

- Legal I Marriott
P Endall - agreed
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers Strategic Directors Leadership Team Feb 2011.
- District Councils All District/Borough Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Commissioning Services consultations with key groups as part of the Needs Assessment Sept/Oct 2010.
Rugby Local Strategic Partnership 21.1.2011.
Financial Inclusion Partnership.

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Cabinet – 17 March 2010

Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That Cabinet endorses the Child Poverty Strategy for Warwickshire as appended to the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out how the Child Poverty Strategy for Warwickshire has been developed and why it is required. The strategy can be found attached as **Appendix A** of this report.

Background to the Strategy

- 1.2 The Child Poverty Act received Royal Assent at the end of March 2010 with the central **aim of eradicating child poverty by 2020**. The Act received all-party support and is contained within the Coalition's "Programme for Government" published in May.
- 1.3 The Act requires local authorities and their named delivery partners to work together to tackle child poverty. The Act specifies a number of duties on local authorities and their partners (Police, Transport, Health, Youth Offending, Probation, Jobcentre Plus):-
- (i) To have partnership arrangements to understand and tackle child poverty in their local area.
 - (ii) To carry out and publish a local child poverty needs assessment in order to understand the drivers of child poverty in their local area and the characteristics of those living in poverty.
 - (iii) To prepare a joint child poverty strategy setting out measures that the local authority and each named partner propose to take to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty.
 - (iv) To take their duty to reduce child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Communities Strategy.

- 1.4 In his **State of the Nation Report**. The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith stated, “In the UK today, millions of children, adults and pensioners are daily experiencing the crushing disadvantage that poverty brings. They are living at the margins of society, unable to achieve their aspirations and trapped in dependency. Such levels of poverty are unacceptable and today’s statistics show that, despite huge expenditure, this has made little impact in helping the poorest. A new approach is needed which addresses the drivers behind poverty and actually improves the outcomes of the millions of adults and children trapped in poverty”.
- 1.5 "It is right that we invest in addressing poverty, but we must focus our resources where they will be most effective. ‘Work’, for the vast majority of people, is the best route out of poverty”.

2. Introduction to Warwickshire’s Strategy

- 2.1 Intrinsic to the development and implementation of this strategy is the value of co-ordinated and collaborative working across the county. The strategy is not about spending more, but making better use of resources. By working together we can remove duplication, and focus collective resources and effort to achieve results.
- 2.2 The overarching ambition of the Warwickshire Strategy is about enabling people into ‘work’ by helping to address the barriers which prevent people from entering or progressing into sustainable employment. This includes addressing the educational attainment and skill level deficits which are predominately entry-level requirements for many employers. Secondly, to support the family in preparing for work by helping to tackle debilitating issues such as debt, benefit dependency, poor housing, family breakdown and other factors which prevent families moving out of poverty.
- 2.3 Key to this is the need for economic revival and growth which will stimulate the employment, development and enterprise opportunities for sustainable employment in the future.
- 2.4 The development of the strategy and responsibility for overseeing its implementation will sit within the new Communities Group, of Warwickshire County Council. However, the strategy clearly has implications and responsibilities for all public sector organisations. To ensure the development of this broader approach, the Leader of the County Council will oversee the development of the strategy.

3. The Definition of Child Poverty

- 3.1 The most commonly used threshold of low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income in that year. It uses disposable income rather than pre-tax income, as this is the money that the household has to live on*.

* Further information about what this means in real terms can be found in **Appendix 2** of the Strategy at **Appendix A** of this report.

4. The Warwickshire Perspective

- 4.1 Although Warwickshire has low overall levels of child poverty, small localised pockets with relatively high levels exist. These areas show up on a multitude of indicators linked to different aspects of child poverty.
- 4.2 Latest available figures show that 14,760 (13.2%) children are considered to be living in poverty in Warwickshire (2008 figures, based on 60% median income levels).
- 4.3 Areas with the very highest levels of child poverty in Warwickshire's urban areas tend to be surrounded by, or are located near to other areas with above average levels. This is particularly the case in Central and West Nuneaton which highlights the concentrated nature of the issue.
- 4.4 There are neighbourhoods in Nuneaton where over 50% of children are considered to be living in poverty.
- 4.5 Nearly a third of all children living in 'poverty' in Warwickshire live in only 10% of the Super Output Areas (SOAs) across the County.
- 4.6 More children in Warwickshire are likely to be living in poverty than the latest official statistics suggest as they do not reflect the impact of the economic downturn and recession. This is due to the lag in releasing relevant data sets.
- 4.7 In Warwickshire the distribution of child poverty is complicated. The largest concentrations are entrenched in the County's largest urban areas, particularly Nuneaton and to a lesser extent Rugby and Bedworth. However, these concentrations are combined with spatially dispersed pockets in the rural south and north.
- 4.8 Whilst the levels of poverty in rural areas are not as concentrated as those in Warwickshire's towns, when aggregated the total numbers are not insignificant. An added complication is that households experiencing child poverty issues in more rural areas may encounter further difficulty in accessing support services due to their more isolated locations.

