

Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 9 October 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Children and Families Scrutiny Board has regularly discussed the impact poverty is having on children and young people in Leeds and that it is a key determinant in some of the service demand challenges being faced by the Council.

Having last considered this issue in the previous 2023/24 municipal year a further update is now brought back to the Board which comprises of the 18 September 2024 Executive Board report and appendices. That report provided 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 and the refreshed Child Poverty Strategy 2024-27.

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. Appendix 2 provides the Refreshed Strategy 2024-2027.

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

Recommendations

- a) That Scrutiny 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 Scrutiny 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.

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 Recent consultation with young people and colleagues has led to the strategy being refreshed – and will be launched in autumn 2024. Further details on the refreshed strategy are provided in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3 It is also important to note that 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.
- 4 The Board should note that some of the data presented in the report relates to earlier in 2024 which is linked to reporting deadlines and requirements for Executive Board, but the Board should be assured that data is captured and analysed on an ongoing basis as part of the regular work of the service.

What impact will this proposal have?

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

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

5. 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.

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.

- The work supports some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best City Plan 2020 and 2025. These include: - improving educational achievement gaps; providing skills programmes and employment support; improving school attendance and reducing the percentage of young people who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).
- 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.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

6. Extensive consultation has been conducted 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?

7. There are no new proposals with resource implications presented in this paper.

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

8. None

What are the legal implications?

9. There are no legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

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

How will success be measured?

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

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

12. This is an ongoing strategy.

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