

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group

1.0 Background

- 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. The Council has made progress in delivering this duty through the development of a draft strategy and action plan, taking into account the contribution of an independent advisory group established for this purpose, the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations in respect of governance arrangements for the Working Group and Wirral's child poverty strategy and action plan to facilitate future activity.
- 1.3 Trust Board members will be aware that the Council has allocated £400,000 as part of its budget for 2012-13 to tackle intergenerational poverty further to the development of the draft strategy and action plan referred to in 1.1 above. Trust Board members are asked to note that this allocation is subject to further consideration by the Council and an update will be provided in due course.

2.0 Role of the Working Group

- 2.1 The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group was established with a specific remit as set out in the Terms of Reference agreed with the Group. This remit was to make recommendations to the Council (as the statutory lead for child poverty) and partners by Autumn 2011 with regard to priorities for the Council and partners in tackling child and family poverty and how these might be achieved through local action. Membership of the Group was based on the need to harness expertise from organisations and individuals external to the Council, and has also benefited from representation from all political groups.
- 2.2 In addition to fulfilling their original remit, members of the Working Group have initiated a number of collaborative projects with the aim of addressing issues of child poverty on the basis of the draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy and largely led by the voluntary, community and faith sector. This has included the development of a child poverty training module which will be rolled out initially across the children's workforce and the establishment of a 'Roots and Wings' consortia to develop collaborative working across the sector.
- 2.3 Given the positive contribution of the Working Group to date, and the expressed desire of members to continue, it is proposed that meetings continue with a refreshed Terms of Reference setting out and clear remit for the Working Group in shaping and challenging partner activity in tackling issues of child and family poverty in line with the finalised strategy and updated action plan.

3.0 Proposed Governance Arrangements

3.1 To ensure that the Working Group can fulfil this role, it is proposed that the following governance arrangements are put in place:

- The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group becomes a subgroup of the Children's Trust on the same basis as the Joint Commissioning Group.
- The Children's Trust will oversee the delivery of the child poverty strategy and action plan through receiving quarterly reports on progress. These will be produced by the Council and considered in advance by the Working Group and Children's Trust Executive.
- The Council's Cabinet will continue to act as the decision-making body in respect of the overall delivery of Wirral's child poverty strategy and action plan given the statutory duty for the local authority in respect of child poverty, with due regard to the role of the Children's Trust in overseeing the delivery of the action plan and of the Working Group in providing challenge.
- The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group will take into account the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy to identify and progress links with wider City Region activities.

4.0 Future Developments

4.1 To provide a framework for the Wirral Child and Family Working Group, a final version of the child poverty strategy and action plan for the remainder of 2012-13 is being produced and will be presented to the Council's Cabinet as the decision-making body at the earliest possible opportunity. The final strategy and action plan take into account the engagement and discussions with the Working Group and other stakeholders that have taken place since the approval of the draft strategy. The Working Group and Children's Trust Board will be further consulted on these documents prior to consideration by Cabinet.

4.2 The Council will review the resources in place to ensure that appropriate support is in place to support the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group in the delivery of its role and in respect of co-ordinating activity in line with the strategy and action plan.

5.0 Recommendations:

5.1 That Wirral Children's Trust Board agrees the proposed governance arrangements set out in section 3.0 above;

5.2 That Wirral Children's Trust Board supports the continuing development of the strategy and action plan.

Report Authors:

Bev Morgan
Manager, Home-start Wirral
Chair, Wirral Child and Family Poverty
Working Group

Jane Morgan
Wirral Council

Contact:

Phone: 647 8369
Email: bevmorgan@homestartwirral.co.uk

Phone: 691 8140
Email: janemorgan@wirral.gov.uk