

Report of the Director of Children & Families

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 23rd October 2019

Subject: Thriving: A Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open 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

Summary

1. Main issues

- The percentage of children living in poverty is increasing, both locally and nationally. In 2016, 20% of young people in Leeds lived in poverty. Across the UK, 70% of children who live in poverty have at least one parent in work.
- Experiencing poverty is strongly correlated to a wide range of detrimental impacts, which can affect someone for their entire life.
- Experiencing poverty often leads to the loss of rights for a child. The UN Convention Rights of the Child details 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life. Six are particularly relevant to child poverty; articles 3, 6, 12, 24, 26 and 27. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has said that all children living in poverty are vulnerable, but some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include: younger children, children who have immigrated and children living in single parent households.
- The cost of poverty to the UK is approximately £78 billion per year. To tackle the impact and cost poverty has on individual's lives, it costs £69 billion- £1 in every £5 of all spending on public services (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Counting the cost of UK Poverty, 2016). If we, as a city, do not act the risk is one that is both moral and economical- poverty creates an unequal and inequitable system, which not only brings increased cost to all of our services, it also holds the moral cost of restricting the realities of Leeds citizens.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- This strategy directly relates to most of the Best Council Plan priorities:
- tackling poverty, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
- reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
- making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
- improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities
- providing homes of the right quality, type and affordability in the right places and minimising homelessness
- keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience

3. Resource Implications

- Each project will have an individual resource implication. Where possible, a partnership approach will be implemented, to pool resources from a variety of directorates and sectors across Leeds.

4. Recommendations

- a) Scrutiny Board to comment on the 'Thriving' strategy.
- b) Reflect on the barriers faced by young people who live in poverty, and how the work of Scrutiny Board can remove some of these barriers.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of 'Thriving: A Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds' (see appendix 1) and some of the work that has taken place over the last year and a half to mitigate the impact of child poverty in Leeds.

2. Background information

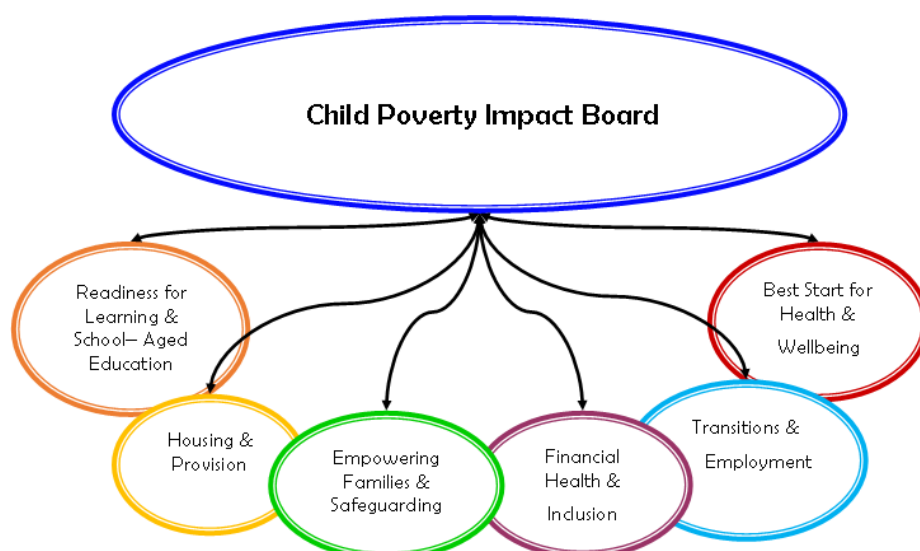
- 2.1 Over the past year and a half, Leeds has been developing a strategy to tackle child poverty. It is recognised that the ultimate aim is to eradicate poverty, and that is the long term goal for Leeds- however, to eradicate poverty, a national approach that allocates resources to tackle poverty, decreases in work poverty, and strengthens the safety net that children, young people and families rely on is crucial. Whilst Leeds will continue to fight to eradicate poverty with the powers that they have, in the short term there is a need to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty and inequality. This strategy, which has been co-produced with a wide range of partners, including a panel of 'experts by experience'- children, young people and parents who live on a low income, provides an overview of the work that Leeds is undertaking to improve the lives of children, young people and parents who live in poverty.

