

**Meeting:** Haringey Strategic Partnership

**Date:** 4 November 2008

**Report Title:** Child Poverty Strategy & Action Plan

**Report of:** Sharon Shoesmith, Director The Children & Young People's Service

### **Purpose**

To consult members of the HSP on the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Summary**

Too many of Haringey's children and young people are living in poverty. The importance of this issue has been recognised by the Council and its partners adopting the national indicator on reducing the proportion of children living in poverty (NI 116) as one of the 35 priorities for the Strategic Partnership's local area agreement.

This strategy and action plan sets out proposals for tackling this issue. Consultation is taking place between 25 September and 5 November 2008.

### **Legal/Financial Implications**

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted and there are no specific legal implications. The strategy will help to facilitate the Council's duties towards children in need under the Children Act 1989 and related statutory instruments and guidance. The Council also has the power to implement a broad range of measures by virtue of the well-being powers of section of s.2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Chief Financial Officer was consulted and commented:

- that the expectation is that costs associated with developing the strategy will be contained within existing resources.
- in practice the strategy, which aims to move towards closer joint planning and working across the council and with partner agencies in tackling child poverty, should increase value for money and direct resources in a more efficient and effective manner.

## **Recommendations**

That the HSP note and make comment on the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.

### **For more information contact:**

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## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The government has set itself a target to end child poverty by 2020 and is strongly encouraging local services to take an ever more active role in reducing poverty.
- 1.2 The local authority and its partners have an important role in helping to tackle the issue by:
  - delivering key services that are critical to improving children's life chances;
  - co-ordinating activities to reduce worklessness and poverty;
  - engaging with individuals and groups at risk of being marginalized;
  - tailoring solutions to meet the needs of local people.
- 1.3 These roles were recently confirmed by the London Commission on Child Poverty (LCPC) which again stressed the important contribution that local services, including council services, could make to reducing poverty.
- 1.4 The Child Poverty strategy identifies 4 objectives that the council needs to meet in order to achieve a substantial reduction in child poverty. These are adapted from already existing service priorities, although they also reflect objectives identified and recommendations made in the London Child Poverty Commission report.

Objective 1: Increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs  
Objective 2: Maximising incomes through improving the delivery of benefits and tax credits  
Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children  
Objective 4: Ensuring all Haringey children have decent and secure homes.
- 1.5 The fundamental aim of Haringey's strategy and action plan is to ensure that all council services and local partners are working together

in a joined up way to reduce child poverty in the borough and ensure that today's children do not become the parents of poor children tomorrow.

## **2. Current initiatives**

2.1 Work is already being undertaken under the 4 Child Poverty Strategy objectives.

Current work strands include:

- Promoting the Haringey Guarantee
- Developing the 'Families Into Work' programme in Northumberland Park
- Working with Job Centre Plus to promote take up of Working Tax and Child Tax credits
- Providing income maximisation information through a range of sources
- Initiatives to improve educational attainment gaps through Children's Centres and Extended Schools
- Delivery of the 'Tackling Fuel Poverty' project
- Joint work between the Education Welfare Office and Housing Officers to minimise the disruption of children moving schools
- £100k has been allocated for a new initiative to provide benefit advice surgeries in some primary schools.

## **3. Strategic Implications**

3.1 The Child Poverty strategy has been designed to deliver two of the Sustainable Community Strategy's (SCS) objectives:

- Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all
- Healthier people with a better quality of life

3.2 Delivery of the strategy will be key in meeting the new LAA target on tackling child poverty, as well as current LAA targets around worklessness and improving educational attainment.

3.3 The strategy is a step in moving towards closer joint planning and working across the council and with partner agencies in tackling child poverty.

## **4. Consultation**

4.1 The strategy and action plan has been sent out for consultation to the Haringey Strategic Partnership, its theme boards and the Youth

Council. Consultation began on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and will finish on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

4.2 Please forward all comments by 5<sup>th</sup> November to:  
[Zakir.Chaudhry@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:Zakir.Chaudhry@haringey.gov.uk)

**5. Appendix**

a. Child Poverty Strategy executive summary