

Title of Report:	Anti-child Poverty Action Plan Progress update 2012
Report to be considered by:	Health Scrutiny Panel
Date of Meeting:	19/6/12
Forward Plan Ref:	

Purpose of Report: To inform HSP of progress in relation to the anti-child poverty strategy action plan

Recommended Action: To note the report and to recommend to specific services any actions required to maintain a focus on tackling child poverty

Reason for decision to be taken: n/a

Other options considered: n/a

Key background documentation: anti child poverty strategy 2011-20 and needs assessment

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority(ies):

- CSP1 – Caring for and protecting the vulnerable**
- CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- CSP3 – Improving education**
- CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principle(s):

- Putting people first**
- Living within our means**
- Empowering people and communities**
- Transforming our services to remain affordable and effective**
- Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:
Ensuring that the presence and impacts of child poverty are recognised and necessary actions taken to enable the needs of the some of the most vulnerable to be addressed.
The risk factors associated with familial social and economic deprivation in relation to physical and mental well being, life chances and outcomes are well evidenced.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill - Tel (0118) 971 2671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	8/6/12

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Julia Waldman
Job Title:	Commissioning, Strategy and Partnerships Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519810
E-mail Address:	JWaldman@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:

Financial:

If there are any financial implications contained within this report this section **must** be signed off by a West Berkshire Finance Manager. Please note that the report cannot be accepted by Strategic Support unless this action has been undertaken.

Personnel:

Legal/Procurement:

Property:

Risk Management:

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Where a decision is required, Strategic Support are not able to accept your report without an EIA Stage 1 being completed (Appendix A to this report). Further information and an EIA Stage 2 form can be found at: www.westberks.gov.uk/eia. For advice please contact Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity) on Ext. 2441.

Corporate Board's

Recommendation:

To be completed after the Corporate Board meeting.

NOTE: The section below does not need to be completed if your report will not progress beyond Corporate or Management Board.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel has requested an information update on the West Berkshire Anti-Child Poverty Strategy, which was published alongside a needs assessment in March 2012 to meet the duties of the Child Poverty Act 2010. This report provides an update with relevant local and national information.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 None.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 There is no decision to be made and therefore no Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Significant work has been undertaken to progress the anti-child poverty strategy action plan targets. National and local changes have resulted in a refocusing of some of the emphasis on change priorities.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel has requested an information update on the West Berkshire Anti-Child Poverty Strategy, which was published alongside a needs assessment in March 2012 to meet the duties of the Child Poverty Act 2010. This report provides a summary of some of the national and local changes related to child poverty reduction. Appendix B provides a highlights summary table showing work that has been undertaken in relation to each of the target areas in the action plan. Inevitably there will be a great deal of other local work contributing to reducing child poverty that has not been represented. This is not a data summary report as data is reported through a range of routes and it has not been possible to collate this in time for this meeting. However a data set has been included as Appendix C for local indicators derived from national sources.

The key indicator for child poverty is the Local Child Poverty Measure (formerly known as NI116). This measure calculates child poverty at a local level by the number of children living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income or in receipt of Income support or (Income-Based) Job Seekers Allowance, divided by the total number of children in the area (determined by Child Benefit data). Percentages are shown in Table 1 next for West Berkshire.

Table 1

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0-15 years	10.8%	10.9%	10.8%	11.8% 10.8% (proxy measure*)	n/a 11% (proxy measure)	Due late summer
Dependent children under 20 years	10.1%	10.3%	10.2%	11.2%	n/a	

* Proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits

- 1.2 The strategy recognised the long term view needed to tackle and 'turn the curve' on some of the deep-rooted issues associated with child and family poverty. The strategy's action plan reflected both the requirements of the national child poverty agenda and the recommendation to address the building blocks for tackling child poverty identified by the Child Poverty Unit. These include:
- (1) Employment and adult skills
 - (2) Financial support
 - (3) Services for children, young people and families, particularly education, health and family support
 - (4) Housing and neighbourhoods
 - (5) (Ending Child Poverty, Making it Happen, 2009, Child Poverty Unit)

- 1.3 These remind us that child poverty is complex, multi-faceted and that it remains 'everybody's business' to end it. The above report, however, questioned whether the building blocks were the right ones to use and the Coalition Government, in producing its Child Poverty Strategy in April 2011 (A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives), used this opportunity to reframe some of the emphasis on tackling child poverty. It moves away from narrow income targets towards 'strengthening families, encouraging responsibility, promoting work, guaranteeing fairness and providing support to the most vulnerable'. (p.8) and tackling 'head-on the causes of poverty which underpin low achievement, aspiration and opportunity across generations'.
- 1.4 The strategy, informed by evidence from a range of sources, including the Marmot Review (Fair Society, Healthy Lives, 2010) includes an exploration of the interrelationship between health inequalities, poor physical and mental health and poverty and their contribution to inter-generational poverty and worklessness, for example.
- 1.5 There is also a focus on social mobility as a route out of poverty and of the need for widespread reform to achieve the necessary change. Reducing child poverty is seen as one outcome of a range of reforms aimed at improving children's live chances and lives. So the revised building blocks are:
- (1) Supporting families to achieve financial independence, including through changes to the benefits system
 - (2) Supporting family life and life chances, including through early help for families both in relation to early years and before problems develop, and schools and education reform
 - (3) The role of place in transforming lives
 - (4) Measurement and accountability including the development of a national and local (Appendix C) set of indicators with latest data available. The latter needs further analysis to determine its relevance and use locally but does give some possible direction for the need for further work to improve our chances of reaching our 2020 target. The breadth of the indicators and benchmarking against national levels is helpful, though statistical neighbours may be more relevant.
- 1.6 Whilst there has been a national shift in emphasis our local approach that sees anti-child poverty work as a golden thread weaving across a wide cross-section of service provision for our vulnerable families remains valid. This is in part because our work locally has shifted in accordance with national policy agendas, for example related to wide-scale changes to health provision and commissioning, the recommendations arising out of the Munro review of child protection, provision of the Early Intervention Grant, changes to welfare benefits and the implementation of the Troubled Families Programme.

- 1.7 The pace and scale of local reform has also, however, resulted in reductions in opportunities to monitor and collate progress as a collaborative activity, including due to reduced staffing capacity and changes to services. The local Children's Trust had oversight of the Child Poverty Strategy but in changing to become the Children and Young People's Partnership there has been a gap of nine months between the final meeting of the Trust and the first meeting of the Partnership scheduled for June 20th. This group will convene time limited task groups and it may be helpful to convene bi-annually a group to review child poverty plans and progress towards the target. Given the flux in the economic situation and the lag in much of the data associated with the indicators annual reporting may be unnecessary.
- 1.8 In addition the Council's new Strategic Review Board would like to revisit the strategy and identify the need for and availability of further resources and integration to support child poverty reduction. The move by Public Health to the local authority may also provide an opportunity to better link the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children; further child poverty needs assessment work and preventative work.

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – Stage 1
Appendix B - Summary of action plan progress
Appendix C - Local indicators

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: JobCentre Plus
Officers Consulted: various
Trade Union: n/a

APPENDIX A

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	Update to health scrutiny panel
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Julia waldman
Name of assessor:	Julia waldman
Date of assessment:	8/6/12

1. What are the main aims of the item?
To update on progress with the anti-child poverty action plan

2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.

Further comments relating to the item:
As an update the item has no equality impact issues. Identification of further work lead to need for further consideration of equalities issues.

3. Result (please tick by clicking on relevant box)
<input type="checkbox"/> High Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Medium Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Relevance - This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	x

Name: Julia Waldman

Date: 7/6/12