

## Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022

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

### What is this report about?

#### Including how it contributes to the city and council's ambitions

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of '**Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds**', and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.
- This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city, regional and national challenge. There are 9 cross council workstreams, each of which have 3 priorities that are reported in on in Appendix One. The workstreams are Financial Health and inclusion, Access to Green spaces, Best Start for Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Provision, Employment and Transitions, Empowering Families and Safeguarding; and Readiness for Learning
- This report is an updated report that was presented to Executive Board October 2021.
- 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.
- The child poverty strategy has been co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.
- 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 don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- The work supports some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the **Leeds Best City Ambition Tackling Poverty and Inequality** published April 2022. These focus on 3 key pillars; Health and Well Being, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon

- This strategy directly relates to The Leeds Best City Ambition’s focus on:
  - Investing to ensure better and more equal access to essential services in health and learning, developed with and accessible for every community across Leeds
  - Ensuring children in all areas of the city have the best start in life and enjoy a healthy, happy and friendly childhood.
  - Enabling every community in the city to have safe connected spaces, streets and paths to access a local park or green space, providing somewhere to be active and to play, helping to improve mental and physical health across all ages.
  - Working with housing providers, landlords, tenants and communities to improve poor quality housing, so everyone can have a home which supports good health, wellbeing and educational outcomes.
  - Ensuring young people and those changing career in later life have the skills and job opportunities which enable them to realise their potential and thrive
  - Addressing the challenges of housing quality and affordability, tackling fuel poverty and creating vibrant places where residents have close access to services and amenities.
  - Investing in our public spaces, green and blue infrastructure to enable faster transition to a green economy while improving quality of life for residents.
- 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.
- 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.

## Recommendations

- a) That Executive Board endorses the 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 Thriving strategy across the city and in particular in each respective Member’s portfolio in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families.
- c) Note the responsible officer is the Deputy Director Children and Families.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of ‘Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds’, and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.

### 1 What impact will this proposal have?

#### Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

Further detail is set out in Appendix 1 of this report in terms of the outcomes and outputs of each project linked to the Strategy for Executive Boards information.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 2 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.

### **What are the resource implications?**

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

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

- 4 There are no legal implications; however, this report is subject to call in.

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

- 5 None.

### **6 Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

As mentioned above, 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

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

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

This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

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

- 7 The outcomes and outputs set out in Appendix One report the outcomes and outputs of each project.

#### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 8 This is an ongoing strategy.

### **Appendices**

- 9 Appendix 1 – Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds
- 10 Appendix 2 – EDCI Thriving Equalities Screening

### **Background papers**

- 11 None.