5. The Context of the Strategy

- 5.1 The purpose of the document is to set out the vision and strategy for reducing, and ultimately eradicating child poverty in Warwickshire. To use the collective knowledge and experience of practitioners in Warwickshire, but which also takes into consideration the national policy reviews on how best to address child poverty.
- 5.2 Child Poverty is a complex issue which transcends service boundaries and requires commitment from all public sector organisations, the Police, the health services, district and borough councils, as well as the voluntary and community sector in helping to eradicate child poverty. Upper-tier authorities have

responsibility to eradicate child poverty, alongside partners who have a duty to co-operate.

- 5.3 The strategy accords with other corporate strategies including the Health Inequalities Strategy, the Children and Young People's Plan, the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, the Affordable Housing Strategy, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- 5.4 The emerging 5 year strategy and business plan from the LEP should help to create some of the employment and training opportunities needed to help people into sustainable employment and move out of poverty.
- 5.5 A series of summits and consultation exercises have taken place during November and December 2010, working with Area Children's Trusts and other key stakeholders to identify the key objectives, priorities and principles that should underpin the strategy.

6. Guiding Principles

- (i) Intelligence-led services, knowing 'what works'.
- (ii) Focusing resources in priority areas.
- (iii) Working collaboratively with colleagues and organisational partners to maximise impact and resources.
- (iv) Recognising the value of early intervention, particularly families with very young children.
- (v) Recognising the value of early intervention in terms of engagement and support.
- (vi) Ensuring that we are providing quality information and access to services, in terms of what we provide, and where we provide it.
- (vii) Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment

PAUL GALLAND
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Shire Hall
Warwick

March 2011

Cabinet – 17 March 2010

Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy

The Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy

Vision: To reduce, and alleviate the impact of child poverty in Warwickshire by 2020.

Overarching Objectives:

1. To move people out of poverty.
2. To break the cycle of poverty.
3. To mitigate the effects of poverty.

Strategic Priorities:

Priority One: Creating Employment Opportunities to help Move People out of Poverty

1. To boost the local economy through major infrastructure projects which will help attract inward investment, and create employment opportunities for local people.
2. To work with the commercial/private sector to ensure that developments will benefit local communities. This includes local procurement opportunities, and through the provision of training opportunities, apprenticeship schemes, work experience programmes and employment opportunities which will encourage people into work.
3. To work with partner organisations to help support local people, particularly hard to reach groups to benefit from local employment opportunities.

Priority Two: Intervening Early to Break the Cycle of Poverty

- (i) Supporting Children's Centres to provide holistic family support. Encouraging positive parenting techniques to promote family stability, a culture of encouragement and aspiration, and provide a strong and stable foundation for learning.
- (ii) Referrals or sign-posting to partner organisations on a range of issues including financial support, improving skills, returning to work, housing, health.
- (iii) Effective engagement with pregnant mums, particularly from 'hard to reach' groups, to ensure effective ante-natal and post-natal care including emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

- (iv) Supporting interventions which help reduce teenage conceptions, and therefore reducing the numbers of children born into poverty, by raising aspirations, improving educational attainment and addressing benefit dependency. Increasing the take up of family planning advice for those in poverty to help prevent a cycle of poverty amongst large families on low incomes.
- (v) To recognise the value of children's centres as a 'hub' for developing community support structures and building capacity within communities e.g. widening participation and engagement with parents. Encouraging volunteering opportunities, developing confidence, aspiration and positive role models.
- (vi) Promoting healthy lifestyles and improving outcomes for families.
- (vii) To continue working with families and schools in raising educational attainment.

Priority Three: Improving Financial Capability and Financial Awareness

Working collaboratively with the voluntary and community sector to provide advice, information and training on financial matters which may be preventing families from being economically active.

- (i) Debt management and prevention.
- (ii) Welfare and benefits advice.
- (iii) Financial capability and budgeting (money management).
- (iv) Financial awareness.

