

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

13th MARCH 2014

SUBJECT:	CHILD POVERTY BUDGET OPTION
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to previous reports, this report makes recommendations in relation to releasing £250,000 funding previously committed by Cabinet to the Birkenhead Foundation Years Trust initiative (referred to in previous reports as the 'Springboard' project).

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 In September 2012, Cabinet made a number of resolutions in respect of the Birkenhead Foundation Years Trust initiative:

(1) Recognised the contribution of the Working Group and notes the views expressed in relation to the proposed Foundation Years Trust "Springboard" initiative at Appendix 1 to the report;

(2) Agreed to release an initial sum of £50,000 of the Child Poverty budget allocation to the Foundation Years Trust to develop a comprehensive business case for the 'Springboard' project and that at the same time a pre-pilot phase of work be undertaken which will involve engaging thirty families with volunteers to begin to test out and develop the model. The Foundation Years Trust shall be under an obligation to develop value for money in expending the initial sum for the purposes permitted;

(3) Agreed to consider the business case at a future Cabinet meeting, and, subject to being satisfied that the business case is satisfactory, robust, clear about the expected outcomes of the Trust's work, that the activity represents value for money and that the monitoring and performance management arrangements will accurately measure the outcomes, take a further decision as to the release of a further £250,000 to support the "Springboard" project; and

(4) Agreed that the Wirral Child and Family Group considers priorities for the remaining £100,000 of the budget allocation and makes recommendations to the

Children's Trust in order for this to be commissioned in line with the process established through the Trust in respect of Early Intervention Grant funding.

- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to note that resolution (4) of this report has been the subject of a separate report to Cabinet, and has resulted in the establishment of two school community hub pilot projects. Progress in relation to this expenditure is being monitored by the Children's Trust Board as well as via scrutiny.

3.0 FOUNDATION YEARS TRUST PROJECT

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of the Foundation Years Trust project business plan. The aim of the Trust is to test the ideas that underlay the report "The Foundation Years: *how to prevent poor children becoming poor adults*". This report set out a proposed new evidence-based strategy to abolish the inter-generational transfer of poverty, shifting the emphasis to a focus on improving children's life chances. The Trust's task is to pilot the recommendations made in that report and on the basis of the findings, help shape the Wirral's anti-poverty strategy, as well as providing a model to roll out the strategy nationally.
- 3.2 A significant amount of work has now been undertaken to develop the Birkenhead Foundation Years Trust project and business plan utilising the initial sum of money released by the Council and a number other sources of funding accessed by the Trust. This work has been led by Zoe Munby, Project Director. Between June-August 2013, the Trust focused on:
- Audit and research;
 - Engagement with families;
 - Developing monitoring and evaluation tools.
- 3.3 Taking into account existing service provision and the prioritising of support for the Intensive Families Intervention Project (IFIP) the Trust then began to develop its project plan around a number of principles as set out in Appendix 1. Again as set out in Appendix 1, the 2 year project will be spread across 3 financial years:
- Year 1 focused on piloting a mixture of evidenced and emerging programmes and approaches.
 - Delivery in Year 2 of services which show promise in Year 1 evaluation.
 - Considering a third year of piloting if likely to achieve a stronger evidence base.
 - Testing hypotheses around the type and level of support required by mothers at different ages and stages of parenthood.
- 3.4 One of the principles for the development of the project specifically refers to the need to complement and supplement existing universal services for families and Level 1 and 2 services. The Foundation Years Trust also recognises that families with higher levels of need will currently be engaged with IFIP services. Multi-agency collaboration has therefore been a clear focus for the Trust in developing its project plan and activities.
- 3.4 By Autumn 2013, the following family support activities were being delivered collaboratively, building upon local expertise:

- **Birkenhead Voices**, with help from 5 Birkenhead organisations we have listened to 30 mums who have given birth in the last two years. Their experiences of pregnancy, child birth and the first few days afterwards have been analysed and the findings will be available in early December 2013.
- **Bump Start**, a project developed by Home-Start Wirral, which is piloting a new approach to support for single mums from pregnancy through to after the baby's birth. This project is currently selecting and training volunteers and working with Health Visitors and Midwives to identify mums who will be ready for support from December.
- **Crèche Volunteers**, a second Home-Start Wirral project which will provide support for families with a child aged 0-5 years with additional needs. The volunteers will be linked to individual families in a group setting focusing on empowering parents through education, support, and play. This project has begun to recruit volunteers and will begin supporting families from January once the volunteers have completed the relevant training.
- **St James' Centre Family project**, is being developed by the North Birkenhead Development Trust and will support parents with mild mental health problems. The project is being introduced to families and has begun to recruit volunteers.
- Two further parent volunteer support projects are at the development stage.
- **PEEP baby play sessions** at Brassey Gardens Children's Centre and later in Rock Ferry, led by the Catholic Children's Society. These groups for parents, babies and under 2s support parents' confidence and enjoyment in play, singing and reading books with the very young.
- A two-day training event on the 30th-31st October brought together 17 staff and volunteers from 7 organisations who are now PEEP (Parent Early Education Partnership) Practitioners. Some will be going on to achieve the City & Guilds accreditation for the training and all are enthusiastic about implementing the PEEP approach into their current work/volunteering. The Birkenhead Project will be developing aspects of the flexible PEEP approach across a number of projects going forward.

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

- 4.1 Project monitoring will be undertaken by Children's Services on the basis of a quarterly update report provided by the Foundation Years Trust.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The Foundation Years Trust will be expected to put in place appropriate risk management arrangements.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 A range of options have been reviewed in order to develop activities set out in this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Foundation Trust has consulted with a range of stakeholders and service users.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR

- 8.1 The project will have an ongoing impact on the sector.

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

9.1 The £250,000 funding referred to in this report refers to the 2012-13 budget option for child poverty activities currently held in reserve.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Foundation Years Trust will be expected to put in place appropriate equality impact assessment arrangements.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There will be no direct carbon reduction implications.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There will be no direct planning and community safety implications.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

14.1 Cabinet agrees to allocate the child poverty funding of £250,000 being held in reserve to the Foundation Years Trust on the basis of the business plan at Appendix 1.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 This recommendation progresses the resolution of Cabinet made in September 2012.

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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
COUNCIL: COUNCIL BUDGET 2012/13	1st March 2012
CABINET: 'ROOTS AND WINGS' CHILD POVERTY BUDGET OPTION	12th April 2012

CABINET: CHILD POVERTY BUDGET OPTION

27th September 2012

COUNCIL: COUNCIL BUDGET 2013/14

5th March 2013

CABINET: CHILD POVERTY PROJECT PROPOSAL

13th June 2013