

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Slough Wellbeing Board      **DATE:** 13 May 2015

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY**

1.      **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Slough Wellbeing Board to the development of a Child Poverty Strategy for Slough.

2.      **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3.      **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a.     **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The Child Poverty Strategy will sit under the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) and set out how the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB) will establish a framework for local partners to co-operate to tackle child poverty. The priorities in the Child Poverty Strategy will support specific delivery against each of the following Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Economy and skills - Improving the educational attainment of our children and young people and developing a strong, competitive and sustainable business sector, supported by a local workforce who have the skills to meet local businesses' changing needs, will increase local families incomes and help grow and maintain the town's prosperity and local economy.
- Health - Reducing inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of our children and young people (and their families and carers) will help them live more positive, active and resilient lives.
- Regeneration and the environment - Improving the physical fabric of the town and its leisure and recreational faculties (including parks and opens spaces) to create an attractive environment for our children and young people (and their families) will help improve their health and wellbeing.
- Housing - Developing a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which includes a range of housing options will help reduce homelessness and limit the number of people living in fuel poverty.
- Safer communities - Reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti social behaviour and safeguarding and supporting our most vulnerable children and young people will help keep them safe, feel safe and make Slough a place where people want to live, work and visit.

### 3b. **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

A Child Poverty Needs Assessment was completed (in liaison with statutory partners and service areas) in the summer of 2014, using the JSNA and other key data sources<sup>1</sup>. It found that:

- Over 8,000 children in the borough live in poverty, of which 7,000 are under the age of 16.
- Slough has a higher rate of child poverty than the national average with 21 % of children living in poverty (compared to 20% nationally).
- Child poverty is concentrated in a number of wards including Britwell (28%), Chalvey (26%), Wexham Lea (24%), Baylis and Stoke (23%), Central (23%), Colnbrook and Poyle (22%) and (Foxborough 21%).
- There are a number of at risk groups who are particularly vulnerable to child poverty and the negative outcomes associated with it.

### 3c. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Reducing inequality, supporting the most vulnerable and enabling people to help themselves are threads that run through each of the challenges and opportunities identified in the council's Five Year Plan (2015 – 2019). The Child Poverty Strategy will support delivery against each of the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- 1 - Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay.
- 2 - There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambitions for Slough.
- 4 - Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley.
- 5 - Children and young people will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances.
- 6 - More people take responsibility and manage their own health care and support needs.

## 4. **Other Implications**

### (a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action.

### (b) Risk Management

There are no identified risks to the proposed action.

### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications to the proposed action.

The Child Poverty Strategy sets out the key actions the CYYPB, the council and partners will take to meet the council's statutory duty under the Child Poverty Act 2010, to conduct and publish a Child Poverty Needs Assessment and have in

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<sup>1</sup> Including the four 'Building Blocks of Child Poverty' as specified in the Child Poverty Act 2010.

place a Strategy for addressing child poverty at a local level and in collaboration with partners.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment in relation to this information report.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Strategy development

A final draft of the Child Poverty Strategy is currently being developed.

It is based on the four 'Building Blocks of Child Poverty' (specified in the Child Poverty Act 2010), the local Child Poverty Needs Assessment and feedback received from key partners, stakeholders and the public (including children and young people and their families and Slough's voluntary and community sector) following three rounds of consultation<sup>2</sup> held between August 2014 and March 2015.

A key focus of the Strategy will be on early intervention and support for children, young people and their families. It identifies the key issues to be addressed and areas for improvement, with particular focus on reducing inequality, increasing social mobility and improving the life chances of the borough's most vulnerable children and young people.

The current draft includes the following strategic priorities to help tackle/mitigate child poverty at a local level:

**Employment and skills**

1. Improved access to employment and skills.

**Family and life chances**

2. Slough's children and young people lead healthier life styles.
3. The aspirations of the next generation are raised.

**Financial support**

4. Family incomes are maximised.

**Place and delivery**

5. Slough's environment supports our children to thrive.

A fourth and final round of consultation is currently underway to identify and agree the key actions that need to be undertaken by the CYYPB and the council, in partnership with a range of organisations and the community, to support the delivery of each of the priorities identified overleaf.

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<sup>2</sup> Over the last year a series of consultations with council staff and statutory partners has been undertaken to support the development of this work. This has involved:

- Consultation with statutory partners and service leads to agree local child poverty needs assessment - as the basis on which to develop a child poverty strategy.
- Consultation with statutory partners and service leads on the draft child poverty strategy.
- Five week public consultation with partners and children and young people and their families and residents. These consultations have helped to clarify the initial focus of the Strategy, understand what activities are already being undertaken to help mitigate/maximise child poverty locally, as well as ascertain what opportunities to work together were available with partners and communities to tackle the issues identified.

