

Walsall Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group
Initiation Document

Work Group Name:	Children's Poverty Working Group
Requested by:	Council
Panel:	Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Municipal Year:	2015/16
Lead Member:	TBA
Lead Officer:	TBA
Scrutiny Officer:	Neil Picken
Membership:	Councillor T. Jukes, Councillor E. Hazell, Councillor R. Burley x2 representatives from the Health and Wellbeing Board

1. Context	
	<p>It is important that Members of the Education and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee take the time to consider all matters within the remit of the Panel. This developed knowledge and understanding leads to effective and improved Scrutiny.</p> <p>At a meeting of Council held on 16 November, 2015 a notice of motion was considered as follows:-</p> <p><i>Council notes that there has been a continued net rise in the numbers of children living in poverty and in extreme poverty over the past 10 years with levels in some areas such as Blakenall reaching 42% A survey of 3500 young people in 2014 found that 9% are always or often hungry because there is not enough food at home (equivalent to 2450 young people in Walsall).</i></p> <p><i>This has had indirect consequences of driving more families into debt, forcing a rise in levels of inequality, contributing to adoption of a poor diet and subsequently a rise in numbers with unhealthy weight and worsened education attainments.</i></p> <p><i>Council further notes that future cuts in funds from Central Government of around £24M in the next financial year alone will , combined with the introduction of universal credit, the continuation of the imposition of the bedroom tax and cuts to working tax credits, further increase these numbers especially in the less well off parts of Walsall.</i></p> <p><i>Council has adopted in 2013 a children and young people's plan for 2013 to 2016 that includes a priority of, 'Reducing the impact of child poverty' and notes that the Children and Young People's Partnership Board has also been tasked to produce a report on this area of concern. The Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy also includes a priority to: 'Reducing child poverty and the impact on families of workless parents'.</i></p>

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	<p><i>However we feel this area is now so serious and imminent to need an urgent updated review and to establish a task and finish group hosted by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel to formulate an action plan that could mitigate the effects of this rise in child poverty levels bringing all relevant partners round the table.</i></p>
2.	Objective
	<p>To formulate an action plan to deliver priority actions across the Council and with its Partners to mitigate and reduce the negative impact of the rise in child poverty in Walsall.</p>
3.	Scope
	<p>For Members to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor and challenge the achievement of intended actions and outcomes in the action plan and secure ownership across the Council and its Partners; • Consider the local and national context and comparators of child poverty; • Understand the laws, strategies and policies in place to tackle child poverty; • Identify services, support and strategies in place locally to address the issue of child poverty; • Map the support offered by the Council, Partners, Charities, community and voluntary organisations; • Identify good practice elsewhere in the country and recommend any particular examples for implementation within Walsall; • Consider the Council's ability to tackle the issues in light of significant budget pressures – identifying budget savings which may impact negatively on child poverty.
4.	Equalities Implications
	<p>When considering each area Members will consider whether each area adequately delivers towards the six strands of equalities, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender • Race • Religion or belief • Sexual orientation
5.	Who else will you want to take part?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People's Partnership Board • Health and Wellbeing Board

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners • Residents • Schools • Third Sector service providers 									
6. Timescales & Reporting Schedule										
	<p>Terms of reference – 5 January, 2016</p> <p>Final report to Committee – 19 April, 2016</p> <p>Final report to Cabinet – June, 2016</p>									
7. Risk factors										
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Risk</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Likelihood</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Measure to Resolve</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Difficulties engaging with teams</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>Engage with teams early to make necessary arrangements</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completing all work in a timely manner</td> <td>High</td> <td>Advance schedule of meetings arranged. Consider interim report if necessary.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Risk	Likelihood	Measure to Resolve	Difficulties engaging with teams	Medium	Engage with teams early to make necessary arrangements	Completing all work in a timely manner	High	Advance schedule of meetings arranged. Consider interim report if necessary.
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Date Agreed:		Date Updated:	
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Timetable: TBA subject to Members availability

DATE	ACTIVITY