

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Public Health

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People and Families

**SUBJECT:** Reducing Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances in Halton

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report is to update members of the work of Halton's Child and Family Poverty Strategic Group and how this feeds into the Liverpool City Region co-ordinated approach to addressing child and family poverty.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members note the contents of this report**

## **3.0 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

3.1 Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. We know that most disadvantaged children are less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future financial security. They are more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments.

3.2 In 2010 Halton alongside other Liverpool City Region (LCR) leaders agreed to adopt a City Region wide approach to tackling issues related to child and family poverty that would build on strong local and City Region partnerships.

3.3 In 2011 the first Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy for the LCR was launched and subsequently in 2015. The vision set out in the strategy continues to represent our long term approach up to 2020, which was the national deadline to eradicate child poverty. Vision states that:

*“Working together as City Region Partners we will reduce child and family poverty and maximise opportunities for children and young people in their life chances.*

*We will achieve this through a dual strategy which ensures an ever growing proportion of children and young people are ready for school and life whilst maximising family resources.”*

## 4.0 HALTON'S CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY STRATEGIC GROUP

4.1 Given Halton are well represented on the LCR Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission by the portfolio holder for children and the Director of Public Health and have been key to developing the city wide strategy we are happy to adopt a joint strategic approach. In addition Local Authorities no longer have a statutory duty to complete a local child poverty strategy. We have, however, agreed we need to develop our own bespoke action plan to underpin it.

4.2 Halton's Child and Family Poverty Strategic Group hosted a morning workshop on 26<sup>th</sup> January attended by a range of stakeholders to consider what should be included in Halton's Child Poverty Action Plan. The group agreed to use the priorities for the Liverpool City Region as the basis of our action plan.

These are:

- Fair employment
- Birth and School readiness
- School interventions, pupil premium and NEETs (Not in Education Employment or Training)
- Health inequalities and lifestyle choices
- Transport and accessibility

4.3 Each table had a lead representing one of the priorities identified above who facilitated discussion with the aim of completing an exercise which aimed to ascertain the following:

1. What do we have in place now in Halton?
2. What do we need to focus on to improve things?
3. How can we work better with the Liverpool City Region (LCR)?

4.4 From the completed responses a paper was collated summarising the key areas/common themes against each of the priorities. These included:

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ISSUES
<b>Fair Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Financial literacy in the community – can handle money</li> <li>b. Teach adults to understand their employment rights</li> <li>c. Use employed young people as role models</li> <li>d. Check childcare accessibility against adult learning and skills provision</li> <li>e. Look at supported internships for young people with learning difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>Birth and School Readiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Integrated multiagency teams collocated</li> <li>b. Future use of Children's Centres – multigenerational?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Increased focus on building parenting skills</li> <li>d. The system to develop an understanding of Early Years Pupil Promises and how we should spend it</li> <li>e. Complete an evidence review for what works with improved parenting and keeping children out of care.</li> </ul>
<b>School Interventions, Pupil Premiums and NEET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Financial literacy for children</li> <li>b. Mapping of availability of fresh food in deprived areas</li> <li>c. Ensuring all children entitled to free school meal get one</li> <li>d. Use social media to give young people information on training and jobs, interview techniques, CV writing, etc.</li> <li>e. Organise holiday meal clubs in deprived areas, tying in with big supermarkets</li> </ul>
<b>Health Inequalities and Lifestyle Choices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Training staff and voluntary sector to work with people on their lifestyle</li> <li>b. Digital access to health advice</li> <li>c. Scope opportunities for low cost/free sports opportunities</li> <li>d. Roll out pilot pregnancy and smoking Quit Buddy Stress Management Scheme</li> <li>e. Enabling children to make the right choice for secondary school meals</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased communication on what concessionary fares, cheap tickets are available</li> <li>b. More children walking to school</li> <li>c. Increased awareness of cycle training for children</li> </ul>

4.5 As a result the group are in the process of pulling together a SMART (specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-based.) action plan, which will feed into the LCR Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy.

4.6 This Action Plan will be regularly monitored and evaluated for outcomes.

4.7 The outcomes of the strategy and action plan will be fed back on an annual basis to the Halton Children's and Young People's PPB and the LCR Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Reducing child and family poverty and improving life chances is a significant challenge for local authorities and Halton is no exception, particularly given the current economic climate and funding reductions. A City Region approach to addressing child and family poverty exploits economies of scale and also helps to share good practice.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

As a local authority we have a responsibility to ensure all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are supported to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future financial security.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

As a local authority we have a responsibility to ensure all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, have access to a breadth of education, training and employment opportunities.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Children and young people who are living in poverty experience a number of issues that may impact on their physical and emotional health and wellbeing. These issues need to be addressed to reduce escalation into adult life acting as a barrier in achieving their academic potential and gaining successful employment.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

We know that most children and young people living in poverty suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments. We need to work together to reduce the risk of children and young becoming involved in crime and also reduce their vulnerability to exploitation.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) like other Northern City Regions has been affected by the economic downturn of recent years with levels of unemployment and low wage growth. The Government's austerity programme has served to exacerbate the effects on the poorest families

in the City Region through reductions to benefits and tax credits and imposition of benefit sanctions, set against the ongoing squeeze on the cost of living.

Local Authorities no longer have a statutory duty to complete a local child poverty strategy, however to do nothing to help address this issue would be detrimental to the borough. This risk will be addressed through an efficient and effective action plan for Halton based on the priorities for the LCR. This action plan will feed into the Liverpool City Region Strategy.

Achieving an effective LCR Child and Family approach requires strong strategic leadership from a range of LCR partners. This has been addressed through the establishment of a LCR Child and Family Poverty Commission of which Halton is actively part of.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Children and young people growing up and living in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. Their needs may require a range of specific services.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy 2015-18	Runcorn Town Hall	Eileen O'Meara
Child Poverty Act 2010	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents</a>	Eileen O'Meara