenges for addressing poverty:

- Tackling worklessness and improving employability;
- Addressing financial and digital exclusion;
- Strengthening families and parenting skills;
- Narrowing the gap on educational attainment;
- Improving health outcomes.

It was approved at Cabinet on 13th June to progress with a Child Poverty Project Proposal. This proposal was to select primary schools to become a 'hub', enhancing the vital role of schools and creating a platform for them to act as a catalyst for transforming local communities.
The activities co-ordinated through this 'school community hub' would be aimed at mitigating and reducing the impact of poverty and deprivation through a 'whole family' approach and a community-led programme of activity. It would seek to enhance rather than duplicate pupil-centred interventions, for example those in place to narrow the gap in attainment.

A commissioning process was carried out a two primary school were successful in becoming a community hub, one in Wallasey and one in Wirral West. These schools are now drafting actions plans and will carry out asset mapping

A map of community assets might include:

- Community connectors – people who make things happen in the local area;
- Existing community groups and associations, for example faith groups, the PTA and 'friends of' groups (parks, libraries, etc);
- Local traders / businesses;
- Housing providers;
- Voluntary organisations;
- Local services, for example Police, Fire and Rescue, health agencies and Jobcentre Plus.

An action plan might include:

- Celebrations and other events designed to equip the community to self help and identify opportunities and ideas;
- Development of social enterprises to meet community need and create employment;
- Microfinance projects – credit unions, business loans, etc.;
- Targeted skills courses and jobs readiness training linked to real job opportunities;
- Targeted services to reduce risk taking behaviour.
- Provision of childcare;
- Securing transport links to areas of employment;
- Improving access to banking services and debt, benefits and legal advice;
- Community celebration events and ideas fairs;
- Parenting and family skills, e.g. budgeting;
- Training to promote community resilience;
- School readiness;
- Building links with neighbouring assets;
- Extended schools programme, e.g. holiday provision;
- Working with housing providers to tackle local housing issues;
- Community-led clean ups and physical improvements.

Project Description: A Birkenhead Primary school (Woodlands Community Primary School) did apply to be part of this project but they were ranked third in the assessment process and there was only enough funding for two schools. Members of the assessment panel have provided very positive feedback stating they gave an excellent submission and highlighted some very positive work to be carried out in the Birkenhead area.

The proposal to the committee is to financially support (in partnership with public health) Woodlands Community primary School to be a Community Hub. We will work with them to develop an action plan focusing on the prevention of risk taking behaviour for families in the Birkenhead area e.g. Becoming NEET, Drugs and Alcohol, teenage pregnancy.

Information to identify the need:
Child poverty is calculated on the basis of the number of children in families in receipt of either out of work benefits, or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income as a proportion of the total number of children in the area. **Child poverty is highest in Birkenhead compared to the other three Constituencies.**

Three wards in Birkenhead constituency had levels of child poverty which are above the national, regional and local averages in 2010 (the last year rates at small area/ward level were calculated). These same three wards had the highest levels of child poverty in Wirral and in the case of Bidston & St. James, this means that more than half of children were living in poverty (53%).

Child Poverty: Birkenhead Constituency, 2010

Ward of Residence (2004 boundaries)	% of all children living in poverty
Bidston and St James	52.8
Birkenhead and Tranmere	47.8
Claughton	22.9
Oxton	17.9
Prenton	16.3
Rock Ferry	44.2
Birkenhead Constituency	**33.7**
Wallasey Constituency	**26.4**
Wirral South Constituency	**12.4**
West Wirral Constituency	**12.6**
Wirral	**24.4**
North West	**22.4**
UK	**20.6**

Examples of good practice: Even thought this project is in its infancy and can not be referred to as good practice for delivery, it was recommended from Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group who have extensive knowledge and expertise on interventions to tackle Child Poverty, this project has been thoroughly planned and the group will support with the development in Birkenhead. The Working Group has also taken a consistent view that short-term interventions are much less likely to work and that a focus on community assets, rather than community deficits, is critical to tackling poverty for future generations. The Working Group has previously informed the commissioning of an evaluation project which explored the impact of existing local initiatives and programmes on families in poverty with a particular focus on identifying what interventions have been most successful in supporting parents into sustainable employment. The findings of this evaluation concluded that:

> "The recognition and use of community networks and assets is an essential element in providing a sound context for mutual trust, peer support and personal development to be undertaken in a familiar and informal setting, often within walking distance, where individuals can be supported to meet with professionals on their own terms to manage their journey towards employability." ('Supporting Families Out of Poverty: What Works?' Final Report, October 2012)

The Marmot Review on Health Inequalities (Fair Society, Healthy Lives 2010) mentioned also made recommendations about the role schools the following approaches to reduce social inequality:

- Extending the role of schools in supporting communities and families taking a 'whole child' approach to education;
- Consistently implementing 'full service' extended school approaches and
- Developing the school based workforce to build skills to work across school and home boundaries.

Outcomes to be achieved: Specific outcomes to be achieved will be identified within the action plan.

Provider: Woodlands Community Primary School- they were the only Birkenhead primary school to apply through the commissioning process in September 2013. They are also in Birkenhead and Tranmere ward which has exceptionally high levels of Child Poverty.

Project Cost: £ 50,000
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Contribution from Birkenhead Constituency Committee: £25,000

Partner Contributions: Public Health £25,000

Supportive Information Finding: Community Participation research will be carried out alongside this project, detailing qualitative information about what it is like to live in poverty in Birkenhead, review of existing support and how services and people themselves can work to tackle the issue.

ABCD principles: This approach considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations and community groups, and the support of local services, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.