

Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Child Poverty

December 2007

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Child Poverty is a multi-dimensional issue, the causes of which can range from unemployment, low paid employment, low educational attainment, low skills, lack of ambition, a culture of worklessness and homelessness. Child poverty can impact upon the life chances of children and young people, having a direct link with educational attainment, health, teenage pregnancy, involvement with drugs and alcohol, anti-social behaviour and future employability. It is widely recognised that those children and young people who live in poverty are more likely to live in poverty in adulthood, having their own children and continuing the cycle of poverty. The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are of the view that it is vitally important to ensure the child poverty agenda is being addressed effectively in Warwickshire and consequently held a single issue meeting in relation to child poverty in Warwickshire. This report outlines the views of the Committee and recommendations to further develop Warwickshire's child poverty agenda. A full list of the Committee's recommendations is outlined in Appendix A.

2. Background

- 2.1 Child poverty is a high priority for the Government, as reflected in the ambitious targets set in 1999 to halve child poverty by 2010 and to eradicate it by 2020. In 2004 the Child Poverty Review¹ was published, outlining four strands of how child poverty would be eradicated. These were:
1. Work for those who can, helping parents participate in the labour market (improving household income),
 2. Financial support for families, with more support for those who need it most, when they need it most (tackling material deprivation),
 3. Delivering excellent public services that improve poor children's life chances and help break cycles of deprivation,
 4. Support for parents in their parenting role so that they can confidently guide their children through key life transitions.
- 2.2 Local Authorities can and do make significant contributions to the national child poverty targets, including: financial support, services for children and young people such as education, childcare support, specific targeting of interventions for looked after children, disabled children and children with special educational needs. In the discussion paper, "*Local Government and Child Poverty: Making a Shared Commitment to a Shared Reality*"², the LGA

¹ HM Treasury

² LGA, www.lga.gov.uk

outlined how Local Authorities can contribute to the child poverty agenda:
These include:

- Integrating children's services;
- Community leadership;
- Whole family approaches;
- Income maximisation;
- Removing barriers to work;
- Life skills; and
- Participation and engagement of young people.

2.3 The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee concentrated upon how Warwickshire County Council and our partners are working towards achieving income maximisation, removing barriers to work, increasing life skills and securing participation and engagement of young people.

3. The picture of Child Poverty in Warwickshire

3.1 Child poverty is a multi-dimensional issue, thereby making it difficult to establish an accurate picture of child poverty in Warwickshire. The recent publication of the New Performance Framework for Local Authorities³, which will form the basis of Local Area Agreements and future Comprehensive Area Assessments, includes an indicator which relates directly to child poverty. The indicator is based on the proportion of dependent children living in households where income is below 60% of the national median. However, there is currently no data available at a local level to be able to measure this indicator. As a result an interim measure, based on the proportion of children living in households where out of work benefits are received, has been established. Using this interim measure the picture of child poverty in Warwickshire is as follows:⁴

	Total No of Children	No of Children in Poverty	% of Children in Poverty
Warwickshire	118,300	15,200	12.8%
North Warwickshire	14,000	1,800	12.9%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	29,200	5,300	18.2%
Rugby	22,200	3,000	13.5%
Stratford-on-Avon	25,300	2,000	7.9%
Warwick	27,700	3,100	11.2%

3.2 Of the 12.8% of children in Warwickshire living in poverty, 63% of these children live with a lone parent.

3.3 Whilst these figures provide a picture of the overall position in Warwickshire, they do not illustrate the pockets of deprivation within each of the 5 district / borough areas.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government, Oct 07

⁴ Source: National Statistics, Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2006. Office of National Statistics

- 3.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation⁵ is based upon Super Output Areas (SOA's) which encompasses small areas covering approximately 1,500 people. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (2004) includes a measure relating to child poverty, recorded as the proportion of under 16 population living in income deprived households (IDACI). Using this indicator, 4 Super Output Areas (SOA's) in Warwickshire are ranked within the top 10% of most deprived SOA's nationally, 3 of these are in Nuneaton and 1 in Brownsover, Rugby.
- 3.5. There is a need for the Council to clearly set out how child poverty will be measured, in order to create a baseline to enable comparative analysis in future years. Whilst the new target set within the New Performance Framework provides a measurement across the County, it is important to ensure a full picture of child poverty within the areas of the county is continually developed. Super Output Areas should be used by the County Council to provide a clearer picture of child poverty at this level.
- 3.6 Additionally, as the Index of Multiple Deprivation is based upon households, it is also important to ensure that information relating to young people who do not fall within this data set is also used as a method of providing a clearer picture of child poverty, and therefore directing services more effectively. For example, it is thought that youth homelessness is becoming an increasing issue within Warwickshire and for those young people that are homeless it is difficult to access accommodation because of their age, therefore accessing education, employment and training is also difficult.

Recommendations

- A Where possible on receipt of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, Warwickshire Observatory undertake a detailed analysis at Super Output Area level, to give a clear picture of child poverty across the 5 district/ borough areas in the County.
- B The Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families use the information obtained from recommendation A to undertake a mapping exercise of the services available within the areas identified as having significant proportions of child poverty. Services relating to youth homelessness should also be included in this exercise. This exercise will enable priority areas to be identified and support the Council and partners in taking decisions and choices regarding service provision to address child poverty. A report outlining the findings from this exercise should be presented to the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government

4. Income maximisation

Benefits and Support

- 4.1 The Job Centre Plus is working to contribute to the eradication of child poverty by the undertaking the payment of benefits, thereby providing a degree of financial security, and also helping people in receipt of benefits into work as a sustainable route out of poverty. The Job Centre Plus is responsible for the local New Deal programme. New Deal is a Government programme that aims to give unemployed people the help and support they need to get into work. Of those on the New Deal programme, 58% are lone parents and 21% are disabled. Of those households on the New Deal programme, 38% have one parent in full time employment and 26% have one or more parent in part time work. Since 1997, New Deal for lone parents has resulted in the employment of lone parents rising by 11%. However, the UK remains one of the lowest EU countries in terms of percentage of lone parents in employment.
- 4.2 Continuing effort is being made to increase the number of lone parents in employment. For example, there is currently a requirement for parents claiming employment related benefits, whose youngest child is 14, to have a work focussed interview. This requirement will be extended from children aged 14 to 12 by October 2008, and to 7 by 2010. It is impossible to identify how this requirement will impact upon the local labour market.
- 4.3 For those unemployed parents who secure employment, there is a need to provide continuing support in order to ensure they remain in employment and that opportunities for progression are fully realised to secure increased financial security. As the largest employer in the County, the County Council should lead by example in terms of providing support to those employees who have previously been unemployed.
- 4.4 For those that are out of work or cannot work, it is fundamentally important that they have access to relevant benefit and financial management advice. The Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate is currently inviting interest in tendering for benefits advice services for people who live in Warwickshire, or who have been placed outside the county. In addition to ensuring access to relevant advice, the Committee is strongly of the view that skills training in relation to financial management should be made available to households with dependent children experiencing financial difficulty. This was further emphasised when concerns were raised regarding the overpayment of Tax Credits. A national Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) survey⁶ of 1,500 visitors in April and May, published in October 2007 found that 80% had been overpaid Tax Credits and 71% of those were experiencing financial difficulty as a result of having to repay the overpayment. Respondents also stated that due to their experiences with Child Tax Credits, they were less likely to of or would not claim allowances in the future.

⁶ Tax Credits: The Current Picture (2007), www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Recommendations

- C Departments in conjunction with Corporate Human Resources consider how employees who have joined the County Council from being long term unemployed can be fully supported to remain in sustainable employment.
- D The Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services initiate discussions with the District and Borough Councils, Colleges and the Learning and Skills Council to establish how basic financial training can be offered to those families experiencing financial difficulties.

Employment Opportunities

- 4.5 A major contribution to the success of reducing poverty is ensuring there are sufficient jobs. Currently in Warwickshire there is a ratio of 10 applications for 1 job. Whilst there appears to be an equal match between numbers seeking employment and the number of vacancies, it is difficult to ascertain whether vacancies match the skills base available. Job Centre Plus advised the committee, of a national agenda working with employers to increase employment opportunities. Locally work is being undertaken to engage local employers to ring fence vacancies for people needing to get into the workplace; this may also include a guaranteed interview scheme for lone parents out of work and ready to start work. It is fundamentally important that employment opportunities are flexible and therefore attractive for parents. As the largest employer in Warwickshire, the County Council should lead by example and give consideration to how lone parents can be supported into and within employment with the County Council.