*Subject to the successful outcome of this final phase of consultation, we envisage that the CYPPB will endorse the final Child Poverty Strategy at its meeting on the 18 May 2015. A final draft of the Child Poverty Strategy will be brought to the Slough Wellbeing Board for agreement in July.*

## **5.2 Governance**

In order to ensure that action on child poverty happens it is proposed that the following governance arrangements are put in place to monitor progress once the Strategy has been finalised:

- That the Slough Wellbeing Board oversees the strategic delivery of this Strategy. It will do this by:
  - Showing strategic leadership and ownership of this issue, along side the CYPPB.
  - Embedding child poverty across the Board's key strategies and plans and the operating plans of its major partners (where appropriate).
- That responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy (and its action plan) rests with the CYPPB. Its role will be to:
  - Raise the profile of child poverty in the borough - through effective communication and engagement, thereby ensuring that our approach to tackling child poverty is well publicised, open and transparent;
  - Ensure buy in from key partners and stakeholders (including Slough's voluntary and community sector) and local communities to enable the delivery of this Strategy.
  - Develop approaches to tackling child poverty locally that draw on the best available evidence and best practise.
  - Embed child poverty across the CYPPB's and partner's key strategies and plans.
  - Agree the actions necessarily to deliver the outcomes identified in this Strategy.
  - Agree a broad basket of indicators, including performance measures, to help monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Strategy and its supporting action plan (see below).
  - Provide regular progress reports to the SWB.
  - Deliver an annual stakeholders conference on child poverty.
  - Review the Strategy's effectiveness at regular intervals as local needs change and new priorities emerge.
- Slough Borough Council also has a statutory responsibility to take child poverty into account, whenever it, or its partners, produce strategies and plans. Its role is to:
  - Show leadership and ownership of this issue, along side the SWB and CYPPB.
  - Embed child poverty across the council's key strategies and plans and the operating plans of its major partners.
  - Regularly review and update the Needs Assessment that underpins this Strategy, in line with government requirements, and share these findings with the SWB, the CYPPB and other statutory partners, where appropriate.

## **5.3 Monitoring delivery**

Reducing child poverty across Slough will require a truly collaborative multi-agency approach and implementing the final Strategy will involve actions from a number of different partners and agencies, including the voluntary and private sectors. The complexity of the cause and effects of child poverty mean that it is often difficult to directly attribute specific actions to specific impact.

Since the Child Poverty Act came into force in 2010, national indicators have been abolished (central government have re-considered data collection and performance indicators, greatly reducing the number of indicators local authorities have to record and measure – there is now a Single Data List of all the data that local authorities are required to submit to central government departments in a given year) and the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) was published in 2013.

An action plan to support the delivery of this Strategy will be developed over the summer. This action plan by its very nature will not be able to cover everything that is happening across the borough in relation to our children, young people (and their families), or all of the activities that will take place to achieve the outcomes identified, but it will provide a common framework, a shared sense of purpose and a clear direction for those looking to co-operate when tackling child poverty locally.

Given the still vast array of indicators available, the CYPPB will identify and compile a list of indicators to provide a useful marker for aiding the identification of areas of need (existing and emerging) and providing evidence of good outcomes. For example, the Fuel Poverty indicator from the PHOF can show over time whether there is a growing need to increase support for this issue and, likewise, indicator 009-00 from the government's single data list (statutory homelessness statistics and information on homelessness prevention and relief) can evidence the impact of this Strategy's housing related activities.

The CYPPB will compile a list of indicators in a 'scorecard' which it will regularly report to the SWB.

## 6. **Conclusion**

Slough's Child Poverty Strategy will coordinate the approach of the CYPPB and partner organisations in order to mitigate the effects of child poverty.

It sets out a vision for what needs to be achieved in relation to a number of key priorities in order to tackle child poverty at a local level. It recognises the policy levers we have available in Slough and commits the CYPPB, the council, key organisations and agencies to using these to maximum effect. It will also focus on ensuring that all of the SWB and CYPPB's (future) strategies, plans and programmes, and those of our partners etc link together to provide a consistent and ongoing approach for our most disadvantaged families, so that we target our resources at those children and young people (and their families) most at risk of living in poverty effectively.

## 7. **Background Papers**

None.