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**Report of Director of Children and Families**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)**

**Date: 18th July 2018**

**Subject: Directors response to Scrutiny Inquiry – The Impact of Child Poverty on Achievement, Attainment and Attendance**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Summary of main issues**

1. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) agreed the terms of reference for an inquiry that would look at the impact of child poverty on the attainment, achievement and attendance. The inquiry had a significant focus on the legislative framework and the duties on local authorities around child poverty, the prevalence of child poverty in Leeds, and the initiatives in Leeds to support partners and schools in mitigating the impact of child poverty.
2. The scope of the inquiry is set out in detail in the final report, *The Impact of Child Poverty on Achievement, Attainment and Attendance*, which was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 ([Link to inquiry report](#)).

**Recommendations**

3. The Scrutiny Board is requested to note the responses to the recommendations based on their findings and to endorse the approach outlined below.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the formal response of the Director of Children and Families to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) inquiry into the impact of child poverty on achievement, attainment and attendance.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The legislative changes to child poverty have removed the need for a child poverty strategy. That is not to say, however, that Leeds City Council do not focus on child poverty, in terms of its impact on a range of outcomes. The commitment to tackling child poverty has been seen as implicit across all directorates of the council. Children and Families link with a number of local and national initiatives; including troubled families, pupil premium and Education Endowment Foundation research. They also work with key partners from schools, including clusters, learning alliances and seconded Headteachers.
- 2.2 National government changes to child poverty definition and measurement has led to complexity in the data collection, measures, and reporting on the numbers of children and young people who experience poverty, which has resulted in uncertainty in the true figure of children and young people who experience poverty, either in Leeds or across the UK. This data that exists shows a clear upward trend in the number and percentages of children and young people who experience poverty.
- 2.3 Latest figures show that 4 million children across the UK experienced relative poverty (after housing costs) during 2015/ 2016; an increase of 100,000 children from the previous year. This figure is predicted to increase by 50% by 2020.
- 2.4 In Leeds, 22.7% of all dependent children under the age of 20 (37,200 children) lived in relative poverty in 2014, compared to 19.9% (2.3m children) in England. With regards to children under the age of 16 in Leeds, 23.1% (32,805 children) were in poverty in 2014, compared to 20.1% (2m children) in England.
- 2.5 School based measures, in the form of Pupil Premium figures, show that 33,467 pupils in Leeds are deprived (Pupil Premium index 2017-2018). Between 2011 and 2015, there was a 32% increase in the number of year 6 Leeds children living in the 10% most deprived areas in the UK; and a 91% increase in the number of year 6 Leeds children living in the 3% most deprived areas in the UK.
- 2.6 Adults being out of work are often cited as the main reason for child poverty; however, in Leeds, 66% of children who are in poverty were from a household where at least one person was in work in 2015/2016.
- 2.7 Whilst it is difficult to establish a causal link between the impact of child poverty on life quality indicators, research shows that experiencing poverty in childhood is a statistically significant factor for substantially lower

outcomes in education, employment, wellbeing and physical and mental health.

