

## The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Leeds' Child Poverty Strategy and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has been done to address ongoing post pandemic and cost of living priorities. Appendix 1 gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps, detailing what is being done to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people in Leeds. It also considers the impact that the ongoing national cost of living crisis is having on local levels of poverty and the impact this is having on children and families.

This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city, regional and national challenge.

We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We know of the associated stigma and feeling of shame for children and young people who live in poverty. Children who experience poverty are more likely to face a wide range of difficulties, both now and in the future. There are strong links between experiencing poverty as a child and having worse mental and physical health, a shorter life, lower grades in education, poor financial health and lower paid, insecure work.

We don't want this in Leeds. So, through the work of the Child Poverty Impact Board underpinned by the Child Poverty Strategy, we are working together as a city to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative.

### Recommendations

- a) That Executive Board endorses the refreshed and ongoing strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, and the work being undertaken by the council and other partners in the key areas of activity.

- b) The Executive Board acknowledges the need to promote the work of the Child Poverty Strategy across the city and across council directorates and through our wider city partnerships in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families.
- c) Note the responsible officer is the Deputy Director, Social Care, Children and Families

### **What is this report about?**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds, and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred post pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.
- 2 This report is an updated progress report that was presented to Executive Board in June 2023<sup>1</sup>.
- 3 The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds has been in place since 2019. In 2016, Children & Families started to develop a plan around mitigating the impact of child poverty across Leeds. In 2017/2018, a scrutiny enquiry on child poverty recommended that Children & Families integrated more of a central focus on child poverty. The first Child Poverty Impact Board met in 2018, and 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds' was launched in 2019.
- 4 The child poverty strategy was co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.
- 5 Recent consultation with young people and colleagues has led to the strategy being refreshed – and will be launched autumn 2024. Further details are on Appendices 1 and 2.
- 6 An ECDI screening has been carried out and is attached at appendix 3. Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this work. Disadvantaged pupils are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), ethnicity, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long-term impact of disadvantage.
- 7 Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 - 2025 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 by helping the council to identify work and activities that reduce disadvantage, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 8 This is an ongoing strategy about mitigating the impact of child poverty for children and families in Leeds. Further detail is set out in Appendix 1 of this report in terms of the actions, outcomes and outputs of each project linked to the Strategy for the Executive Board's information.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing                       Inclusive Growth                       Zero Carbon

- 9 This strategy directly relates to the Best City Ambition specifically:

***“Our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home”.***

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<sup>1</sup> [Child poverty Executive Report June 2023](#) and [Child Poverty Executive Board Appendix A June 2023](#)

The strategy relates to the 3 pillars:

**Health and wellbeing** -In 2030 Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone: where those who are most likely to experience poverty improve their mental and physical health the fastest, people are living healthy lives for longer, and are supported to thrive from early years to later life.

**Inclusive growth** -In 2030 Leeds will have an economy that works for everyone, where we work to tackle poverty and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly across the city, creating opportunities for all.

**Zero carbon** -In 2030 Leeds will have made rapid progress towards carbon neutrality, reducing our impact on the planet and doing so in a fair way which improves standards of living in all the city's communities.

10 The strategy aligns with local and city-wide strategies such as the Priority Neighbourhoods work, the Children and Young People's Plan, Child Friendly Leeds, Future in Mind Strategy, and the Best City for Learning, and Marmot City.

11 This strategy relates to the council priority around the climate emergency. As the climate continues to change, extreme weather patterns across the globe will become increasingly common. The knock-on effects of these changes will be profound; however, it is hard to determine what specifically they will look like. What is certain is that there will be scarcity of various resources, such as food and energy, which could lead to price increases, which will have a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty. We should seek to mitigate the impact of poverty and reduce insecurity and inequality around these basic needs to build strengthened communities for the future.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: ALL

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

12 Extensive consultation has been carried out with regards to this strategy, with private, public, third and education sectors, children, young people and parents, universities and community groups. Most recently to refresh the strategy we consulted with 20 groups of young people totalling 214 children and Young people across Leeds. The consultation was completed with the Child Poverty Impact Board which is chaired by the Lead member for Children and Families.

### What are the resource implications?

13 There are no new proposals with resource implications presented in this paper. This strategy pulls together the work being done across the council directorates and relevant partners across Leeds focusing on mitigating the impact of poverty on children. This is about working together in a Team Leeds approach to share information learning and actions so that together we can tackle inequality and poverty in Leeds.

### What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

14 The purpose of the child poverty strategy is to work together to mitigate the impact of child poverty. The priorities as detailed in Appendix 1 outline what is being done to mitigate the impact of child poverty. The key risk of not having a child poverty strategy is the loss of a coordinated approach across Leeds working together to mitigate the impact of poverty. This

could also result in potential duplication of work and lack of connection to other work and groups across the council and city.

### **What are the legal implications?**

15 There are no legal implications.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **What other options were considered?**

16 This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

#### **How will success be measured?**

17 Success is measured through activity as detailed on the appendix- in terms of progress against key priorities.

#### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

18 This is an ongoing strategy. The responsibility of managing the work falls to the workstream leads as well as their teams.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Update: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds
- Appendix 2 – Refreshed Strategy 2024-2027
- Appendix 3 – EDCI Screening Form Child Poverty Exec Board 2024

### **Background papers**

- NONE