

**19 April, 2016**

**Child Poverty Working Group**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** All

**1. Report:**

- 1.1 Further to a Notice of Motion agreed by Council the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Child Poverty Working Group. The terms of reference are attached at appendix 1.
- 1.2 The working group has considered a number of matters relating to child poverty including worklessness, low paid work, inadequate benefits and food poverty.
- 1.3 It became clear during the working groups investigation that there were a number of workstreams within the Council that would have a bearing on the working groups review. This includes the Welfare Reform Working Group and work undertaken by the Children and Young Peoples Board.
- 1.4 In light of the ongoing workstreams and complex nature of child poverty, it is suggested that this review should be re-established in the 2016/17 municipal year to provide sufficient time to investigate the issue in detail.

**2. Recommendation:**

That the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee re-establish the Child Poverty Working Group in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

**Contact Officer:**

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**Child Poverty Working Group Initiation Document**

<b>Work Group Name:</b>	Youth Poverty Working Group
<b>Requested by:</b>	Council
<b>Panel:</b>	Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Municipal Year:</b>	2015/16
<b>Lead Member:</b>	TBA
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Sue Blick and Tara Hussain
<b>Scrutiny Officer:</b>	Neil Picken
<b>Membership:</b>	Councillor T. Jukes, Councillor E. Hazell, Councillor R. Burley, Councillor Robertson (H &WBB) & Councillor I. Shires (H &WBB)
<b>1.</b>	<b>Context</b>
	<p>It is important that Members of the Education and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel take the time to consider all matters within the remit of the Panel as this developed 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</i></p>

	<p>parents’.</p> <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>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Objective</b>
	To formulate an action plan that could mitigate the effects of the rise in child poverty levels.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Scope</b>
	<p>For Members to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the local and national context;</li> <li>• Identify the laws, strategies and policies in place to tackle child poverty;</li> <li>• Identify services, support and strategies in place locally to address the issue of child poverty;</li> <li>• Map the support offered by the Council, Partners, Charities, community and voluntary organisations;</li> <li>• Identify good practice elsewhere in the country and recommend any particular examples for implementation within Walsall;</li> <li>• Consider the councils ability to tackle the issues in light of significant budget pressures – identifying budget savings which may impact negatively on child poverty.</li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>
	<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"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Religion or belief</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Who else will you want to take part?</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People’s Partnership Board</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Third Sector service providers</li> </ul>

