

**CHILD POVERTY UPDATE: SCHOOL COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT**

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**1.0 Background and Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline 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 Child and Family Poverty Working Group was established in May 2011 to explore the evidence and research and make recommendations as how the Council and partners should address its statutory duty in relation to child poverty.
- 1.4 The £100,000 funding available for the project was allocated to Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group to identify priorities and put in place activities to address issues of child poverty. It should also be noted that, in respect of funding for child poverty initiatives, a commitment is also in place to support the Birkenhead Foundation Years project. A report on this project will be brought to the Children's Trust following consideration by Cabinet.

**2.0 SCHOOL COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT**

- 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 they 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.

2.4 The following commissioning process was developed and implemented by with support and guidance from the Council's Procurement Team:

- 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;
- Four schools expressed an interest within the deadline using the template provided;
- Visits to these schools took place on the 6th November by members of the Working Group, with formal interviews being undertaken on the 19th November. These were undertaken by a panel which was chaired by the Director of Children's Services.

2.5 On the basis of the visits to the four schools and the scored interviews, two of the four schools received joint highest scores and were selected to pilot the community hub approach. Each of the following schools has been allocated £50,000:

- Holy Spirit Catholic and Church of England Primary School Primary School (Leasowe and Moreton East Ward, Wallasey Constituency);
- Fender Primary School (Upton Ward, Wirral West Constituency).

2.6 Dedicated project planning and project management support has been identified by Public Health to support the establishment of the school community hubs, particularly with regard to ensuring that robust monitoring is in place with regard to budget expenditure. In addition, this support will:

- Identify best practice from other areas to feed into the development of the hubs;
- Focus the hubs so they are able to demonstrate how their projects will have an impact on the community;
- Ensure the hubs have an early evaluation plan including tailored outcomes for that specific project such as case studies, distance travelled etc.
- Ensure community champions have the skills that are key to delivering a successful community led programme;
- Ensure the projects are meeting whole community needs and not just the needs of parents who attend the school.

2.7 The Child and Family Working Group will act as a stakeholder group for the school community hub project and will consider progress as part of its quarterly meetings (see Appendix 1 attached). Again with dedicated support from Public Health, the Working Group will:

- Develop a local child poverty performance management framework which reflects the Liverpool City Region Strategy on Poverty and Life Changes and benchmark performance with other areas;

- Produce a quarterly update for the Children's Trust Board which can be widely circulated;
- Support the development of local projects.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Child and Family Poverty Working Group Work Programme**

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## **WIRRAL CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY WORKING GROUP**

As partners in the future of Wirral, we want to reduce the numbers of children and young people living in poverty and support them to build the foundations for prosperous, healthy and happy lives. We also want to raise the aspirations of all of our children and young people and their families so that their dreams for themselves and their communities can be achieved.

As a Working Group, we will:

- Challenge ourselves and others to take practical action to achieve our common goals of reducing poverty and harnessing the talent and ambitions of Wirral's children, families and communities;
- Act as a key stakeholder group for the School Community Hub initiative put in place by the Council to find new and innovative ways of working with families building on the assets found in local areas;
- Proactively promote the use of research and best practice in addressing poverty.

We will focus our energies on ensuring that Wirral plays its part in delivering the aims and actions identified in the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy. The current priorities for this strategy are:

- Improve school readiness
- Support families to be prepared for Universal Credit;
- Tackle children and young people with unhealthy weight;
- Close attainment differences in schools;
- Improve transport access;
- Increase employment and skills within low income families.

Our programme of work is set out overleaf. This will be reviewed at the end of Working Group meetings to take into account any changing priorities from the LCR Commission and local issues. The Working Group will report quarterly to Wirral's Children's Trust on its work programme.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Additional Contribution (to be confirmed)</b>
December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR priority: Supporting families to be prepared for Universal Credit</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice: Leadership Academy presentation on tackling poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Steve Lloyd, DWP National Partnerships Team presentation on Universal Credit</li> </ul>
March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR priority: Tackling children and young people with unhealthy weight</li> <li>▪ Local issue: Fuel poverty</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Health Team on Food Plans</li> <li>▪ Fuel Poverty Team on Fuel Poverty projects</li> </ul>
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR priority: Improving school readiness</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zoë Munby, Foundation Years Trust project</li> </ul>
September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR priority: Closing income differences in attainment in schools</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cllr Tony Smith (LCR Commission lead) and Dave Hollomby, School Improvement</li> </ul>
December 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR Priority: Increasing employment and skills within low income families</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DWP / Economic Policy Team / Reach Out</li> </ul>
March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Community Hub Update</li> <li>▪ LCR Priority: Improving Transport Access</li> <li>▪ Research and Best Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merseytravel / Wirral Transport Team</li> </ul>