Priority Four : Addressing Housing Needs and Homelessness

Quality and stability of housing is important. Poor quality housing and overcrowding can contribute significantly to negative outcomes for children and inhibit the learning environment, and affect the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of the whole family.

- (i) To increase the amount of affordable housing across the boroughs/districts which is available for families and young people who are in poverty, or at risk of poverty.
- (ii) To support people who are at risk of becoming homeless, and homelessness prevention activities, helping to reduce the demand on housing.
- (iii) Bringing void properties back into occupation for the benefit of families, as part of an empty properties strategy.
- (iv) Giving greater priority to families where there is overcrowding.

Measuring Progress: How will we know if the Strategy is Working?

The Frank Field Review argues that that a major limitation of the existing child poverty measures is that they have incentivised a policy response focused largely on income transfers which is financially unsustainable.

A more effective approach would be to use a set of measures that will incentivise a focus on improving children's life chances, and ultimately break the transmission of intergenerational disadvantage. For Warwickshire, proxy measures could include, for example:-

- (i) Improving the take up of free school meals.
- (ii) Decrease the number of JSA claimants by helping people into employment.
- (iii) Reducing the number of teenage conceptions in Warwickshire.
- (iv) Improve educational attainment, particularly in areas where attainment is low.
- (v) Increasing the numbers of mothers and fathers attending ante-natal care.
- (vi) Localised measures through children's centres.

Accountability:

Within the County Council a Corporate Group, including key partners in the public and voluntary sectors, is in place to oversee the implementation of the new Child Poverty Duty and to drive forward the objectives of the strategy.

The Strategic Director for the Communities Group will be the lead accountable officer for the child poverty strategy, on behalf of all partners where there is a 'duty to cooperate'.

Programmes and actions within WCC, and partner organisations will deliver aspects of the strategy, and will feed into the annual reporting of progress on the eradication child poverty as outlined in the new duty.

By focusing resources on communities most in need, linking with the localities agenda, we can develop localised community action plans that can begin to address local needs, to build capacity and resilience within communities and raise aspirations that accords with the Big Society agenda.

Next Steps

To agree, with partners, an action plan that will outline the contribution of each partner in helping to achieve the vision of this strategy.

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Contributors to the Strategy

Sector Specialist for Child Poverty :	Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO)
WCC Children's Trust	Commissioning Support Services
Young people/Youth Parliament	Early Years Team
Special Schools	County, Borough and District Officers
Parent Support Advisors	Respect Yourself Campaign
Early Intervention Service	Gypsy and Traveller Services
Youth Service	CAF Team
North Warks and Hinckley College	Family Nurse Partnership
Area Offices	Safeguarding Services
Police	Warwickshire Observatory
Voluntary and Community Sector	Credit Union
CAB	Multi-agency Commissioning
School Improvement Officers	

Extended Services

Connexions
NHS
Public Health
Leaving Care Team
Integrated Disability Team

Appendix 1

Two key Reports which have informed the strategy are the **Independent Review on Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens** by **Graham Allen MP, and the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP.**

And **The Foundation Years : preventing poor children becoming poor adults, An Independent Review** by **Frank Field MP, Dec 2010.**

The premise of the two reports is that good early intervention is the key determinant for tackling social disadvantages and inequalities later in life. Providing children with the social and emotional support needed to help fulfil their potential and break the cycles of underachievement which blights some of the poorest communities. Specifically that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life, and that family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years matter more to children than money.

An independent review of best practice in early intervention was published in January 2011.

The Marmot Review :

Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being—from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status.

Addressing health inequalities in Warwickshire and supporting families to choose healthier lifestyles will be a key determinant of future life outcomes, including educational attainment and employment opportunities which will help to break the cycle of poverty.

Appendix 2

The Definition of Child Poverty

The most commonly used threshold of low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income in that year. It uses disposable income rather than pre-tax income, as this is the money that the household has to live on.

Incomes are adjusted for household size and composition to put them on a comparable basis. Clearly, a lone adult does not require the same income as a family of four in order to have the same standard of living.

The latest year for which household income data is available is 2008/09. In that year, the 60% threshold was worth: £119 per week for single adult with no dependent children; £206 per week for a couple with no dependent children; £202 per week for a single adult with two dependent children under 14; and £288 per week for a couple with two dependent children under 14.

These sums of money are measured after income tax, council tax and housing costs have been deducted, where housing costs include rents, mortgage interest (but not the repayment of principal), buildings insurance and water charges. They therefore represent what the household has available to spend on everything else it needs, from food and heating to travel and entertainment.