



Report to Children, Young People & Family Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Report of: Executive Director, Children, Young People & Families

Subject: Refreshing the Child & Household Poverty Strategy

Author of Report: Tony Tweedy, Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills & Communities

Summary:

We need to develop a new Tackling Poverty Strategy for Sheffield to replace the current one that runs to the end of 2014 and to address the growing need in our city in the context of continuing difficult economic circumstances and reducing resources within the public sector.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 places a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to co-operate to assess need and formulate strategies in response to this need. Our work to tackle child poverty will be an important focus within a broader strategy to tackle poverty for all age groups in Sheffield.

On 4th July 2014, a consultation on the composition of the new strategy was published and responses were invited by the end of September 2014. The consultation will be used to inform and influence the commitments that the City Council and its partners make in the refreshed strategy and action plan.

This report has been requested by the Children, Young People & Families Scrutiny Committee to enable it to contribute to this consultation and the formulation of the strategy.

This report provides a summary and links to the full consultation documentation.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	x
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	

Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	

Background Papers:

All consultation documentation:

- An **invitation letter**, which explains what we are doing, why, and what we would like other people to do including some suggested questions (the electronic document is titled 'Letter inviting people to get involved', when printed the title is 'Sheffield's Child and Household Poverty Strategy – making a difference together')
- A **consultation response form** which brings all our suggested questions together in one place (the electronic and printed versions of the document are titled 'Tell us what you think')
- A summary of the data (**draft Needs Assessment**) we have gathered so far, along with some areas where we particularly need help, or where information is required (the electronic document is titled 'Needs Assessment', when printed the title is 'Poverty in Sheffield – an assessment of need')
- A summary of what we think the evidence is telling us about what works (**draft Evidence Review**) (the electronic and printed versions of the document are titled 'Tackling Poverty – how do we know what works?')
- A table-based summary (**Draft Action Plan**) showing what is already being done, along with space to add what could be done in future (the electronic and printed versions of the document are titled 'Anti-Poverty Plan summary')
- A **self-assessment of the previous strategy**, Sheffield's Child & Household Poverty Strategy 2012-14 (the electronic document is titled 'self -assessment of Child & Household Poverty Strategy', when printed the title is 'From Struggling to Succeeding - did we achieve the goals we set out in our Child & Household Poverty Strategy?')
- The **previous needs assessment** (there are full and summary versions of this available here:
<https://www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/professionals/strategy/Sheffield-s-Child-and-Household-Poverty-Strategy.html>)
- The **previous strategy** (there are full and summary versions of this available here:
<https://www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/professionals/strategy/Sheffield-s-Child-and-Household-Poverty-Strategy.html>)
- The Fairness Commission recommendations (available here:
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/fairness-commission.html>)

All documents are attached and can be found here:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/what-we-want-to-achieve/corporate-plan/tackling-poverty-and-increasing-social-justice.html>

Category of Report: OPEN

Report of the Executive Director , Children, Young People & Families

Refreshing the Child & Household Poverty Strategy

1. Introduction/Context

- 1.1 This report has been requested by the Children, Young People & Families Scrutiny Committee to enable it to contribute to the consultation which will inform the development of the new strategy.
- 1.2 The local authority needs to develop a new Tackling Poverty Strategy for Sheffield to replace the one that runs to the end of 2014 and to address the growing need in our city in the context of continuing difficult economic circumstances and reducing resources within the public sector.
- 1.3 Part 2 of the Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities and their partners to cooperate to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty in their local areas. In summary, the duties are as follows:
 - 1.3.1 Cooperate: the Act places a duty on responsible local authorities (those with top-tier functions) to put in place arrangements to work with partner authorities named in the Act to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty in their local area. The Act requires named partner authorities to cooperate with the local authority in these arrangements;
 - 1.3.2 Understand needs: the Act places a duty on local authorities to prepare and publish a local child poverty needs assessment that will enable them to understand the characteristics of low income and disadvantaged families in their area, and the key drivers of poverty that must be addressed; and
 - 1.3.3 Develop and deliver a strategy: - the Act requires responsible local authorities and partners to prepare a joint child poverty strategy for their local area, which should set out the contribution that each partner authority will make and should address the issues raised in the needs assessment.
- 1.4 The named partners are:
 - 1.4.1 The district authorities who deliver key services including housing benefits and securing local facilities for families;
 - 1.4.2 Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities;
 - 1.4.3 Jobcentre Plus;
 - 1.4.4 The Police, Youth Offending Teams, and Probation Trusts; and
 - 1.4.5 Transport Authorities
- 1.5 Guidance (non-statutory) from the Child Poverty Unit on the Act states that:

