

SUNDERLAND'S CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2010-11 PHASE 2

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress and achievements of Phase 1 of the Sunderland Model in reducing Child and Family Poverty and seek approval to progress to Phase 2 with a revised and focussed strategy based on the outcomes of the consultation process and the needs assessment.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 There was a duty on the Council and its Partners to carry out a Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment by October 2010 and to produce a Local Child and Family Poverty Strategy by April 2011. The Coalition Government has decided not to issue formal statutory guidance in relation to this duty on the Council and its Partners or laying regulations detailing requirements of local Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessments.
- 2.2 The Child and Family Poverty Strategy consultation process has been completed. An extensive range of partners, officers across the Council and Elected Members participated in the process and the outcome will be set out further in the report.
- 2.3 The first phase of the Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment has been completed, once again with a wide range of partners participating and the next steps are considered further in this report.
- 2.4 The Coalition Government has introduced a new NI116 Child Poverty measure and HMRC has produced a national dataset which relate to families below 60% of median income. This has established the level of Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland at 25.4%

3. Progress Update

- 3.1 The progress of the first phase of Sunderland's strategic approach to reducing Child and Family Poverty has produced the following products:
 - A Sunderland three phased model to tackling child and family poverty
 - A Governance structure in place with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as lead, supported by the Child and Family Poverty Board.
 - Committed 'buy-in' from all strategic partners
 - A greater level of understanding of child and family poverty issues in Sunderland
 - A Child and Family Poverty Strategy that was developed in partnership, with a wide range of partners actively engaged and then consulted

- Engagement of young people in the planning process (including the development of a DVD)
- An initial high-level Action Plan which covered the scope of the actions across the partnership to tackle child and family poverty
- Senior Management support within the Council and Partners
- A Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment completed
- A regional profile on an innovative and progressive approach
- A national profile with the Child Poverty Unit (CPU) visit and health task team reports
- Progress on reducing Child and Family Poverty without access to substantial additional resources as was the case with neighbouring Authorities.
- Performance Framework in place with Partners signed up

3.2 The progress in the first year of developing Sunderland's approach and the products achieved is fully compliant with the non-statutory guidance, ahead of schedule.

4. Child and Family Poverty Consultation

4.1 In June 2010 the draft Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy document was formally shared with key partners for consultation. Partners were given the opportunity to feedback on the strategy between June and September 2010, either by post or email. One interpretation of the limited number of responses received is that partners are satisfied with the content of the strategy and this is largely due to the engagement of partners in the strategy development process. In addition, suggestions and key intelligence was highlighted as result of various presentations to LSP Delivery Partnerships, Area Committees, the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee and one to one meetings will also be integrated into the revised strategy.

4.2 Sunderland's Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), established to represent disability, race, gender, faith, older people, younger people and lesbian, gay and bisexual people, will be invited to share their views on Child and Family Poverty and influence the actions that form the Child and Family Poverty Action Plan. The process of requesting the involvement of the IAGs has commenced, in line with the agreed protocol.

5. Needs Assessment

5.1 Following the Child and Family Poverty Board's approval to a Needs Assessment specification, a project brief was issued to all Directorates and Partners to carry out this assessment. The objective of the task was to ensure that Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy and Action Plan is rooted in sound, up to date analysis of the needs and characterisations of children and families living, or at risk of living, in poverty in Sunderland.

5.2 The Needs Assessment was completed and is now the subject of detailed consultation and discussion with Partners. The Needs Assessment is attached as **Appendix 1** together with a highlight report (**Appendix 2**) summarising the key points for the Committee's consideration. A development event was held on 10 November 2010 to engage Partners in refining and agreeing the Needs Assessment.

6. Regional Developments

- 6.1 The North East Child and Family Poverty Advisory Group is currently drafting a North East Declaration on Child and Family Poverty which will be aimed at local businesses and the Community and Voluntary Sector. Authorities were consulted to tie-in the Declaration to a Regional European Event held on 13 November 2010. Sunderland children were represented at this event showcasing their work in producing the Child and Family Poverty DVD.

