



**CABINET MEMBER
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH**

**CABINET
21 MARCH 2016**

**WIRRAL PLAN 2020: UNDERPINNING
STRATEGY – IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES**

Councillor Tony Smith said:

“Raising aspirations for our children and families in the borough and reducing the impact of poverty is critical to ensuring that we can harness the skills and resources of our communities, and ensure that they are equally able to take the opportunities that ensure a positive life experience. We know that at the moment we have much to do, and that this has long been a difficult challenge to meet. However we are determined to bring together the skills and resources available to us to build on our learning and to target our efforts to support those who are most affected.”

In the Wirral Plan we set out the following pledge: We will continue to work with partners to look at opportunities to tackle child and family poverty in Wirral communities. Sadly, 22.4% of children in Wirral currently live in low income households. Our long term ambition is to ensure no child in Wirral lives in poverty and we will work with our partners to reduce this level over the five years of this plan.”

REPORT SUMMARY

The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision sets out a shared vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan are underpinned through the development and implementation of a set of key strategies.

This report provides Cabinet with the Improving Life Chances strategy; a key strategic document which outlines our approach to the Wirral Plan priority:

We will continue to work with partners to look at opportunities to tackle child and family poverty in Wirral communities. Sadly, 22.4% of children in Wirral currently live in low income households. Our long term ambition is to ensure no child in Wirral lives in poverty and we will work with our partners to reduce this level over the five years of this plan.

This matter affects all wards within the Borough and is therefore a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to approve the Improving Life Chances strategy which is appended to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

The Improving Life Chances strategy has been developed to deliver the Wirral Plan pledge to tackle child poverty.

The strategy has been developed with local stakeholders, and partners to ensure effective engagement in its delivery.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wirral Plan 2020 was approved unanimously at the meeting of Council on 13th July 2015 and has been adopted as a borough strategy by strategic partners from the public, private and third sectors.

The plan contains twenty pledges to be achieved by 2020; within those twenty pledges is a commitment to tackle child poverty.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities to publish a child poverty strategy. On Wirral there has been a multi-agency steering group in place which has worked together to tackle this challenging issue. This has led to innovative approaches such as the development of two school hubs which have worked within their local communities to support developing skills for employment, parenting skills and health and wellbeing activities. To make inroads to the levels of child poverty in the borough we need to build from this learning and the intention through this strategy is to take a targeted approach, built on the principles of communities being assets, to bring together the factors that we know from a strong evidence base will help families to achieve their best potential.

It is important to acknowledge that this intent is supported through other underpinning strategies developed through Wirral 2020, such as the Growth Strategy and the Children, Young People and Families Strategy.

This strategy has been developed through the steering group, and will be reviewed on an annual basis with regular performance reporting taking place through appropriate governance arrangements.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The intention is that existing resources in the Borough be brought together as the approach to our target areas is developed. Any financial implications will be identified as part of the project plan.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities to publish a child poverty strategy.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

The Improving Life Chances strategy will be coordinated by existing staff resources. Any additional resource will be identified as a detailed delivery plan is developed.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan developments to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

The Improving Life Chances strategy has been developed through the partnership steering group, and the key themes consulted on with wider stakeholders during its development. Further engagement and consultation will take place to develop the plans for the target areas.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The potential impact has been reviewed with regard to equality and the impact assessment can be found at:

REPORT AUTHOR: *Fiona Johnstone*
Director of Public Health
telephone: (0151 666 5178)
email: fionajohnstone@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Improving Life Chances Strategy

REFERENCE MATERIAL

All reference material is contained within the strategy appended to this report.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	