

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Health and Wellbeing Board Community and Children's Services Committee	24.04.2015 08.05.2015
<b>Subject:</b> Child Poverty Update Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Decision</b>

### **Summary**

The City of London Child Poverty Needs Assessment was conducted in 2014. It found that child poverty remains an issue in the City, despite being the City being one of the least deprived local authority areas in the UK.

There are currently a variety of services and interventions available to tackle child poverty in the City. Overall the City provides quality services for those currently engaged. However, services may be uncoordinated, confusing for families to navigate, or families may not currently be engaging. The work that has been undertaken as a result of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment recognises the high quality services available in the City, but proposes that further action could be taken to tackle the issue. A case management model is proposed, which would provide targeted, tailored and intensive work with families around employment and training for adults and education and aspiration-raising activities for children. This approach would support families to engage with and navigate services, and would tackle the root causes of poverty.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Endorse the development of a case management model as an approach to tackling child poverty in the City.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. The Child Poverty Needs Assessment was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2014 and by the Community and Children's Services Committee in September 2014. Members requested that officers report back on progress after 6 months.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Board has identified child poverty as a priority, and has included it in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It is also a departmental priority for the Department of Community and Children's Services. Additionally, child poverty is a Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator,

which is used by the Government to measure the City of London's success in meeting its local authority duties to promote the health and wellbeing of its population.

3. The Child Poverty Needs Assessment highlighted the following key issues:
  - Child poverty remains an issue in the City, with major differences in deprivation between areas. Portsoken has the highest rates of child poverty.
  - According to the national figures, 110 City children (14%) were living in poverty in 2011. This figure was calculated using the relative poverty measure (defined as the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% of the median income), based upon records of 790 children living in the City. In May 2014, analysis of local data identified a total of 1062 children living in the City of London, of whom 21% (218) were in low-income households (defined as living in a household with a low income supplemented by benefits), with 11% in workless households. According to the same dataset there are 113 low-income and 66 workless families in the City. The national indicator and the local figure have different definitions so they are not directly comparable, but they give an indication of the scale of the problem.
  - Both national and local trends show increasing pressures on families, which could make it very challenging for the City to reduce child poverty.
  - The small numbers of families in poverty known to our services face a diverse range of challenges. Of the families already engaging with services, front-line workers already know the profile of their vulnerable families very well.
  - The most deprived families are more likely to have been in persistent poverty for generations, resulting in a lack of ambition for the children from poorer families, so aspiration-raising activities for young people may be beneficial.
  - Families in poverty tend to live in social housing estates (Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and Mansell Street estates). Evidence suggests that the Portsoken area has the greatest need for intervention.
  - These families are both workless and working. Parental employment is key to lifting families out of poverty. However, there are some key challenges around employment; many families in poverty are lone parent households, or households where one parent is already working. As parents are both income-poor and time-poor, affording and scheduling childcare is a challenge. There is also increasing concern for families who are in employment but on a low income supplemented by benefits, with low rates of pay combined with casual, part-time or zero-hour contracts.
  - The City offers a range of different activities and interventions available for the small number of families who are in need. Overall the City provides quality services for those currently engaged. There are, however uncoordinated services, which may be confusing for families to navigate.
4. The key recommendations from Child Poverty Needs Assessment were as follows:
  - Investigate mechanisms for “pulling” together of efforts, based on the needs of individual estates in the City.

- Review current Housing strategies, to establish to what extent they continue to support families in need living in City Estates when they move to out-of-borough estates.
- Investigate means to improve tracking of young people entering secondary schools (age 11 and up).
- Investigate whether the City can improve support to older children through youth provision and better uptake of the apprenticeship scheme.
- Investigate what can be done to improve uptake of ESOL locally.
- Investigate whether development deals include commitments to local City of London resident employment.
- Investigate how the City can improve navigation/uptake of the many services we offer.
- Work with housing to consider potential options for helping the next generation aspire higher and address overcrowding by helping young adults to secure their own tenancies.

### **Current Position**

5. An officer working group identified that the majority of this work is already underway. There are high quality services provided by the City of London to raise aspirations for children and increase family incomes through employment opportunities for parents. However, there is recognition that families may not be aware of the services that exist to support them, or may be accessing services in an uncoordinated way.
6. In addition, there are a number of other initiatives that are underway and will make an impact in this area, including a review of youth service provision, work with the Chief Officers' Group to encourage all departments across the Corporation to pull together to tackle poverty in the City, especially regarding employment interventions, and a data mapping project in DCCS that will provide us with better insight into families' circumstances and contact with services.
7. Best practice from pilot projects to tackle child poverty in other local authority areas indicates that a case management model can be highly effective. A dedicated case worker works with a family in poverty to help them navigate the services that are available, and provide advice and support tailored to their needs. A similar approach could be used in the City, with a particular focus on training and employment opportunities for parents to help lift families out of poverty, and aspiration-raising activities for young people to encourage them to aim higher. An intervention of this type will allow us to directly tackle the root causes of child and family poverty.

### **Proposals**

8. Members are asked to endorse the development of a case management model as an approach to tackling child poverty in the City.
9. A further update will be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children and Community Services Committee after six months once a firm proposal for commissioning and delivery of the service has been developed.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Reducing child poverty supports the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy:
  - *Ensure that more people in the City have jobs: more children grow up with economic resources (reduce child poverty).*
11. It supports the aims of the Children and Young People's Plan 2012-2015:
  - *Continue to close the gap in attainment and skills between disadvantaged groups and their peers.*
  - *Focus on helping young people adopt a healthy lifestyle and be aware of the resources available in the City.*
12. It also supports the following strategic aims in the Housing Strategy 2014-2019:
  - *Continue to manage the demand for social housing fairly and transparently, giving priority to those in greatest need and making efficient use of our housing by tackling overcrowding and under-occupation.*
  - *Reduce inequalities in our more deprived areas through a targeted, area-based approach to earlier intervention.*
  - *Build better, safer and more sustainable neighbourhoods through improvements to security, access, outdoor spaces and community facilities on our estates, and tackling anti-social behaviour.*
  - *Preventing homelessness through closer partnership working, addressing the impact of welfare reform and improving access to support.*

## Conclusion

13. Child poverty remains a pressing issue for a small but significant number of families in the City. High quality services are offered in the City to tackle many of the issues associated with child poverty, such as parental unemployment or low wages, education and training opportunities and youth services. However, services may be uncoordinated, confusing for families to navigate, or families may not currently be engaging.
14. A case management model is proposed, which would provide targeted, tailored and intensive work with families around employment and training for adults and education and aspiration-raising activities for children. This approach would support families to engage with and navigate services, and would tackle the root causes of poverty.

## Background Papers

Child Poverty Needs Assessment (18 July 2014, HWB / 12 September 2014 CCS)

### **Sarah Thomas**

Health and Wellbeing Executive Support Officer

T: 020 7332 3223

E: [sarah.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk)