

**CHILD POVERTY: SCHOOL COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT**

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**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress that has been made in respect of establishing a primary school community hub, further to recommendations made to the Council's Cabinet in June 2013 by Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group.
- 1.2 The proposed approach to establishing the school community hub, as set out in the report to Cabinet, is based on enhancing the vital role of schools and creating a platform for them to act as a catalyst for transforming local communities.
- 1.3 The £100,000 funding available for this project was allocated by the Council for the Child and Family Poverty Working Group to identify priorities and put in place activities to address issues of child poverty.

**2. Introduction**

- 2.1 In their recommendations to Cabinet, the Working Group suggested that the project should take as its starting point an asset-based approach and suggested that testing this approach in a localised way through a 'school community hub' would be the most effective use of the resources available. It is intended that activities delivered through the 'school community hub' will be informed by the needs identified by families and the wider community, and that lessons learnt from the approach should be rolled out borough-wide.
- 2.2 The rationale for using a primary school as a hub is that primary schools tend to have a focused geography, are naturally accepted as community leaders, have a resource of buildings, land and people and access to enrolled children, younger and older siblings and most importantly to parents. There is also evidence that primary school pupils are much more likely to be affected by an area's economics and employment deprivation than their counterparts in secondary schools.
- 2.3 The Working Group proposed that a school should be selected through a transparent commissioning process and that this school should then:
  - Identify / recruit community organisers to work using the school as a base;
  - Work with the school community to develop an asset map for the local area, and an action plan which sets out what the community can do for itself, what it needs support to do, and what it wants partners to deliver;
  - Support the community organisers to deliver this action plan, with clear project management arrangements.

**3. Commissioning Process / Progress**

- 3.1 The commissioning process was developed with guidance from the Council's Procurement Team.

3.2 To date the following actions have been taken:

- Primary schools where the majority of pupils on roll are affected by child poverty and deprivation were invited to express an interest in delivering the community hub project by September 2013;
- An information session took place in September to provide headteachers with the opportunity to ask any questions about the project;
- 4 schools expressed an interest within the deadline;
- Visits to these schools took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, with formal interviews being undertaken on the 19<sup>th</sup> November by a selection panel chaired by the Director of Children's Services;
- A decision will then be made with the school community hub project underway by January 2014.

**4. Recommendations:**

- That Wirral Children's Trust Board note the progress made in respect of establishing the School Community Hub project

**5. Appendices:**

The report to Cabinet in June which provides the background to the project can be viewed at:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4358&Ver=4>

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