

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21ST MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR TONY SMITH
KEY DECISION:	NO

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 set out the governance arrangements for the Working Group and Wirral's child poverty strategy and action plan agreed with Wirral's Children's Trust to facilitate future activity.
- 1.3 Committee 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. This was further considered by Cabinet on the 27th September 2012 (<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3861&Ver=4>)

2.0 Progress Report

- 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 has been 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.
- 2.4 To ensure that the Working Group can fulfil this role, the following governance arrangements are now in place:
- The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group is 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The Council is reviewing how it co-ordinates support for the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group and in the delivery of its role and in respect of co-ordinating activity in line with the strategy and action plan.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 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 provides an update on the ongoing approach being undertaken to examine 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 is based on ongoing consultation with local partners and stakeholders through the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group.

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.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The final child poverty strategy and action plan referred to in 2.5 above will be accompanied by an equality impact assessment attached.

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

- Children & Young People 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

None

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 AND FAMILY POVERTY BUDGET OPTION	27th September 2012
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN	14th April 2011
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT	13th October 2011
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT	16th November 2011