Recommendations:

- E Cabinet explore with Corporate Human Resources and Legal Services whether there is a possibility of offering a guaranteed interview scheme to lone parents.
- F The Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a scrutiny review looking at the County Council's policies in relation to flexible working and ascertain how these can be improved, particularly for those with childcare responsibility

- 4.6 In some respects the costs of schooling can greatly exacerbate the experience of living in poverty for children and young people. The DfES now (DCSF) published a study in 2004⁷ outlining some of these costs:

⁷ Department of Education and Skills, (2004), The Cost of Schooling, London: DfES

- School uniforms can be expensive, particularly where schools have specially designed logos imprinted upon uniforms. The DfES calculated that the average cost of a school uniform, including PE kit is around £236 per year, rising to £312 for boys.
- DfES estimate that the average cost of school residential trips is around £186. It is widely recognised that pupils may suffer academically, if they are prevented from going on school trips which are relevant to the curriculum.
- The costs of school meals vary considerably, and the Committee further stresses the recommendations relating to the affordability of school meals contained in the School Meals Scrutiny Review, particularly Recommendation D. In addition to affordability during term time, it is also recognised that the lack of provision of School Meals outside of term time can be a significant financial burden for some parents and can have possible impact upon children and young people in relation to reduced nutrition.
- Concern is also raised regarding extra cost parents face in relation to the curricular. These costs can range from ensuring pupils have access to a computer and purchasing equipment and materials required for particular subjects, for example ingredients for food technology, paints for artwork and textbooks for exams.

4.7 Overall, the DfES estimated that the total of all these hidden costs amounted to £948 per year for a secondary school child and £563 for a child in primary education. Inevitably these costs will have risen since 2004.

Recommendation

- G The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families submits a report to the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining the hidden costs of education in Warwickshire – including a picture of uniform costs and school trips and also outlining the support options available to families to assist with these costs. This report should include details of the changes in school uniform rules and guidance introduced by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- H The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families undertakes a mapping exercise of the Charities, Community and Voluntary Organisations across the County who provide schools with support in relation to costs of schooling. This exercise be used to identify gaps in such provision.

5. Removing barriers to work

Childcare

- 5.1 The provision of flexible, available and affordable childcare is a key element in the Government's strategy to eradicate child poverty. The benefits of childcare are seen not only in terms of enabling parents to go to work or to increase their hours but also the wider improved outcomes for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, a lack of suitable, affordable childcare is frequently cited by parents as a barrier to employment.
- 5.2 The Government introduced the first National Childcare Strategy⁸ in 1999, outlining a ten year strategy to address the provision of childcare as a barrier to employment. The Childcare Act 2006 is a further step to realise the Government's vision and imposes a number of duties upon Local Authorities in relation to childcare. These include:
- A duty to reduce inequalities between children under 5 through integrated services offered through a Sure Start Children's Centre in every community
 - An increase in the free early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds from 12 ½ hours per week to 15 hours per week by 2009 for the most disadvantaged families (not yet defined) and for all children by 2010. There will be an increased flexibility in how the 15 hours of childcare can be taken, and this could potentially result in a number of problems in relation to sustainability, availability of settings etc
 - A duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents and all Local Authorities are required to review the sufficiency of childcare in their areas.
 - A requirement to ensure that the full range of information parents and prospective parents may need or could access for their children through to their 20th birthday, is available to all parents and a pro-active approach to reaching those who might otherwise have difficulty accessing or understanding the information.
- 5.3 The provision of childcare outlined by the Childcare Act 2006 will not necessarily address the childcare needs of those families in poverty in Warwickshire and there are a number of challenges which need to be addressed. Firstly, there is a need to secure the sustainability of childcare until employment opportunities are found. Secondly, there are issues relating to securing childcare to meet the needs of certain groups, for example children or parents with disabilities. Thirdly, securing sustainable funding for Children Centres is a fundamental challenge.
- 5.4 In Warwickshire, the development of Children Centres is being carried out in three stages. 13 Children Centres were built in Phase I (2004-2006), 17 children centres will be developed in Phase II, to be operational by March 2008 and a further 12 children centres will be developed in Phase III, to be operational by March 2010. Current funding for developing Children Centres

