

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY MEETING

8TH MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR SHEILA CLARKE
KEY DECISION:	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to work with partners to develop a Wirral Child Poverty Strategy as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010.
- 1.2 As requested by Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this report sets out a further progress report on the work that has been undertaken to develop a Wirral child poverty strategy and action plan in partnership with local organisations and agencies, including the voluntary, community and faith sector. As set out in the previous report to the Committee, the local authority established a local advisory group to review the evidence and make recommendations to the Council and its partners about local action to tackle child poverty. Representation on this group (the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group) is drawn from the voluntary, community and faith, housing, health, and education, employment and skills sectors. It is chaired by a representative from the voluntary, community and faith sector. It has Elected Member representatives from all parties.
- 1.3 The discussions of the Working Group have informed the development of a draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy which was considered at last meeting of Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Central to these discussions have been the need for all partners to work with each other to add value to existing provision and the need to utilise the positive assets of local communities in raising the aspirations of children and families.

2.0 PROGRESS REPORT

- 2.1 On the 13th October 2011, Cabinet considered a report relating to the draft Wirral Child Poverty Strategy and action plan and:

- Authorised the Chief Executive to undertake further consultation on the draft strategy and prepare a final version for approval and adoption by the Council and partners;
- Authorised the Chief Executive (and any other officer nominated by him) to undertake any other steps and action incidental and conducive to finalising the strategy and progressing the action plan, including working with relevant partners and stakeholders as considered necessary and appropriate;
- Agreed that the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group should continue to meet to oversee the further development of the strategy.

2.2 Further consultation has been undertaken via the Local Strategic Partnership's Executive Board and the Children's Trust and will continue to be undertaken with a number of other key forums through attendance at partnership meetings. Consultation to further develop the action plan is being undertaken through a core officer group working with departments and partner organisations.

2.3 A number of other steps are underway in addition to the further consultation outlined in 2.2 above. These are critical to producing a final version of the strategy and action plan:

- Work is also underway to develop a new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2012-13 overseen by the Children's Trust Executive. Through this process projects and activities are being developed related to the child poverty agenda. These key projects and activities will be included in the action plan.
- Performance management and governance arrangements for delivering the strategy and action plan are being developed, these will be linked to refreshed arrangements for the Local Strategic Partnership;
- An Equality Impact Assessment is being produced to ensure that equality implications are addressed as appropriate;
- The work to develop Wirral's strategy and action plan is closely aligned with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) child poverty and life chances strategy, which has now been launched and is available at www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk; Wirral is working with colleagues across the Liverpool City Region to deliver the actions identified in the recently launched Liverpool City Region strategy; these links will be reflected in the final strategy and action plan;
- The Council's budget for 2011-12 included £10,000 to support targeted engagement in respect of developing the strategy. A project has been commissioned and is underway to evaluate 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 outcomes of this evaluation will be circulated widely to all partners and used to inform the development of the action plan.

- The findings of the consultation to develop Neighbourhood Plans for Wirral's Area Forum areas which took place at the end of last year questions are being analysed with particular reference to ensuring that the plan includes actions relating to developing the role of communities and neighbourhoods in addressing issues of poverty and deprivation.
- 2.4 The final version of the strategy and action plan will be discussed by the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group at its next meeting on the 21st March 2011 will subsequently be referred to Cabinet for further consideration. The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group has agreed to continue meeting to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan once this is finalised and a revised terms of reference is being produced to reflect this ongoing role.
- 2.5 The Child and Family Poverty Working Group has requested that proposals are developed for the final strategy and action plan to be launched; this will provide an opportunity to engage those who have contributed to the development of the strategy and who are delivering services at the front-line to children and families across Wirral. It is proposed that a child poverty pledge is developed to coincide with the launch of the strategy and action plan. This will be part of a wider communications plan to ensure that local people and organisations are aware of the work that is happening and that successes are celebrated.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The development of a risk register for the child poverty and action plan will be included as part of performance management and governance arrangements. Failure to develop and implement a child poverty strategy and action plan will expose the Council to risk of challenge for failing to discharge a statutory duty.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 This report sets out the approach being undertaken to identify a wide range of options for action by the Council and its partners in relation to eliminating child poverty in Wirral.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The approach set out in this report has been developed to incorporate a targeted approach to consultation and engagement with local partners, families and communities about child poverty issues.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 The role of the voluntary, community and faith sector in tackling the complex problems faced by children and families living in poverty and in identifying those at risk is recognised through appropriate representation on the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group. In addition, the group is chaired by a representative from the voluntary, community and faith sector. The sector

continues to be a key partner in developing and delivering Wirral's strategy and action plan.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The activities described in this report are being progressed using existing staff resources from a number of departments.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The local authority has statutory duties in relation to the Child Poverty Act 2010, which will be progressed through the delivery of the activities set out in this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Child Poverty Strategy will have a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services. The final strategy and action plan will have a full equalities impact assessment attached, the initial stage of which will inform consultation and engagement activities relating to the draft strategy.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no specific carbon reduction implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no specific planning and community safety implications.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 It is recommended that

- Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made to date.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 At its meeting of 17th October 2011, Council requested that regular updates on progress in implementing the recommendations in the report to Cabinet are provided to the Children & Young People and Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committees.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Jane Morgan**
Telephone: (0151) 691 8140
Email: janemorgan@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

<http://www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk/> for the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN	14th April 2011
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT	13th October 2011
ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT	16th November 2011