- 2.8 On the 20th July 2017 the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) agreed the terms of reference for an inquiry that would look at the impact of child poverty on the attainment, achievement and attendance. The inquiry had a significant focus on the legislative framework and the duties on local authorities around child poverty, the prevalence of child poverty in Leeds, and the initiatives in Leeds to support partners and schools in mitigating the impact of child poverty. The scope of their inquiry is set out in detail in detail in the final report, The Impact of Child Poverty on Achievement, Attainment and Attendance, which was published on the 15th May 2018.
- 2.9 The inquiry was conducted over five evidence gathering sessions which took place between July and December 2017, when we received a range of evidence both written and verbal. We also visited three schools and one Cluster Partnership in November 2017 to speak to practitioners. A meeting was also attended with the LCSB Education Reference Group on the 3 October 2017.
- 2.10 Leeds has an ambition to be a child friendly city by 2030. The mechanism for delivering this vision is outlined in the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2019 – 2021. The CYPP states that mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people is a priority.
- 2.11 The Best City for Learning Strategy, 2016-2020 is a strategy to improve education across Leeds. It was developed from intelligence gathered from a series of debates, entitled Leeds: The Big Education Debate. These events were held in 2015, and attended by a wide variety of educationalists and professionals across Leeds. Improving the experiences and outcomes of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners was expressed as an area of necessary improvement within these debates. Seven priorities, born from the debates, were identified and together they create the Best City for Learning Strategy. One of these priorities is 'High Expectations for All', in which the emphasis is placed on identifying 'Creative and innovative approaches need to be used to address the gaps which prevent children from achieving their potential'. This priority addresses the gap between the less and more advantaged, and discusses the importance of providing equity of education.
- 2.12 The Annual Standards Report's, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016- 2017, all have sections on child poverty and the impact of this on educational attainment in terms of pupil premium and free school meal measures. The Annual Standards Reports provide an update on the priorities highlighted in the Best City for Learning Strategy.
- 2.13 Clear priorities for Children and Families Services are outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan and driven by an active Children's Trust. Priorities are strategically aligned with the overall local authority plan (Best Council Plan, 2019-2021), the Best City for Learning, Best Start in Life Strategy, Leeds SEND Strategy, Future in Mind Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Safer Communities Strategy.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The impact of living in poverty can be categorised into two types- structural and individual effects. The structural effects can include inadequate housing, fuel poverty, food poverty, parental unemployment and a lack of access to resources and facilities. Individual effects can include poor mental and physical health, low educational outcomes, restricted access to opportunities, lower wellbeing and low paid/ no employment.
- 3.2 The principal measure of child poverty has, for many years, been based on relative income. In the recent recession there has been a reduction in median earnings. Therefore, this has had the effect of reducing the value of the relative poverty line which is measured against the median earnings figure. This has resulted in people being taken out of the relative poverty figures even though their earnings position may not have changed. The latest national figures showed that 300,000 fewer children were in relative income poverty between 2009-10 and 2010-11 largely due to reductions in median incomes. At the same time absolute poverty remained unchanged, implying that the living standards of children did not improve over this period.
- 3.3 It is recognised that the attainment and achievement of disadvantaged children and young people is not a new issue and the research and analysis undertaken has been extensive. Consistent conclusions are that disadvantage impacts on a child's learning and the longevity of the disadvantage makes a difference. Disadvantaged pupils are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), ethnicity and EAL (English as an Additional Language) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long term impact of disadvantage.
- 3.4 Studies on long-term disadvantage show that there is a strong link between pupils' attainment and progress, and the percentage of time they spend in school as free school meal eligible. At all key stages, pupils who have been on free school meals have lower attainment than children who haven't been on free school meals. If a child has been eligible for free school meals on just one occasion, their attainment is still lower than their peers who haven't been free school meal eligible. Attainment decreases as the length of time spent on free school meals increases. Studies show that only a very small percentage of schools have been able to reverse this trend, and be above national averages for attainment. Disadvantaged pupils finish primary school over 9 months behind non-disadvantaged and finish secondary school over 19 months behind. Disadvantaged pupils fall behind by around two months each year over the course of secondary school.
- 3.5 Leeds is considered alongside regional and national performance data which identifies that Yorkshire and Humber is one of the regions with the greatest challenge. This is particularly reflected in the Leeds data. Leeds gaps are larger than national, with the gap between children who are on free school meals and not on free school meals widening throughout their education journey. The gap at 5 years is 5.7 months, at 11 years it is 13.3 months, and at 16 years it is 22.3 months. Whilst this gap at 16 years is larger than national gaps (19.2 months) it is smaller than the average gap

for Leeds' comparator cities (Bristol, Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield) where the average gap is 22.6 months.