⁸ Department for Education and Skills, now Department for Children, Families and Schools

is considered to be insufficient. The Children Centres built in Phase II will only receive development not general funding, therefore receiving less funding than those developed in Phase I, as they will receive only development and not general funding. Phase I Centres will face a significant reduction in funding during 2007/08, with other funding being used to top up allocations. This is because the Children's Centres Indicative Allocations for next year are lower than expected, and will cause serious problems for the next three years. Whilst Cllr Seccombe, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families has written to the Minister for Children, Young People and Families to seek clarification regarding the allocation, consideration needs to be given as to how the Children's Centres can be supported in a sustainable way.

Recommendation

- I Cabinet gives consideration to the long term sustainable funding of Children Centres in Warwickshire.

Barriers to work for young people

- 5.5 There are a number projects within Warwickshire that aim to enhance the opportunities for young people to access employment, education and training. These projects include:
- Wheels2Work- a programme run by Connexions which lends mopeds to anyone aged between 16-65 having difficulty accessing employment or training and where a moped is lent for a period of 6 months. All successful applicants receive compulsory basic training, safety equipment, tax and insurance cover and regular maintenance and servicing of the mopeds. When the project was initially launched mopeds were lent to applicants for 12 months, this has since been reduced to enable more people to benefit from using a moped. Since 2000, 900 young people have been helped to access employment interviews, training and/or jobs. Currently there are 57 mopeds available in Warwickshire.
 - On Your Bike – a joint project between Connexions and the Youth Offending Team, involves the servicing and repairing of unclaimed bicycles passed onto the project by the Police. The bikes are available to young people for a donation of £25 (where possible) and are used for journeys less than 4 miles. The bicycles are provided with safety equipment and training.
 - Workwise – a Connexions project which was launched in February 2007 and will run until March 2009. The project aims to assist anyone 16-65 with access to interviews and employment in the form of part payment of travel costs for an interview or for the first two months after starting employment. A use of a moped for a period up to 6 months may also be available.
- 5.6 Both Wheels2Work and Workwise receive a small amount of funding from the County Council.

5.7 In addition to addressing transport related issues, other Local Authorities are developing innovative ways of enhancing employment opportunities available for young people. A Public Sector Apprenticeship Project run by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Connexions involving Local Authorities, the Police, Fire Service, PCT and local colleges, has been highlighted as being successful in removing barriers for young people gaining employment within the public sector. The project was launched in July 2006, and has secured Neighbourhood Renewal Funding of £60,000 per year until March 2008, where the project will be mainstream funded by the Connexions Service. The aims of the project are:

- To reduce the number of 16-19 young people in NEET
- To increase the number of Apprenticeships currently offered in the Public Sector
- To increase the number of e2e (Entry to Employment)⁹ placements within the Public Sector with a view to a smooth transition onto an Apprenticeship
- To increase the number of Public Sector opportunities for those young people leaving care
- To promote and create a positive image of Public Sector Employers and encourage the Public Sector to serve their community more effectively.

5.8 Each public sector organisation nominates a champion to support the project and a Connexions Project Adviser manages the project. A number of apprenticeships are set aside within the public sector organisations involved, for young people to apply for and successful candidates are supported by a Connexions Personal Adviser to keep them engaged and working. The apprenticeships consist of an NVQ Level 2, Key Skills and Technical Certificate (12-18 months), with advanced apprenticeships available to NVQ Level 3 Standard (36 months). It is based on both college or work based training, as well as the actual job experience. Currently the project has 19 young people engaged in apprenticeships in a variety of public sector organisations.

Recommendation

J Warwickshire County Council works with key partners to develop a Public Sector Apprenticeship Scheme, similar to that run by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Cabinet be requested to nominate a lead officer to develop this project and allocate £30,000 to support the initial start up costs.

