

CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY STRATEGY FOR WIRRAL

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**1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The paper updates Partnership Members on developments with tackling Child and Family Poverty. The following aspects are covered:

- The National position: the scope of the 2010 Child Poverty Act and the Coalition Government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020
- The Liverpool City Region's framework for developing a Child and Family Poverty Strategy and related activities
- The governance and strategy arrangements for tackling Child and Family Poverty in Wirral
- Key dates and next steps

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Children's Trust Panel are requested to:

- Note the approach and progress to date in developing a Child and Family Poverty Strategy for Wirral.
- Consider how the panel wishes to participate in the processes of developing, assuring and approving Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment.
- Continue to receive updates on progress in developing the Child and Family Poverty Strategy prior to its adoption in April 2011.

**3 BACKGROUND**

3.1.1 The Child and Poverty Agenda is being progressed nationally, across the Liverpool City Region and within the Local Authority district of Wirral.

**4 The National Picture**

4.1 The Child Poverty Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The Act establishes national targets to end Child Poverty in the UK by 2020 and places a number of duties on local authorities and other local delivery partners to work together to tackle child poverty. These duties are to:

- **Cooperate** to put in place arrangements to work to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their local area
- Prepare and publish a **local child poverty needs assessment** to highlight the drivers of child poverty in the local area and the characteristics of those living in poverty.
- Prepare a **joint child poverty strategy** setting out measures that the local authority and each named partner propose to take to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their local area.
- Take tackling child poverty into account when preparing or revising **Sustainable Community Strategies**.

- 4.2 In *'The Coalition: our programme for government'*, the Coalition Government iterated the commitment to ending child poverty in the UK by 2020.
- 4.3 A 'National Review of Poverty and Life Chances' has been charged with studying the extent of poverty in the UK and making recommendations to help less affluent families. This review is being headed by Frank Field MP and is due to report in December 2010.
- 4.4 The Coalition Government has revoked a previous deadline for Local Authorities to complete a Needs Assessments and produce a Child Poverty Strategy for their district. This confirms that there will be neither formal statutory guidance issued nor regulations laid detailing the requirements of local child poverty needs assessments. Wirral and the broader Liverpool City Region are continuing to work towards completing a Needs Assessment of the area by December 2010 and a Child and Family Strategy by April 2011.

## **5 Liverpool City Region**

- 5.1 The City Employment Strategy (CES) of the Liverpool City Region has commissioned the development of a Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Framework.
- 5.2 The creation of a City Region Child and Family Poverty Commission has been endorsed by the City Region Cabinet. Cllr Andrew Hodson, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, has been nominated to represent Wirral on the Commission. Plans are progressing to finalise membership of the Commission and appoint an independent chair. The Member of Parliament for Birkenhead, Frank Field has agreed to take on the role of the independent chair.
- 5.3 This development will help the Commission's immediate priority to establish links with the independent National Review of Poverty and Life Chances that is also being led by Frank Field MP and will ensure that the Liverpool City Region has a strong voice with which to inform and shape the national agenda.
- 5.4 A Child and Family Poverty Advisory Group will also be established to inform the City Region Commission with representation from each local authority area. This group will be responsible for identifying gaps in data and analysis and raising issues specific to their field of expertise and / or local area.
- 5.5 There are a number of City Region activities in place to ensure that the statutory requirements set out in the Child Poverty Act will be met. These include a child poverty data project and a series of consultation events that were held over the summer. These activities will contribute to the requirement to produce needs assessments for the City Region and for individual local authority areas.
- 5.6 One of the key barriers to developing effective approaches to reducing child poverty has been the availability of data and intelligence. Mott MacDonald was commissioned through Merseyside Information Services (MIS) to assist with the data requirements that will inform the needs assessment. The data project is well underway and a City Region data group has been convened consisting of representatives from all six local authorities.