- 3.6 Analysis has been conducted with primary schools in Leeds, to provide an overview of poverty and pupil deprivation levels. It is important to emphasise that poverty effects each child differently, and therefore each school will have its own unique context, challenges and celebrations. One fifth of primary schools within Leeds have between 66% and 99% of their pupils living in the most deprived areas nationally and yet two fifths of primary schools have less than 5% of their pupils living in the most deprived areas. The most disadvantaged schools have the highest proportion of children with Special Educational Needs (20%), a figure that decreases on comparison with the affluence of the area. For the most affluent areas, the figure is 8%.
- 3.7 The difference between the nine most deprived clusters and the rest of the city is quite clear. These nine clusters have the most dense population of pupils, the highest rates of free school meals, the highest rates of new arrivals, and the highest proportions of BAME, EAL and SEND pupils.

#### Response to Scrutiny recommendations

- 3.8 **Desired outcome: Understanding the range and effectiveness of services provided to mitigate the impact of Child Poverty to inform the provision and commissioning of services and ensure appropriate investment of council resources**
- 3.8.1 Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Children and Families maps the range of Council wide services to reduce the impact of child poverty in order to:
- a) provide a clear overview of activity and the effectiveness of that activity,
  - b) identify the gaps in service provision
  - c) inform commissioning of council services
  - d) inform the need for Third Sector support
- 3.8.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation and is pleased to provide the following update; a Child Poverty Impact Board has been established, with members comprising of Chief Officers from a wide range of council directorates.
- 3.8.3 A) A mapping activity has been undertaken, drawing together all of the work across the council that has a specific focus on mitigating the impact of child poverty. There are a vast amount of boards and groups across the council that work on this priority, and it has been established that there is a need for one group to draw together this work and assess the impact of this work.
- 3.8.4 A partnership approach has been created, which aims to find and implement research-led interventions, integrating the voice of the child with the voices of parents and professionals. This city wide approach will create or develop research- led collaborations that assess the impact of low cost, high impact work, interventions and projects. These areas will focus on reducing the

effects of child poverty, and thoroughly exploring the outcomes of these solutions.

- 3.8.5 The child poverty strategy for the city focusses on establishing a city-wide equal partnership, the Child Poverty Impact Board, which applies robust measures and targets to reduce the negative impact of child poverty, through using research informed interventions and projects. There is a strategic board and six Impact Workstreams, involving a wide range of partners across the city; they will create and evaluate low cost, high impact projects that improve the lives and experiences of children and young people who live in poverty. These projects will research the impact of poverty, but, crucially, will see what we can change or improve to make a difference and mitigate this impact.
- 3.8.6 These six Impact Workstreams will be clustered around six areas: 'Readiness for Learning & School Age Education', 'Housing & Provision', 'Empowering Families', 'Financial Health & Inclusion', 'Transitions & Employment', and 'Health, Wellbeing & Resilience'. The workstreams both consist of new boards, and enhancements to existing boards.
- 3.8.7 B) The Child Poverty Impact Board will oversee the Impact Workstreams, and the wide ranging membership of the Impact Workstreams are designed to identify areas of concern, gaps in service provision, and areas that can be improved; and then create innovative and bold approaches to address the concerns and reduce the gaps, to improve the lives of children, young people and their families.
- 3.8.8 C) Discussions within the Child Poverty Impact Board that focus on how the city can work together more effectively to mitigate the impact of poverty are underway, and the role of commissioning arrangements are included within these improvement conversations.
- 3.8.9 D) Both the Strategic Board and the Impact Workstreams will consist of representatives from Leeds City Council, public, private and third sectors, academics, community representatives, youth voice representatives and other partners. Working with the third sector is a key priority for all work for Children and Families directorate, which can be seen in the child poverty priorities.
- 3.9 **Desired Outcome – To review and update the Directors Sub Delegation Scheme**
- 3.9.1 Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Children and Families and the Leader of Leeds City Council:
- a) reviews the Directors Delegation Scheme for the Director of Children and Families, with reference to 'Specific Delegations' part 3, Child Poverty.
- b) ensures that mitigating the impact of Child Poverty remains a specific delegation for the Director of Children and Families.
- 3.9.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation, and is looking forward to working with key partners to mitigate the impact of child poverty in Leeds.

- 3.10 **Desired Outcome – To aid continued support and challenge by the Scrutiny Board with regard to the ‘Challenging Child Poverty’ Priority**
- 3.10.1 Recommendation 3 – Following adoption of the refreshed CYPP, that the Director of Children and Families includes performance management information pertaining to ‘Challenging Child Poverty’ priority, in all future performance reports presented to the Scrutiny Board.
- 3.10.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. The Director will endeavour to include all relevant data with regards to mitigating the impact of child poverty within future performance reports that are presented to the Scrutiny Board.
- 3.11 **Desired Outcome – To improve living conditions for children in order to support their education and wellbeing.**
- 3.11.1 Recommendation 4 – That the Director of Children and Families works with the Director of Resources and Housing to ensure that there is effective communication between the two Directorates that enables children and young people living in sub-standard or crowded housing conditions to be identified and supported appropriately to minimise the impact on their education and development.
- 3.11.2 The Director of Children’s & Families welcomes this recommendation, and work on this priority is ongoing through the ‘Housing and Provision’ Impact Workstream, as well as conversations at the strategic level. Both directorates have identified the impact of poor quality housing provision, and the issues associated with some private sector properties that contribute to this poor quality housing provision. The Impact Workstream will first look to create data on the scale of the problem, and then it will create projects that aim to improve housing and provision for children, young people and their families. There will be a link in to improve the education and wellbeing of children who live in sub-standard housing through the Child Poverty Impact Board, of which all research and impacts will be presented.
- 3.12 **Desired Outcome – To aid continued support and challenge by the Scrutiny Board with regard to mitigating the impact of Child Poverty**
- 3.12.1 Recommendation 5- That the Director of Children and Families and the Chair of the CPIB provides the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) with a comprehensive report which details
- a) the purpose and priorities of the CPIB
  - b) an overview of the aims, objectives and targets of the CPIB.
  - c) details of how the CPIB will ensure cross Council and Partnership commitment and action in order to reduce the impact of Child Poverty
- 3.12.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation and would like the opportunity to send this report to Scrutiny following an OBA event that will be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> October. The aim of the OBA is to ensure that the Child Poverty Impact Board and the Impact Workstreams are promoted to the city, additional membership is gathered, and the aims,

objectives and targets of the groups are consulted on by a wide range of external and internal partners.

**3.13 Desired Outcome – Review how further support can be provided to mitigate the impact of Child Poverty through commissioning, procurement and third sector support.**

**3.13.1 Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Children and Families:**

a) investigates how reducing the impact of child poverty can be included in service specifications to support the Council's Social Value Charter

b) considers how a set of commonly understood priorities and targets to mitigate the impact of Child Poverty can be created, shared and implemented with Third Sector Partners and wider organisations who support families in Leeds.

3.13.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation, and is pleased to report that the Child Poverty Impact Board are working with partners to assess the best way to support the Council's Social Value Charter and to develop a set of priorities and targets. The Scrutiny Board will be invited to consult on these priorities and targets once they have been developed with a wide range of partners.

**3.14 Desired Outcome – To narrow the learning gap for disadvantaged children at KS1 and KS2**

3.14.1 Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Children and Families commissions independent analysis and research by a recognised educational research organisation in order to identify the fundamental reasons for the widening of the learning gap during KS1 and KS2, so that the Local Authority, Schools and support organisations can respond collectively to the challenges raised.

3.14.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation, and conversations around research into the widening of the gap in educational attainment between less advantaged and more advantaged young people with a range of partners including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and universities in Leeds.

3.14.3 The 3A's Strategy is also being developed to reduce the gap in educational attainment for all vulnerable children and young people. This strategy is focussed around the collective drive to improve the Attendance, Achievement and Attainment of all our children and young people, but particularly those who are vulnerable and/ or less advantaged.

3.14.4 Our ambition in Leeds is to improve outcomes for all children and young people, and we know we need to do more to make a difference for children and young people who are particularly vulnerable. There is a city wide focus on closing the gap, through raising the attainment, achievement and attendance of vulnerable learners.

3.14.5 We know that we want children and young people to flourish in our city, and so we must give them a secure knowledge in education, demonstrated by



good grades in a range of examinations throughout the continuum of learning. Each set of results acts as a passport to the next phase of learning and provides a firm foundation on which further accomplishments can be built. That is why we will continue to focus on attainment.

- 3.14.6 To be successful in life, and to secure meaningful and fulfilling work, we know that children also need more than great outcomes. They need key skills such as resilience, confidence and self-esteem; the ability to communicate and work in a collaborative and cooperative way within a team. We know that children need to be able to make a friend and be a good friend to others, and that success in music, the arts or sports can create a more rounded and interesting character. We want children in Leeds schools, therefore, to be supported to achieve.
- 3.14.7 Finally, we know that when children are in school and learning, that they are safe, secure and successful; that is why we have such a strong emphasis of attendance. By combining the three A's of Attainment, Achievement and Attendance we believe that we can give all Leeds children a strong start in life and enable them to contribute to our vibrant and compassionate city.
- 3.14.8 Closing the gap in these learning outcomes is a key priority for the Children and Families service and Learning Improvement. Leeds is striving to ensure education in Leeds is equitable through acknowledging that not every child starts at the same point, and therefore focusing extra support to ensure that children who are disadvantaged make accelerated progress and achieve the same outcomes as their peers.
- 3.14.9 Key staff work with leadership teams to identify any gaps, and support them to apply strategies to address the gaps and diminish the impact of disadvantage. It is also acknowledged by all staff within Children and Families that any interaction with a family, child or young person should include an acknowledgement that learning is a fundamental element of support. The 3A's are at the heart of the innovations bid and work is taking place across the city to ensure that learning has a high priority in all consultations.
- 3.15 **Desired Outcome – To narrow the learning gap for disadvantaged children at KS1 and KS2.**
  - 3.15.1 Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Children and Families undertakes detailed analysis of the schools in Leeds where disadvantaged pupils are making good progress to better understand the drivers for this, and identifies if the strategic and operational approaches can be adopted by schools who are in need of further support to narrow the gap for disadvantaged pupils
  - 3.15.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation and is pleased to provide the following update; the Impact Workstream 'Readiness for Learning and School Aged Education' will undertake this detailed analysis, in partnership with schools, settings, universities and third sector organisations.

- 3.16 Desired Outcome – To increase take up of FSM for those children who are entitled to receive one**
- 3.16.1 Recommendation 9- That the Director of Children and Families works in partnership with the Director of Communities and Environment (Financial Inclusion Team) to identify those schools where pupil take up of FSM is below average and work with those schools to identify what improvement measures can be put in place.
- 3.16.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation and is pleased to comment that this work will be delegated to the 'Financial Health and Inclusion' Impact Workstream.
- 3.17 Desired Outcome – To help support families out of poverty**
- 3.17.1 Recommendation 10-That the Director of Children and Families works in partnership with the Director of Communities and Environment (Financial Inclusion Team) to further equip front line staff in Children's Services with the skills to recognise debt and poverty, and to help or signpost families to manage their finances.
- 3.17.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation and the Child Poverty Impact Board will proceed to design and implement a series of interventions under the Financial Health and Inclusion Impact Workstream in order to mitigate against the effects of poverty and improve the long term outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people by: raising awareness of existing financial support services; supporting the wellbeing of those experiencing financial difficulty; improving financial capability; and providing comprehensive outreach to those who need services.
- 3.18 Desired Outcome - To reduce holiday hunger and ensure children are ready to learn when they return to school**
- 3.18.1 Recommendation 11- That the Director of Children and Families investigates what school holiday food provision is available for children who would usually access FSM, and how this support can be expanded in areas of high deprivation in Leeds.
- 3.18.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. We propose to engage a range of key personnel, including officers from Children and Families Health and Wellbeing, Learning Improvement, Social Care, Third Sector Organisations and Public Health in identifying the school holiday food provision and how this can be expanded across Leeds. We know that there are areas of good practice across the city, for example partnerships between schools and with the Real Junk Food Project, and so the 'Health, Wellbeing and Resilience' Impact Workstream will investigate if a holistic, city wide approach can be established, to ensure that no child goes hungry through the school holidays.

**3.19 Desired Outcome – To broker consistent and mutually beneficial relationships between schools and the Police/PCSO's, which were previously highly valued by the schools visited.**

3.19.1 Recommendation 12 – That the Director of Children and Families works in partnership with West Yorkshire Police to improve effective and consistent relationships to support schools in areas of high deprivation. Particularly for schools in areas which include a high proportion of families receiving targeted support.

3.19.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. We fully appreciate the importance of children both being and feeling safe in their schools and communities. Our service is currently aware that some schools are using their Pupil Premium to broker relationships with local Police/PCSO's for safer schools. Our service will investigate the impact this is having and consider liaising with other schools to ensure a comprehensive Police/PCSO relationship is available to all schools who need it.

**3.20 Desired Outcome – To ensure that disadvantaged children are placed in a learning environment within 4 weeks.**

3.20.1 Recommendation 13 – That the Director of Children and Families investigates the perceived backlog situation for in-year moves and the resources provided to support in-year school admissions and reports back to the Scrutiny Board in July 2018 detailing what action will be taken to ensure that waiting times for disadvantaged children beyond 4 weeks is minimised.

3.20.2 The Director of Children and Families has prioritised finding good learning places for all children and young people, but especially those who are less advantaged. Three additional posts have been created in the Admissions Team to manage the increase in requests for in-year transfers. One of these new posts will specifically focus on ensuring that a school place is secured as quickly as possible and to review the existing fair access protocols, which prioritise timely admission for disadvantaged children. The Admissions Team continues to review whether responsibility for co-ordinating in-year requests for school places should lie with the Local Authority rather than schools, to ensure any barriers to securing a school place quickly can be overcome.

3.20.3 One particular area of identified pressure for the city is in Harehills / Burmantofts, where our innovative approach to meeting the unprecedented demand for school places has seen the creation of over 1900 additional school places. Since 2014, 195 permanent places per year group have been created across the area, with a further 400 bulge places commissioned in-year to provide for children arriving in the area during the school year. It was recognised during the first term of this academic year (2017/18) that despite the existing additional places, there were a number of children who could not secure a local school place due to the volume of requests being received. A satellite site to Shakespeare Primary School was established with the support of Bridge Community Church, which has provided over 130 additional places to local children, a favoured option as this provided for sibling groups moving into the area which were often more difficult to admit together in other schools. The children engaged with this learning provision are benefiting from the excellent care and education provided by the school

staff, and Children and Families would like to express their sincere thanks to Shakespeare Primary for working with us to develop the satellite school. The Department of Education visited the satellite provision, and the feedback was that they were very impressed with the provision.

3.20.4 In addition to this satellite provision, all schools in the area were asked to admit one or two children over their published admission number to provide a further 111 places across the schools. This ensured that all those identified as being without a school place were offered a local place. Applications for school places for children arriving in the area continue to be received and regular reviews of these ensures that we continue to create school places as and when required to meet both projected and current demand. A learning review will be undertaken with internal and external partners, to ensure that the learning and good practice, alongside the complications, are captured and then shared across the city.