6. Participation and engagement of young people

6.1 The Government's Child Poverty Review¹⁰ highlights the importance of improving educational outcomes and providing support to 16 to 19 year olds

⁹ Entry to Employment is a learning programme that aims to help those who are not ready or able to enter Apprenticeship programmes, further education or employment.

¹⁰ HM Treasury, 2004

from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education, employment or training to enable entry to well paid employment and thus breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty. It is recognised that children in families with lower incomes are less likely to perform well in school and more likely to play truant. A study carried out by the University College London, found that a child's background strongly influenced educational attainment with 95% of young people from affluent households achieving 5 GCSE's compared with 15% of young people from deprived households. Closing gaps in attainment between different groups is a critical element in addressing poverty cycles.

6.2 Since 2003 there has been a steady increase in the number of young people staying in education in Warwickshire and in 2007 86% of year 11 students continued in education, the highest percentage so far. Whilst educational attainment is a key factor in relation to child poverty, impacting upon life chances, skills and employability, the Committee acknowledges that schools alone cannot tackle the achievement gap that leads to cycles of poverty. All public services and community and voluntary organisations need to focus upon raising the ambitions and expectations of young people. There are a number of good projects within the County that can disseminate learning and best practice in relation to raising aspirations and expectations of young people.

- The Pride in Camphill project is an example of a project that has successfully engaged young people and created a sense of pride within a historically disadvantaged community. It is important that the lessons learnt from this project are filtered across to other areas of the County.
- The Flare Project jointly run by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Connexions Services offers young people who are disengaged or who have health issues preventing them from attending school, to take part in a learning experience outside of the school environment. Young people are encouraged to develop a sense of pride and diligence in their approach to work and to develop life skills, for example, communication, teamwork and self-confidence. The overall aim of the project is to reengage young people and to prevent them falling into the NEET category.

6.3 The Committee acknowledges the achievements of these projects and is strongly of the view that the County Council could do more to raise the expectations and aspirations of young people in Warwickshire.

Recommendations

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|---|---|
| K | Warwickshire County Council develop a consistent policy regarding work experience placements for young people. |
| L | Warwickshire County Council encourages key partners to develop work experience placements schemes. |
| M | Warwickshire County Council works with local businesses to develop a work placement scheme for young people classified as NEET. |

7. Life skills

- 7.1 Level of skills is strongly associated with employment rates, the higher qualification obtained the higher the likelihood of being employed. Skills are also linked to the quality of employment, quality being measured by income. Low skills are a major barrier to job entry and progression in work (40% of lone parents on Income Support have no qualifications and 1.2 million parents are in low-skilled employment). Therefore, a particular challenge is to raise the skills among the current work age population. However, in addition to this emphasis needs to be placed on improving the skills and qualifications of today's 5-20 years olds who will become parents in the next 15 years. The Opportunity Centres in Nuneaton and Rugby are an excellent example of how this challenge can be addressed.
- 7.2 Opportunity Centres provide community based training facilities to deliver vocational courses relating to construction at a foundation level. The programme started in 2002, with 22 organisations working together to deliver basic level training to hard to reach target groups in Warwickshire to ensure employment and improved prospects. Student numbers have grown in Nuneaton from 80 to 270 per week and Rugby currently has 60 students per week. Whilst colleges provide training in areas such as construction, these courses start at an NVQ Level 2, the entry level qualifications for these courses (5 GCSE's) exclude some people. The Opportunity Centres offer support and basic level training to enable young people to access further training with colleges. The support delivered by the Opportunity Centres needs to be sustained and opportunities provided for young people to progress.
- 7.3 Other Local Authorities run similar schemes. The Vale Royal Borough in Cheshire runs a training centre for young people to gain skills and qualifications, which is supported by local employers who provide work placements and employment to ease the young people into the work place. The IdEA regard this scheme as an example of best practice, as the involvement of local employers reflects the partnership approach and the acknowledgement that both public and private sectors have a role to play in engaging young people into the local economy, and thereby addressing deprivation.
- 7.4 Overall, helping people develop themselves and their skills to move up the employment ladder is an ongoing commitment and requires education, engagement, employment support, in work support and career progression.

Recommendation

- N The Strategic Director for Environment and Economy develop a scheme with local businesses that offers work placements for those attending opportunity centres and other skill based learning projects.

