

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Item number</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Scott Butterfield, Corporate Development, Policy and Research Manager
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2014

## CHILD POVERTY FRAMEWORK

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider a report which updates on progress on implementing the multi-agency Child Poverty Framework and related issues and activity.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the attached report, asking questions and making any recommendations that are considered necessary.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement

## 5.0 Child Poverty Framework - Update

### 5.1 Level of Child Poverty in Blackpool

5.1.1 Appendix 7a shows the latest official figures on the level of Child Poverty in Blackpool. Key points are:

- The “poverty threshold” – the figure below which families are considered to be in poverty - fell from £218 per week to £204 per week between 2011 and 2012 due to the recession
- The proportion of children living in poverty **improved** in Blackpool over this period – falling from 30.2% to 29.3%
- However, as relative poverty levels fell more quickly in other areas, our ranking compared to other areas **worsened** from 21<sup>st</sup> highest to 14<sup>th</sup> highest

Appendix 7b shows the change in individual areas. Care should be exercised in interpreting these figures as these will refer to small numbers of individuals.

5.1.2 The change in figures highlights the issues with the relative poverty measure, which should not mask the ongoing impact of poverty in Blackpool.

### 5.2 Better Start

5.2.1 Previous scrutiny updates have highlighted the importance of the Better Start Project in delivering of a range of interventions around the social and emotional development, communication and language, and health and nutrition of 0-3 year olds in seven of Blackpool’s most deprived wards. The award of £45m of Lottery Funding to deliver this will be central to delivering progress on Child Poverty.

5.2.2 Recruitment has been undertaken to the key post of Better Start Director and two members of staff have also been appointed as Development Managers. Together with the Better Start Executive Board they are appraising the projects and approaches which will best deliver on these objectives, undertaking further recruitment, establishing commissioning arrangements, project planning and undertaking some ground work to agree a common language between professionals and local residents.

5.2.3 The role of the Blackpool Children and Young People’s Partnership will be crucial in ensuring that the systems change and projects established in the 7 wards is incorporated into the approach of the Council right across Blackpool. The BCYPP replaces the existing Children’s Trust to ensure we take a more upstream approach – stopping problems before they start – in line with the ethos of Better Start. The draft terms of reference of the Partnership are attached at Appendix 7c.

### 5.3 Child Poverty Framework review

5.3.1 The existing Child Poverty Framework is due to run until 2015. With the Better Start programme now getting underway, the process of reviewing our existing framework will shortly begin. This will include:

- An update of the statutory Child Poverty Needs Assessment, the evidence base which underpins the priorities of the document;
- A review of existing and future activity;
- Consultation with the public and stakeholders on the aims and content of the document;
- Consideration of suitable performance management, performance indicator and reporting arrangements to ensure progress is made.

5.3.2 Better Start will be the main driver of progress on child poverty in the new framework, and as such the timetable of the new document is dependent on the establishment of a detailed work programme. A timetable for the completion of the new document will therefore be set once this has been created.

#### **5.4 Child Poverty Framework - Progress**

5.4.1 The following highlights progress against some of the projects outlined in the Framework:

##### *5.4.2 Employment*

- Provision of Traineeships (“pre-Apprenticeships”) by DWP with Blackpool and Fylde College
- DWP Schools Project working with the Pupil Referral Unit to prepare ten disadvantaged 15 year olds for the workplace
- Drug and alcohol treatment services have been successfully re-tendered and a new model of care is now being delivered which encourages recovery. A programme of support has been commissioned to help people in recovery to gain employment, which has been particularly successful
- Although Blackpool continues to have a higher unemployment rate than regional and national averages there has been significant reduction in unemployment in the town since 2012. Blackpool’s peak season unemployment claimant count in September 2014 was 3.8% compared to 6.2% in 2012 and 5.3% in 2013. Equivalent to an extra 2,169 no longer claiming job seekers allowance
- Blackpool has a higher unemployment rate than average, although there have been reductions in peak season unemployment count which is also reflected in the rate of youth unemployment. The proportion of 18-24’s claiming JSA has fallen by more than half from 11.5% in Sep 2012 to 5.4% in Sep 2014 (from 1,370 to 645 young people)
- Levels of 16-18 year old young people that are not in education training or

employment (NEET) have decreased from 8.1% in 2012 to 6.8% in 2013, below the England average for the 2012 and 2013 of 9.2% and 7.6%, respectively