**3.21 Desired Outcome – To highlight poverty proofing initiatives to schools in Leeds to aid and support reducing the impact of Child Poverty.**

3.21.1 Recommendation 14 – That the Director of Children and Families communicates child poverty initiatives such as ‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ delivered by Children North East and the North East Child Poverty Commission, and/or the Manchester ‘toolkit’, to all Leeds Schools.

3.21.2 The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. Using the information gleaned from our own proposed audits and research of best practice throughout Britain, we will propose a set of poverty mitigating initiatives tailored to Leeds schools in order to make schools a poverty-safe space. In addition to this, partnership work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other local authorities, including Newcastle and Children North East, is being developed to map the impact of child poverty on school life, and the strategies, approaches and tools that are used in effective schools to mitigate this is being created. This will provide a contextualised, local map of the ways that schools can ‘Poverty Proof’ the school day, which will then be shared with all of our schools and settings.

**3.22 Desired Outcome – To provide greater voice and influence for disadvantaged children and to aid schools in the development of initiatives that will reduce the impact of Child Poverty in the learning environment.**

3.22.1 Recommendation 15 – That the Director of Children and Families:

a) engages with schools to develop (in partnership) a poverty proofing audit toolkit, to support schools in mitigating the impact of child poverty on learning.

b) considers how children can raise their concerns about poverty and the impact it has on their education and how the solutions they propose can be implemented.

3.22.2 A) The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. In line with the Children and Young People’s Plan 2015-19, our service has the

ambition that 'All children and young people are happy and have fun growing up'. We are committed to ensuring a disadvantaged background does not adversely affect the chance of realising this outcome. The service will comprehensively investigate what measures Leeds schools are - or are not - currently implementing, using a framework developed in collaboration with schools, families, children and young people. We will listen to the voice of individuals with lived experience of being in relative poverty in schools, to design and recommend best practice throughout the local authority and alleviate the effects of poverty in schools.

- 3.22.3 B) The Director of Children and Families accepts this recommendation. Our service has a longstanding commitment to the voice and influence of children and young people: the Children and Young People's Plan 2015-19 highlights that one of our five outcomes is 'All children and young people are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence'. Whilst we have a universal ambition for all children to achieve this outcome, there are more barriers to break down for children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and we are committed to empowering all children to be active citizens. The service will consider developing a voice and influence partnership with the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission in order to engage fully with the individuals affected and consider how their proposals can be implemented with guidance from our Child Poverty Impact Board.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The inquiry was conducted over five evidence gathering sessions which took place between July and December 2017, when the Scrutiny Board received a range of evidence both written and verbal. They also visited three schools and one Cluster Partnership in November 2017 to speak to practitioners. A meeting was also attended with the LCSB Education Reference Group on the 3 October 2017.
- 4.1.2 Consultation and engagement with children and young people is being established through work with the University of Leeds, Leeds City Council and Child Poverty Action Group. In addition to this, an Outcomes Based Accountability Event will be held in October 2018 to gain the views and opinions of a wide range of partners.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout the Scrutiny inquiry. Disadvantaged pupils are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), ethnicity and EAL (English as an Additional Language) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long term impact of disadvantage.
- 4.2.2 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK and ensure that

as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

#### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 This report provides context on a key city regional and national challenge. Improving learning outcomes is a priority in the Children and Young People's plan, raising attainment for all while closing the gaps that exist. This priority is reflected in all city strategies contributing to the strong economy compassionate city including the Best Council Plan 2015-20 and the Joint Health and Well Being Plan. Learning being central to improving future outcome for citizens and the city.

4.3.2 Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2020 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.

4.3.3 The scope of the inquiry fulfils some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best Council Plan 2015 – 2020. These include; improving educational achievement gaps; providing skills programmes and employment support; improving school attendance and reducing the percentage of young people who are NEET.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1. There are no specific resource implications from this report.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 None

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 None

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Director of Children and Families welcomes the recommendations of the scrutiny inquiry and undertakes to ensure the co-ordination of their implementation as outlined in this response.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Scrutiny Board is requested to note the responses to the recommendations based on their findings and to endorse the approach being taken.