8. The way forward – Partnership working

- 8.1 There are a variety of measures within the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) that contribute to addressing child poverty, however the County Council has not made explicit its commitment towards addressing child poverty. Whilst child poverty has been given increasing priority within the County Council and among partners in recent years, a clear commitment, vision, strategy and action plan need to be developed to guide this work more effectively. A Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy should be a partnership strategy which addresses the issues raised by this review and summaries the range of targets contained within the LAA and CYPP which contribute to addressing child poverty in Warwickshire. Child Poverty can only be successfully addressed through partnership working, both corporately and externally. Therefore, tackling child poverty requires all directorates within the County Council and our partners to contribute to addressing child poverty, by enhancing an understanding of child poverty and becoming more self aware of the impact policies and working practices have upon child poverty.

Recommendation

- O Warwickshire County Council makes explicit its commitment to tackling child poverty in Warwickshire.
- P Warwickshire County Council leads in developing a Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy, with clear objectives, targets and milestones outlined in an action plan. The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families be given responsibility for developing this Strategy.
- Q To ensure a consistent evaluation of how Council policies impact upon child poverty, it is recommended that the Agenda Management Sheet for Committee reports be amended to include a section to detail how the report impacts upon social inclusion and child poverty.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to that this opportunity to congratulate the Children, Young People and Families Directorate and the Environment and Economy Directorate for their outstanding contributions to addressing child poverty in Warwickshire. It is hoped that the recommendations contained in this report will build on the efforts already being made.

Recommendations

- A** Where possible on receipt of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, Warwickshire Observatory undertake a detailed analysis at Super Output Area level, to give a clear picture of child poverty across the 5 district / borough areas in the County
- B** The Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families use the information obtained from recommendation A to undertake a mapping exercise of the services available within the areas identified as having significant proportions of child poverty. Services relating to youth homelessness should also be included in this exercise. This exercise will enable priority areas to be identified and support the Council and partners in taking decisions and choices regarding service provision to address child poverty. A report outlining the findings from this exercise should be presented to the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- C** Departments in conjunction with Corporate Human Resources consider how employees who have joined the County Council from being long-term unemployed can be fully supported to remain in sustainable employment.
- D** The Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services initiate discussions with the District and Borough Councils, Colleges and the Learning and Skills Council to establish how basic financial training can be offered to those families experiencing financial difficulties.
- E** Cabinet explore with Corporate Human Resources and Legal Services whether there is a possibility of offering a guaranteed interview scheme to lone parents.
- F** The Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a scrutiny review looking at the County Council's policies in relation to flexible working and ascertain how these can be improved, particularly for those with childcare responsibility.
- G** The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families submits a report to the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining the hidden costs of education in Warwickshire – including a picture of uniform costs and school trips and also outlining the support options available to families to assist with these costs. This report should include details of the changes in school uniform rules and guidance introduced by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- H** The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families undertakes a mapping exercise of the Charities, Community and Voluntary Organisations across the County who provide schools with support in relation to the costs of schooling. This exercise be used to identify gaps in such provision.

- I** Cabinet gives consideration to the long term sustainable funding of Children Centres in Warwickshire.
- J** Warwickshire County Council works with key partners to develop a Public Sector Apprenticeship Scheme, similar to that run by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Cabinet be requested to nominate a lead officer to develop this project and allocate £30,000 to support the initial start up costs.
- K** Warwickshire County Council develop a consistent policy regarding work experience placements for young people.
- L** Warwickshire County Council encouraged key partners to develop work experience placement schemes.
- M** Warwickshire County Council works with local businesses to develop a work placement scheme for young people classified as NEET.
- N** The Strategic Director for Environment and Economy develop a scheme with local businesses that offers work placements for those attending opportunity centres and other skill based learning projects.
- O** Warwickshire County Council makes explicit its commitment to tackling child poverty in Warwickshire
- P** Warwickshire County Council leads in developing a Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy, with clear objectives, targets and milestones outlined in an action plan. The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families be given the responsibility for developing this Strategy.
- Q** To ensure a consistent evaluation of how Council policies impact upon child poverty, it is recommended that the Agenda Management Sheet for Committee reports be amended to include a section to detail how the report impacts upon social inclusions and child poverty.