7. Recent Policy Developments Relevant to the Supporting Child and Family Poverty Agenda

- 7.1 The work on Child and Family Poverty and the associated draft strategy was developed under the previous government. As anticipated the change of government has had a significant impact on the policy, operational and economic environment and this will continue apace into the future. There are many policy developments that will fundamentally change the environment within which families and support services operate, in particular changes in the social welfare system will impact on the circumstances of many families that are living in poverty.
- 7.2 The change of government is also impacting on how the Council and its partners operate in the future. The emergence of policy drivers such as the localism agenda and the Big Society, amongst others, provide the basis on which local services can be developed to provide an increasingly focused approach to service delivery. The move towards personalised service delivery that is responsive to an informed understanding of need is at the core of the service review activities that are emerging through the Sunderland Way of Working (SWOW). This approach should provide the basis on which the factors that contribute to Child and Family Poverty can be mitigated. Of course we also need to ensure that the service developments that are emerging from the review process do not disadvantage those in our communities who are already subject to inequalities.
- 7.3 In addition, several research reports that are relevant to the Child and Family Poverty agenda have been published since we embarked on the development of the strategy and these provide supporting evidence for the approach that is being developed in the city.
- The Marmot Review concluded that reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. Health inequalities result from social inequalities so actions must be universal but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage (proportionate universalism).
 - Alan Milburn's report on Unleashing Aspiration recognises that while prosperity has grown for most in our country, poverty remains an entrenched way of life for too many people. The report advocates targeted help so that the most disadvantaged, children especially, get a fair chance to compete to succeed.
 - Frank Field's Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances was published on 3 December 2010. As expected it focuses on what happens during the early years of a child's development that so impacts on a child's lifetime opportunities and outline an 'index of life opportunities' to open a new phase in the anti-poverty strategy.

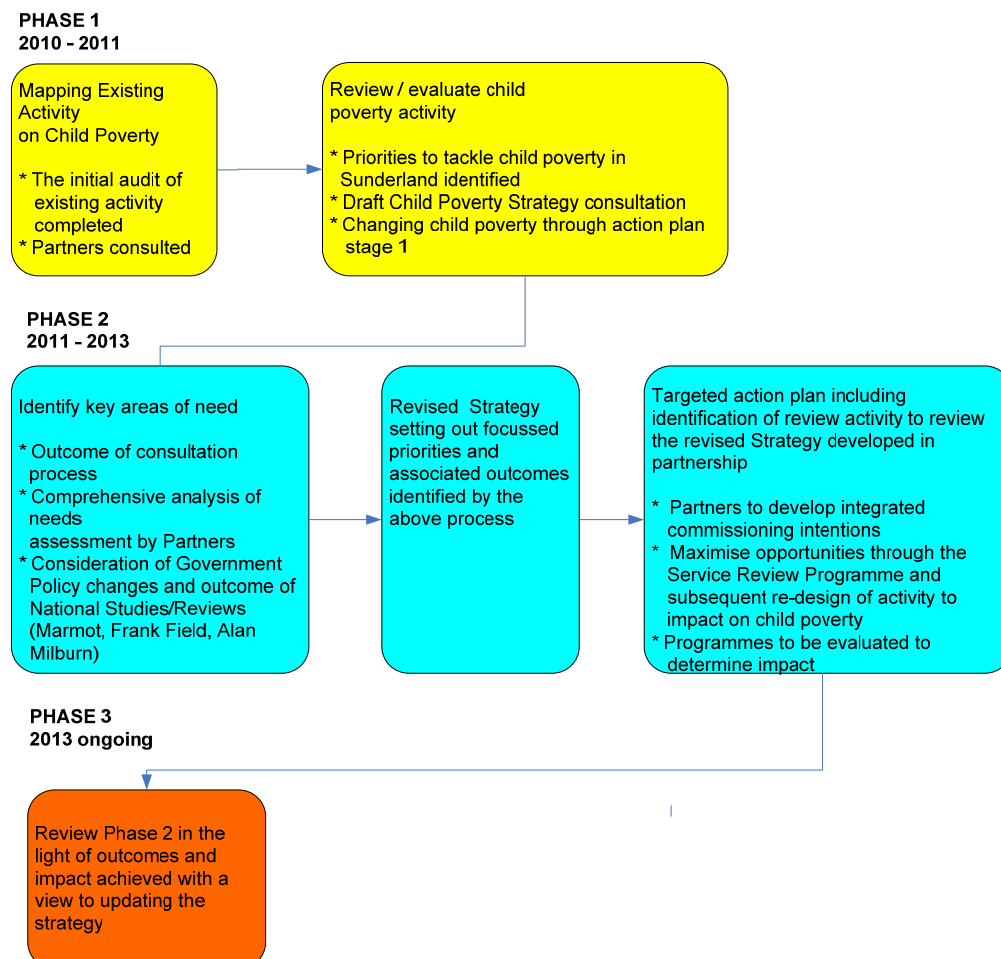
7.4 The developments outlined above demonstrate the need to reconsider the strategy in order that it is fit for purpose going forward.

