



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

**[No.]**

Report Title: Child Poverty Strategy & Draft Action Plan

Forward Plan reference number : n/a

Report of: Director of the Children and Young People's Service

Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Key Decision

**1. Purpose (That is, the decision required)**

1.1 The strategy and draft action plan set out the council's approach to combating child poverty.

**2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)**

2.1 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 our Strategic Partnership's local area agreement. This strategy and draft action plan sets out our proposals for tackling this issue and I recommend them to the Cabinet.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 Members are asked to approve the draft action plan for consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in December 2008, and Cabinet's approval will be sought for any proposed amendments to the action plan.

3.2 Members are asked to note the Child Poverty Strategy and current initiatives to reduce child poverty which are already in place.

Report Authorised by:

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Director  
The Children and Young People's Service

Contact Officer: Zakir Chaudhry, Corporate Policy & Strategy Manager, x2518

#### **4. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

4.1 The expectation is that costs associated with developing the strategy will be contained within existing resources.

4.2 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.

#### **5. Head of Legal Services Comments**

5.1 This report has been considered by the Head of Legal Services 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.

#### **6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

**Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's Business** (March 2008)

**Working for Children** (March 2007)

**The Children's Plan** (December 2007)

**Capital Gains** The London Child Poverty Commission Final Report (February 2008)

**Interim Report** The London Child Poverty Commission (September 2007)

#### **7. Background**

7.1 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.

7.2 The local authority has 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

7.3 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.

7.4 Members have also made it clear that they want to see a renewed drive by the council to improve the circumstances and opportunities of the borough's poorest children. A Members' Child Poverty Working Group was established last year, chaired by the Deputy Leader, Cllr Reith.

7.5 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.

7.6 The fundamental aim of Haringey's strategy and draft 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.

7.7 The council will consult a range of partners through the Haringey Strategic Partnership and its Theme Boards on the draft action plan. This will include representatives of community groups, HAVCO and the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

## 8. Current initiatives

8.1 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 maximisations 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.

## 9. Strategic Implications

9.1 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

9.2 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.

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

## **10.Financial Implications**

10.1 The strategy's objectives will be delivered within existing budgets. It is hoped however, that by encouraging a more co-ordinated and focused approach to child poverty, the strategy will increase the effectiveness of the council's activity in this area and improve value for money.

## **11.Legal Implications**

11.1 This strategy has no legal implications for the Council.

## **12.Equalities Implications**

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and found that the implementation of the Strategy will enable the local authority and its partners to concentrate its efforts in providing services to the most excluded and deprived children and families in the borough.

## **13.Consultation**

13.1 The draft Action Plan will be sent out for consultation to the Haringey Strategic Partnership, its theme boards and the Youth Council. Consultation will begin on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and finish on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The results of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in December 2008.

## **14.Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs**

- a. Child Poverty Strategy
- b. Draft Child Poverty Action Plan