3. Main issues

- 3.1.1 To address and improve the issue of poverty, a revolutionary approach is needed. We cannot make meaningful change unless we work together, tying in

the intelligence, resources and work that is being done across the city to develop new knowledge and assess what makes the most difference, and why. We need everyone to get on board– children, young people, families, communities, schools, academies, education settings, private sectors, third sectors, public sectors, universities, faith groups, not for profit organisations & any other partners.

- 3.1.2 The ways in which poverty is experienced by children cannot be understood through solely looking at adult poverty. To understand how poverty impacts the lives of children and young people, we need to talk to children and young people. Similarly, we cannot just focus on eradicating adult poverty as the solution to child poverty. We need to focus on mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people- whilst we work as a city to improve the structures around people who experience, or are at risk of, poverty.
- 3.1.3 Leeds City Council, the University of Leeds, Child Poverty Action Group and CATCH worked in partnership to develop a panel of ‘experts by experience’- young people and parents who live on a low income. Three young people, three young adults and three parents worked collaboratively over six months to discuss the day to day impact of poverty on their lives. The panel were trained in research tools, and conducted peer research with young people and adults in their community. The panel developed three snakes and ladders boards, one around the impact of poverty on education, one around the impact of poverty on employment and university, and one around the impact of poverty on lone parenthood. These games, the final report and the video, have been incorporated into a wide variety of events, including conferences on: Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Education, and the Child Friendly Leeds Poverty Event. There has been discussions in the Child Poverty Impact Board on the outputs. The panel have also worked closely on the refinement of the child poverty strategy, as well as being involved in various projects that sit under the child poverty work. The online version of the report can be found in appendix 2.
- 3.1.4 There are two parts to this work: The Child Poverty Impact Board, which is a city wide governance board that will apply robust measures and targets to reduce the negative impact of child poverty, and six Impact Workstreams. The workstreams will focus on improving a specific area of young people’s lives that is affected by poverty. Each workstream will have between one and three projects to be implemented over a two year period. The workstreams will report to the Child Poverty Impact Board, and can be found below:



4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 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.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this work. 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 the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city regional and national challenge. This priority is reflected in all city strategies contributing to the strong economy compassionate city including the Best Council Plan 2018/19-2020/21, the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Joint Health and Well Being Plan and the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Executive Board report, discussed in December 2018.
- 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 work fulfils some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best Council Plan 2018/19-2020/21. 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.
- 4.3.4 The strategy collaborates with local and city wide strategies such as the Locality Neighbourhoods work, the Children and Young People's Plan, Child Friendly Leeds, Future in Mind Strategy, and the Best City for Learning

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.5 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 a price increase, which will have a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty. We should seek to reduce

poverty, insecurity and inequality around these basic needs to build strengthened communities for the future.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 This report has no specific resource implications.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

5. Conclusions

5.1.1 Experiencing poverty has a significant correlation to poorer outcomes across a wide range of life indicators. This is a problem that is growing, both in Leeds and nationally, and it is clear that a radical approach is needed to reduce the impact of poverty- which will help to eradicate poverty.

5.1.2 In Leeds, we believe that a young person's life chances, and their ability to access opportunities, should not be impacted by their background or the area in which they live. We also know the challenges that are faced, both by the people who live in poverty, and by the services who work across the city.

5.1.3 For this reason, we need to work as a city, to share our understandings, knowledge and practice, to learn about the day to day impact of poverty for children and young people- and then to work with children and young people to tackle this impact.

5.1.4 We need a radically new approach to tackle child poverty, with all organisations sharing information, resources and good practice, to ensure that all barriers that young people face are broken down.

5.1.5 Thriving is the first step in a long journey to work better, together, to improve opportunities, and enable better outcomes, for our children and young people.

6. Recommendations

- a) Scrutiny Board to comment on the 'Thriving' strategy.
- b) Reflect on the barriers faced by young people who live in poverty, and how the work of Scrutiny Board can remove some of these barriers.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ 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.