- The Council's lead employment service team, Positive Steps, has continued to deliver high quality advice and guidance to adult jobseekers through its various programmes, assisting 375 local residents into work in 2013/14, 23% higher than 2012/13
- Greater priority has been placed by the Council on creating new apprenticeship opportunities, both within the Council itself as major employer, and the wider business area. The Council created some 54 new apprentices in 2012/13, and 2013/4, and facilitated a successful 100 new apprentices in 100 days campaign in 2013 involving numerous training providers and local employers. Our apprenticeship scheme has aimed to reduce poverty amongst young people by offering employment opportunities to up skill the most disadvantaged in our society and provide viable career pathways; paying above the national apprenticeship pay rate by paying our apprentices the National Minimum Wage; offering guaranteed interview status to any young person who is disabled, a youth offender, NEET, a LAC or a care leaver
- We have held a tendering process for local training providers to work in partnership with us on developing a traineeship programme for young people. This will be for young people who are not apprenticeship ready and will incorporate work experience placement and training support to endeavour to move young people into apprenticeships or work
- In the last year the Council has pioneered a new Chance2Shine Work Placement offer for out of work young and adult residents seeking work experience. The tailored approach has been taken up by some 111 people; with 43 people going onto achieve paid employment. The programme has been recognised by national charity, Fair Train, who awarded the Council its gold standard for quality work experience
- The Council has been very active in supporting new start businesses with advice, training and access to finance. In the 2 years ending March 2014, the Council assisted 153 residents to start trading, unlocking some £428,000 of start-up finance through various local and national unsecured loan schemes
- The week 28<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October we held a dedicated career development event for 5 care leavers. Over the course of the week we developed CVs, focused on improving job application skills and interview skills and introduced them to local training providers. Two young people have moved into employment as a result. Another two are already at college part time and we are supporting them to obtain work experience placements whilst they are studying
- The Jobs, Friends and Houses social enterprise, led by Lancashire Constabulary, was awarded £450k from the Transformation Challenge Fund to work with ex-offenders (potentially within the age groups targeted by the

Child Poverty Framework) in recovery from substance misuse. These ex-offenders will be given training and skills to regenerate properties in Blackpool which will be sold on to fund further development

- Project search started in September 2014 - this is an intensive project working with students with mild learning and developmental disabilities with a view to securing sustainable long term employment.

#### 5.4.3 *Health and Child Development*

- Speech, Language and Communication Services are targeting under 5 year olds to promote good communication skills
- The Baby Steps programme targets vulnerable young mums for support
- The non-accidental head injuries programme covers all new mums
- Children's Centres aim to reduce inequalities through improving school readiness, and improving parenting aspirations. As part of this, Healthier Catering Award & Healthier Vending programmes are working with Children's Centres, restaurants, cafés and takeaways to improve the nutritional profile of the foods they serve
- Take up of the free entitlement to places for two year olds is monitored to ensure all who are entitled can access a child care place
- The Healthy Child Programme includes targeted elements for more vulnerable parents, helping to promote parent-child attachment, healthy eating and early detection of developmental delay or child safety
- The Baby Buddy phone app supports all young parents to increase their knowledge of good parenting skills
- Distribution of Healthy Start vitamins to children
- The Book Start programme, which promotes parental attachment and literacy through the free distribution of books
- The further development of the Family Information Service and website to offer information, advice and assistance on childcare as well as general information on a wide range of services for children, young people, their families and professionals