- 1.5.1 'The intention of the new child poverty duties is not to create more partnerships and processes. There is flexibility as to which group or forum takes responsibility for leading action on child poverty. The key features are that they come together to focus on child poverty, that they represent the range of partner authorities named in the Child Poverty Act and that sufficient time, resource and commitment is available to fulfil their duties in the Act and make a real difference to outcomes.'
- 1.5.2 'Although there is no requirement or prescription for local strategies necessarily to be stand-alone documents in their own right, they should be visible, transparent and accountable in order to comply with Section 23 of the Act.'
- 1.6 Our work to tackle child poverty will be an important focus within a broader strategy to tackle poverty in Sheffield.

On 4th July 2014, the city Council published consultation documentation in support of the development of this Strategy and invited responses by the end of September 2014. The consultation will be used to inform and influence the commitments that partners make in the replacement strategy and action plan.

- 1.7 All consultation documents can be found here:
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/what-we-want-to-achieve/corporate-plan/tackling-poverty-and-increasing-social-justice.html>

2 Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc

- 2.1 **Strategy and Action Plan.** Please refer to the ***Draft Action Plan*** and the ***Self-Assessment***. This is an initial draft and by no means a complete picture of everything that is being done, or that could be done. We want to use this as a starting point to talk to people about what should go into our new plan.
- 2.2 We have suggested the following questions for people responding to the consultation:
- 2.2.1 Did we have / have we got the right priorities?
- 2.2.2 What is the most important action to take?
- 2.2.3 What would be appropriate actions to meet our aims?
- 2.2.4 Thinking about the last strategy and the underpinning delivery plan, were they the most effective things we could have chosen to do? If not, why? / what would have been better?
- 2.2.5 Are there things we previously committed to that we should stop doing / do less of?
- 2.2.6 Are there things we should keep doing?

2.2.7 What's working well?

2.2.8 Are there new opportunities now?

2.3 **Needs Assessment.**

We have suggested the following questions for people responding to the consultation:

2.3.1 In addition to what we have already found out (shown in the document), what else is important?

2.3.2 Does the picture in this document reflect your experience?

2.3.3 Is anything missing?

2.3.4 Is there anything that needs to be changed?

2.3.5 If not, what do we need to stress / emphasise?

2.3.6 What should this tell us about our priorities for the future?

2.4 **Evidence review.** Please refer to the ***draft Evidence Review***. We need to make sure we understand the things that are most likely to help people to escape poverty. Then we will try to match the biggest problems in Sheffield with the things that work best to resolve them. Of course it won't be straightforward because everyone's situation and circumstances are different, but we think it's important to try. This document is a work in progress. We have suggested the following questions for people responding to the consultation:

2.4.1 What has helped you, or people you know, cope with / overcome poverty?

2.4.2 Are you aware of any other research or evidence that you think would help us to write the Strategy?

2.4.3 Is anything in here that is contradicted by other information you can provide? (if so, please specify)

2.4.4 Anything else you think we ought to know / include?

3 **What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

3.1 Poverty has significant negative impacts on people who experience it.

3.2 Important work is already taking place in the city, but we recognise that there is much more that needs to be done to tackle poverty and in some cases we may need to think again about where best to focus our efforts. Things have changed substantially in Sheffield since we wrote our last strategy. There have been significant budget reductions affecting public and third sector organisations and there are more to come. This has made it more difficult for these organisations to provide support to the

most vulnerable people in the city. Welfare reform and associated benefit changes are now affecting around one in seven people in the city. Both of these factors, coupled with the continuing impact of the recession, mean that the scale of the challenge we face in trying to tackle poverty and mitigate its worst effects will require extraordinary efforts. We are determined to do what we can to meet this challenge.

- 3.3 In order to mitigate the worst effects of poverty and help people to escape it, we need to work together and take a wide range of actions.
- 3.4 Refreshing the strategy gives us an opportunity to think together about the most effective things we can do with diminishing resources and the specific commitments that each partner organisation in the city can make.
- 3.5 The consultation will be used to shape the refreshed strategy and to identify the commitments that partners can make in addressing poverty in Sheffield.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Scrutiny is asked to consider the consultation documentation and to offer comments and recommendations accordingly as part of the wider consultation exercise currently underway in the city.