8. Moving to Phase 2 of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Model – The Process

8.1 The previous sections of this report have identified that considerable progress has been made in establishing Child and Family Poverty as a priority, put in place a robust governance structure and a greater understanding that ‘Reducing Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland is Everybody’s Business’. This completes Phase 1 of the Sunderland model.

8.2 However, the position has fundamentally changed since we first drafted the City's Strategy twelve months ago. It is now time to revise this draft to reflect the outcome of the consultation, the findings of the Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment, the change in policies from the Coalition Government and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

It is proposed to move the Phase 2 in accordance with the following process:



8.3 The process outlined above is in accordance with the adopted Sunderland model for tackling Child and Family Poverty and is also consistent with the established principle of moving to Outcomes Based Commissioning as set out in the following model:

9. Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy – Way Forward

- 9.1 The findings of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment 2010 provide the basis of the revised Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy. The Phase 2 Strategy also takes into account the outcome of the consultation process, the national evidence base and a Development Workshop held on 10 November 2010. This timely review will enable Partners to take account of the Strategy's Priorities in the re-shaping of services following the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 9.2 Initial consideration by the Child and Family Poverty Board and Working Group has identified the following priorities for consideration:
- **Employment:** focussing on the long-term unemployed, training opportunities and engaging local businesses in the agenda
 - **Children's Services and Education:** focussing on access to childcare and Children's Centres by our poorest families, narrowing the attainment gap and reducing the number of NEETS
 - **Health and Quality of Life:** a focus on reducing teenage conceptions, child obesity, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking related disease, improved lifestyles through physical activity and safer communities.
 - **Housing:** with a focus on supporting the socially excluded, the provision for homeless families, improvements to unfit housing and tackling fuel poverty
 - **Financial Inclusion:** focussing on increasing financial capability, improved advice and reducing indebtedness.
- 9.3 A key feature of the strategy in taking forward these actions was considered to be through the development of a localised/neighbourhood model of tackling poverty based on the Whole Life Inclusive City aim of the Economic Masterplan (including the development of the city villages concept), and a greater understanding of local/community needs linked to mapping systems such as the Geographical Information System (GIS).
- 9.4 As noted above, a Development Workshop was held on 10 November 2010 to consider the five existing, agreed priorities, the neighbourhood model and the Needs Assessment
- 9.4.1 At the development workshop there was agreement amongst practitioners that in order to make difference, we need to take a different approach. From discussions, a two pronged approach emerged:
- 9.5 Firstly, embedding action on the existing child and family poverty priorities into the day to day practice and the service plans and strategies of those organisations which form the Sunderland Partnership. The overarching priority for the child and family poverty strategy in Sunderland would therefore be to:
- **Make child and family poverty everybody's business through adopting an approach to 'child and family poverty proof' Strategic Plans of all Partners as routine practice.**

9.6 Secondly, a focus on a more defined service area which could engage the contributions of a range of partners and agencies, may be more likely to make a real impact

9.6.1 The second priority would be:

- **To develop integrated neighbourhood models of service to retarget and deliver Early Years and Early Intervention.**

10. Draft Outline of the Revised Child and Family Poverty Strategy

10.1 In the light of the changes and progress identified in this report, the Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider whether the current model and proposed direction of Phase 2 is consistent with the Sunderland Way of Working and the Council's (and its Partners) expectations.

10.2 If the Committee is mindful to support continuation with the current model, the following structure to the revised Strategy is proposed:

- Policy background
- Review and achievements of Phase 1
- Endorsement of Sunderland Model and outlining Phase 2
- Highlighting the evidence base (Marmot Report etc)
- Needs Assessment outcomes
- Consultation feedback
- Links to other Strategies
- Revised priorities (as highlighted above)
- Process for engaging Partners in developing the revised Action Plan (December-March)

11. Timetable for the Production of the Revised Strategy

11.1 The timeline is as follows:

Meeting	Date of Meeting
Child and Family Poverty Needs Analysis and Strategy Review Workshop	10/11/10
Delivery Improvement Board	10/11/10
Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee	11/11/10
Local Strategic Partnership	16/11/10
Cabinet (to approve Strategy)	01/12/10
Children's Trust	January 2011
Cabinet (to approve Action Plan)	01/03/11

12. Recommendations

12.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

12.1.1 Note the progress and the products from Phase 1 of the Sunderland Model to reduce Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland.

12.1.2 Consider and comment on the move to Phase 2 with a revised Strategy reflecting the Consultation and Needs Assessment outcomes.

12.1.3 Consider and comment on the structure of the revised Strategy and priorities as set out.

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