#### 5.4.4 *Young People and Connexions*

- NEET figures for October 2014 were 5.9%, the lowest recorded for this month and a 17% improvement on the previous year
- The Summer Ventures Programme offers a targeted summer learning and mentoring programme for school leavers at risk of NEET and also for NEET 16-18yr olds. Of the 103 people starting the programme, 99 completed and 94 went into education, training or employment on completion
- A Pilot Virtual Early Leavers Service (VELS) started in June. This is a rapid response service for young people who leave early further education or training. In the first

quarter, it supported 80 young people, with 73% of these getting back in education, training or employment – and a significant number of the remainder were no longer in Blackpool

- The Youthability Hub is a weekly one stop shop for unemployed 16 - 24yr olds supported by a wide range of partners. An independent evaluation showed that 94% of young people rated the service good or very good, 72% of young people rated it better than any other employment support received, and 91% would recommend it to friends. Just over 60% who were unemployed when using the service were in employment, education or training when followed up
- Family learning ran 113 courses in 2013-14 and worked with 645 adult learners and their families, with courses including Maths, English and Supporting a Child's Learning and Development. 97% reported they had learned skills to help their family
- Rates of teenage pregnancy are down 25%. Work is ongoing through the teenage pregnancy steering group to raise aspirations of vulnerable young women, encourage the uptake of Long Acting Reversible contraception and through establishing a programme of consistent PSHE in secondary schools. The latter is part of an incentive scheme that supports school and teachers to deliver a programme of agreed lesson plans, in conjunction with school nurses and targeted youth services. The Family Nurse Partnership has expanded to support more young mums to improve the health of children and reduce second pregnancies.

#### 5.4.5 *Youth Offending*

Data shows the continued success of the strategy to divert younger children committing low level offences into alternatives to prosecution and improvements in the identification and support provided to those at risk of offending. We have achieved a reduction of over 70% since 2009; from 286 young people down to 71.

#### 5.4.6 *Financial Inclusion*

Measures impacting indirectly or directly on children include:

- Creation of a combined Council welfare benefit and debt advice service to make debt advice easier to access – linking those in most need to the Discretionary Housing Payments and Discretionary Support Schemes as well as to advice which prevents them falling into crisis situations in the future
- Pay day loan sites blocked on public access IT equipment
- The Credit Union has relocated to a shop front premises to raise its profile and encourage people to access cheaper forms of credit
- Junior saver account launched for all Year 7s in Blackpool

- Council promoted energy switching schemes run twice a year

#### 5.4.7 *Housing*

The delivery of selective landlord licensing aimed at addressing social and environmental issues has been rolled out to Claremont following a successful trial in South Beach, with a further rollout to other areas in inner Blackpool in Autumn 2015. This also provides additional debt, benefit and employment support to help people gain the skills to get a job and keep it. The Queens Park housing scheme refurbishment is expected to complete in March 2015, providing more quality affordable family homes.

#### 5.4.8 *Special Educational Needs*

Proportionately more parents with children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities live in poverty. Work has centred around implementing the new Children and Families Act, which has led to a local offer of services commissioned through the Council and CCG commissioning strategy, and joined-up plans centred on the young person. These can include a focus on employment, education and health outcomes, with services offered through a range of local providers.

#### **Does the information submitted include any exempt information?**

No

#### **The following officer has been invited to attend the meeting to report on this item:**

- Ruth Henshaw, Corporate Development Officer

#### **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 7a: Child Poverty 2012 Data Release briefing note

Appendix 7b: Child Poverty 2012 Data Release – map of local change

Appendix 7c: Blackpool Children and Young People's Partnership Draft

Terms of Reference

#### **6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 None.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 100% of new policies are being assessed against equality characteristics, helping to mitigate against the perpetuation of inequalities experienced by these groups, and ultimately contributing to reducing the impact of disadvantage – including those experienced by families from these groups in poverty.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 Input from Child Poverty Working Group on progress against Framework actions.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None.