### **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 Appendix 1: Child Poverty Overview

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

National government changes to child poverty definition and measurement has led to complexity in the data collection, measures, and reporting on the numbers of children and young people who experience poverty, which has resulted in uncertainty in the true figure of children and young people who experience poverty, either in Leeds or across the UK. This data that exists shows a clear upward trend in the number and percentages of children and young people who experience poverty.

- Latest figures show that 4 million children across the UK experienced relative poverty (after housing costs) during 2015/ 2016; an increase of 100,000 children from the previous year. This figure is predicted to increase by 50% by 2020.
- In Leeds, 22.7% of all dependent children under the age of 20 (37,200 children) lived in relative poverty in 2014, compared to 19.9% (2.3m children) in England. With regards to children under the age of 16 in Leeds, 23.1% (32,805 children) were in poverty in 2014, compared to 20.1% (2m children) in England
- School based measures, in the form of Pupil Premium figures, show that 33,467 pupils in Leeds are deprived (Pupil Premium index 2017-2018). Between 2011 and 2015, there was a 32% increase in the number of year 6 Leeds children living in the 10% most deprived areas in the UK; and a 91% increase in the number of year 6 Leeds children living in the 3% most deprived areas in the UK.
- Adults being out of work are often cited as the main reason for child poverty; however, in Leeds, 66% of children who are in poverty were from a household where at least one person was in work in 2015/2016.

Whilst it is difficult to establish a causal link between the impact of child poverty on life quality indicators, research shows that experiencing poverty in childhood is a statistically significant factor for substantially lower outcomes in education, employment, wellbeing and physical and mental health.

The impact of living in poverty can be categorised into two types- structural and individual effects. The structural effects can include inadequate housing, fuel poverty, food poverty, parental unemployment and a lack of access to resources and facilities. Individual effects can include poor mental and physical health, low educational outcomes, restricted access to opportunities, lower wellbeing and low paid/ no employment.



When looking at strategies to improve childhood poverty, the most important area to focus on is developing ways to reduce the impact of experiencing poverty on the lives of children and young people.

The intention is to create a partnership approach to find and implement research-led interventions, integrating the voice of the child with the voices of parents and professionals. This city wide approach will create or develop research- led collaborations that assess the impact of low cost, high impact work, interventions and projects. These areas will focus on reducing the effects of child poverty, and thoroughly exploring the outcomes of these solutions.

The Leeds approach to challenging child poverty will consist of two main strands, the first being a reformed Child Poverty Impact Board, and the second being Impact Workstreams.

Both the Strategic Board and the Impact Workstreams will consist of representatives from Leeds City Council, public, private and third sectors, academics, community representatives, youth voice representatives and other partners.

The Child Poverty Impact Board will be a strategic governance board with a reformed membership, comprising a city region approach. Membership for the Strategic Board will remain consistent, and the Strategic Board will assess and oversee the interventions carried out by the Impact Workstreams, and create policy and strategic direction accordingly.

The Impact Workstreams will be clustered around six areas; 'Empowering Families', 'Housing & Provision', 'Health, Wellbeing & Resilience', 'Readiness for Learning & School Age Education', 'Financial Health & Inclusion', and 'Transitions & Employment'. The workstreams may consist of new boards, or they may involve enhancements to existing boards.

They will exist to create, or develop on, projects and interventions that are focussed around improving the outcomes of children who experience poverty through exploring and mitigating the impacts of child poverty in relation to their area. This work will be research led, with students and academics from Universities in Leeds contributing to developing and assessing the impact of these interventions. The Impact Workstreams will have a more flexible membership, and interventions/ projects will be time-sensitive; if they are found to be having no/ low impact, they will be discontinued and replaced. If they are found to be having impact, they may be continued, expanded or developed.



# Child Poverty Impact Board