## **6 Wirral's Approach**

- 6.1 The duty to co-operate recognises that, whilst the local authority should play a lead role in coordinating local partners, it cannot tackle child poverty alone and that a range of other partners must play their role. A number of agencies are named as partner authorities in the Bill:
- The police, youth offending teams, and probation service
  - Transport authorities
  - Primary Care Trust and Strategic Health Authorities
  - Jobcentre Plus
- 6.2 Many other organisations are also mentioned in the Bill that can play a critical role in child and family poverty such as private and third sector service providers, charities, community groups, the housing sector and employers.
- 6.3 In line with the City Region timetable, Wirral is planning to develop and approve a Child and Family Poverty Strategy to be in place by April 2011. It will outline how co-ordinated services will tackle child and family poverty up to 2020 and will be reviewed every three years. There will be an opportunity in future years to integrate the Child and Family Poverty Strategy with the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 6.4 Mapping of the data and information has illustrated that there is already much in place in Wirral that is addressing the causes of child and family poverty through wide ranging activities such as, financial support and advice for business, employment and training advice services for individuals, Children's Centres, and housing, education and health services. Wirral's Sustainable Community Strategy recognises and explores many of the issues linked to child poverty in its clear focus on tackling inequality and deprivation through increasing prosperity. The development of Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Strategy will build on this approach.
- 6.5 Wirral is currently developing its Needs Analysis document. Appendix 1 shows the type of data that will be included in Wirral's Needs Analysis.
- 6.6 Wirral's Child Poverty partner consultation event was held in August where a number of key partners and stakeholders attended. Outcomes from the event will inform the needs assessment and subsequent Strategy.
- 6.7 The Council has recently nominated Councillor Andrew Hodson to be Wirral's representative on the City Region Child Poverty Commission.
- 6.8 The Director of Corporate Services and Director of Children's Services are jointly accountable for the delivery of the duties set out in the Child Poverty Act in conjunction with key partners. The Head of Policy and Performance is the Council's lead officer for this work.
- 6.9 The Local Strategic Partnership's Executive Board has confirmed that the Management Group will oversee the development and delivery of the Strategy in tandem with the Liverpool City Region approach outlined above. Development of the Strategy would then be within an existing partnership structure. It is intended

that these arrangements are formalised through reports to the Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board and to Cabinet.

- 6.10 The City Region and local needs assessments will provide a rich source of information for the Council and partners in any future review of priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **7 LATEST POSITION AND NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The work towards a child poverty strategy for LCR and Wirral is continuing throughout the year in respect of the development and publication of LCR and local needs assessments.
- 7.2 Further updates on progress with the needs assessment and Strategy will be provided to Cabinet prior to adoption of the Strategy, April 2011.

## 8 KEY DATES

### Needs Assessment development and approval

Date	Activity	Responsibility
22/11/10	Children's Trust Update	Head of Policy and Performance
3/11/10	WEDS Update	Head of Policy and Performance
22/11/10	Wirral Needs Assessment prepared	Head of Policy and Performance
9/12/10	Wirral Needs Assessment agreed by Cabinet	Head of Policy and Performance
5/1/11	LCR Needs Assessment prepared	City Employment Strategy [EXTERNAL]
14/1/11	LCR Needs Assessment approved by City Region Chief Executives	City Employment Strategy [EXTERNAL]
28/1/11	LCR Needs Assessment approved by City Region Cabinet	City Employment Strategy [EXTERNAL]

### Child and Family Poverty Strategy Development and Approval

Date	Activity	Responsibility
31/3/11	Develop Wirral Child and Family Poverty Strategy	Head of Policy and Performance
31/3/11	Develop Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Strategy	City Employment Strategy [EXTERNAL]

### External Milestones

Date	Activity	Responsibility
November 2010	Inaugural meeting of the LCR Child and Family Poverty Commission.	City Employment Strategy [EXTERNAL]
December 2010	National Review of Poverty and Life Chances' published	Frank Field MP [EXTERNAL]
April 2011	First national child poverty strategy to be published	Child Poverty Unit [EXTERNAL]

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Board are requested to:

- Note the approach and progress to date in developing a Child Poverty Strategy for Wirral.
- Consider how Wirral Children's Trust wishes to participate in the processes of developing, assuring and approving Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment.
- Continue to receive updates on progress in developing the Child and Family Poverty Strategy prior to its adoption in April 2011.

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Child Poverty Act 2010

City Region Child and Family Poverty Framework Analysis Report, A Brighter Future; working together to tackle child and family poverty.

Wirral DRAFT Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment.

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**Interim Director of Corporate Services**

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## Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

The diagram below illustrates the themes and their respective datasets that the Wirral and LCR Needs Assessment documents will explore.



