

REPORT FOR: HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting:	11 May 2017
Subject:	Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy and Action Plan
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Howe, Director of Public Health Harrow Council
Public:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy and Action Plan

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the child poverty and life chances strategy which brings together the actions currently being undertaken by the council and partners that will help mitigate the impact of child poverty in Harrow.

Recommendations:

The Board is requested

- to support this strategy and action plan
- to agree a frequency for reporting progress on the implementation of the strategy and its outcomes.

Section 2 – Report

Child poverty has a major impact on health inequalities and the life chances of children. Although the Child Poverty Act 2010 was renamed the Life Changes Act 2010 and the responsibilities of Local Authorities were repealed as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, we have continued with the planned development of a local strategy and Action plan to address child poverty in Harrow.

Although Harrow is an affluent borough with good health outcomes on average, the data obscures some stark inequalities in health and wellbeing. The needs assessment published in October 2016 showed the extent of these inequalities.

18.5% of children in Harrow live in poverty. By adding in housing costs, this rises to 28.7%. – more than 1 in 4 of Harrow's children. This average masks the inequalities within the borough where 15% of children in Headstone North live in poverty compared to 42% in Roxbourne (after housing costs).

The impact of living and growing up in poverty can be seen in the poorer educational attainment of young people leading to lower paid employment and a continuing cycle of poverty. It is also seen in the health outcomes of children and young people in higher rates of poor oral health, childhood obesity, child accidents and injuries, respiratory illnesses and long term conditions such as asthma.

The Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy has been developed by a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders from within the council and partner organisations. The strategy brings together the actions that are currently being undertaken or which are planned which have an impact on child poverty. The strategy developed began with an understanding that there will be no additional funding available for new programmes of work and that any actions need to take into account the financial situation of the public sector organisations in Harrow and the impact this has on the capacity of the voluntary and charity sector to deliver.

The strategy identifies the 8 areas within the borough that have the highest rates (and numbers) of children in poverty and where actions should be focused:

- Roxbourne
- Wealdstone
- Marlborough
- Greenhill
- Roxeth
- West Harrow
- Headstone South

- Queensbury

We have identified five priorities:

Priority 1: To increase opportunities for parents with English as a second language to enter employment, education and training and support adults in gaining skills

Priority 2: To tackle financial exclusion, including debt management, financial literacy, affordable credit and maximise benefit take up

Priority 3: To increase opportunities for inward investment and funding opportunities by working with the voluntary and community sector

Priority 4: To improving health and wellbeing of children and families and access early support services with a focus on looked after children, children at the edge of care, children with SEN.

Priority 5: To support families with housing and in temporary accommodation.

Each of these has an action plan which identifies the work being undertaken to address the priority.

Financial Implications/Comments

There is no specific budget earmarked to support the delivery of this strategy. Where actions or programmes have been identified within the strategy and associated action plan, any required resources have been identified within existing Council budgets. As a result the action plan is expected to be delivered within the existing financial envelope for partner organisations.

Given the financial challenges across both the Council and partner organisations, any activities arising from future actions within the strategy (which covers the period 2017 to 2020), in particular those with resource implications, will need to be considered and prioritised within the context of the respective annual budget setting processes.

Additional funding will be sought from grants wherever possible.

Priority 3 makes an explicit recommendation to seek funding from external sources. Public Health has already been successful in obtaining grants for training on oral health and mental health first aid in schools both of which have been identified in priority 4. The Public Health team has also supported a successful bid for social impact funding of a local voluntary group.

It should be noted that in February 2016 Cabinet, as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved significant reductions to the public health team and the services commissioned from April 2018. As a result it may prove challenging to continue to support the strategy, including accessing external grant funding, within the reduced level of resources.

Legal Implications/Comments

The Child Poverty Act 2010 Part 2- required a number of things from local authorities and their partners:

Section 21 - to cooperate to tackle child poverty in their local areas;

Section 22 - a duty to publish a local child poverty needs assessment (The Harrow child poverty needs assessment was published in October 2016).and

Section 23 - a duty to publish a child poverty strategy for their area.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 was renamed the Life Chances Act 2010 and the requirements for local authorities repealed as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, Section 7. Despite this change, the local strategy development group agreed to continue to produce a strategy due to impact of child poverty on health inequalities, which is a local priority.

Risk Management Implications

In developing this strategy, the steering group and stakeholder group have been mindful of the financial situation within the council and its partner organisations. However, funding still remains a risk to delivery of some of the programmes if further budget cuts are required.

Capacity to deliver and monitor the strategy must also be flagged as a risk as further cuts are planned to public health staffing within the coming year. A set of indications that are already collected elsewhere will be identified to minimize the impact of monitoring the strategy.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

An EqIA was not carried out.as the strategy is directly impacting on at least one of the protected characteristics. Many of the individual parts of the action plan will already have undertaken EQIAs

The strategy also seeks to reduce the impact on health inequalities which in itself is not a protected characteristic.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The strategy supports action on the following priorities

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance (Council and Joint Reports)

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 20 April 2017		
Name: Noopur Talwar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 24 April 2017.		
Ward Councillors notified:		NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Carole Furlong, Public health Consultant, 020 844209508

Andrea Lagos, Public Health Strategist, 020 8736 6240

Background Papers:

A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out: the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for Harrow 2016

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/100010/health_and_social_care/1181/the_annual_public_health_reports

Child Poverty Needs Assessment, 2016 (awaiting publication on website)