

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
11 JUNE 2012	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services

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POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with details of the updated strategy and action plan developed for poverty reduction. To also provide examples of some of the activities taking place to achieve the objectives in the plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the committee to comment on the action plan and activities taking place and advise of future reporting requirements.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Safeguarding the Most Vulnerable Families.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The March committee requested a detailed poverty action plan for the June meeting. The poverty reduction objective is part of programme 2 in the Single Delivery Plan – Safeguarding the Most Vulnerable Families

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 We are continuing to refine the Action Plan and activity has started to deliver the outcomes in the plan. Examples include: -

Early Intervention

- We have reviewed the specification for the delivery of the Family Information Service and future delivery model. The information provided around children and families services will now link to the wider information available through the Councils contact centre creating one access point.
- We have successfully bid to be a pilot in increasing the free 2 year old early education places – this will provide access to 58 more places in our more deprived areas.
- Children's Services and the neighbourhood team are working together to join up the pathways of adults and children to substance misuse services to ensure that the impact on children and young people where substance misuse is a feature is minimised.
- We have changed our service specification for children's centres to focus on those families who have the greatest needs and where we will have greatest impact, and commissioned two highly respected national bodies to deliver the majority of our children's centre services – Banardos and Spurgeons.
- We have secured funding from the Eastern Region Safeguarding Board to deliver early identification and intervention training for professionals working with families pre-birth –

this will enable difficulties to be identified earlier and action to be taken to prevent escalation.

- We have revised the Common Assessment and Referral form (CAF) – this now runs to only 4 pages (was 16) – this will encourage and enable universal providers to complete and get access to services for families in need of support.
- We are launching locality multi-agency support groups where professionals will meet in localities on a fortnightly basis and CAFs will be presented – the professionals will develop multi-agency packages of support for families in response to the needs identified in the CAF.
- We are providing increased support to children and families where English is a second language, this will aide their ability to communicate and learn.
- We have developed a dedicated team of youth workers to support families and schools around troublesome behaviour.

Financial Inclusion

- We have created a ‘Homestart’ package that gives vulnerable families moving into accommodation the best chance of securing a stable tenure, including access to basic needs and money management advice.
- A briefing paper has been produced regarding the planned welfare reforms and potential impact on individuals, families and services or professionals, community practitioners and those working with vulnerable families.

Decent Homes

- We are providing temporary housing to those families and young people in crisis to ensure they have a safe environment within which to live.
- We are providing a Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency to give families practical help in accessing grants, benefits advice and full project management service to improve their living conditions.
- We are identifying 16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness and working with their families to secure appropriate housing solutions.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 During the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy there was wide consultation with partner agencies.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Action Plan will be amended to include clear timescales and a progress column, alongside continued activity.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1 Draft Poverty Reduction Strategy

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Poverty Reduction Action Plan