

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet 13 January 2014

<b>ITEM 5</b> <b>Child Poverty</b>
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**Portfolio(s):** Adult Social Care  
Children, Young People and  
Learning

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Lesley Spillard  
Cllr Ian Grayson

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**Report from:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wards affected:** All

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## **PART 1**

### **1.1 Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny study in relation to Child Poverty.

In accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Cabinet are required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet are asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendations and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

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### **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response within 2 months to the recommendations presented as a result of the overview and scrutiny study into child poverty.

### **1.3 Forward plan:**

The report was included in the forward plan for the period 19 December 2013 – 31 March 2014 under the matters arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub committees heading.

### **1.4 Council plan and policy framework**

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2014-18 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People will:

- A – Be listened to by services that respond better and faster to their needs.
- B – Be supported to achieve their potential, especially our children and young people.
- C – Be supported to live healthier and longer lives
- D – Be cared for and kept safe if they become vulnerable

## 1.5 Information:

### Background information

- 1.5.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of the 2012/13 work programme, prioritised child poverty as an important issue and agreed to establish a joint sub-group between Children, Education and Skills and Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-committees to carry out an in-depth review. It was recognised from the outset that the sub-group would not be able to make any significant contributions to the reduction of child poverty within North Tyneside, but that the review may help to raise the importance of the issue.
- 1.5.2 It was recognised from the outset that child poverty was a vast topic area and that, for the sub-group to keep on task, it was important to clearly identify a small number of specific issues to investigate in detail. It was agreed that it would be best to look at the topic deep and narrow rather than broad but shallow. The sub-group therefore decided to look specifically at 'best start in life, early intervention and prevention' and 'barriers to employment'.
- 1.5.3 Members consulted with officers of the Council, Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme providers and members of the public in completing this work.
- 1.5.4 The findings of the study resulted in 26 recommendations, for both Cabinet and partner organisations of the Council:

**Recommendation 1:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in receiving the Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18, focus on ensuring that appropriate actions and measures to address the causes and effects of child poverty are included within the Plan.

**Recommendation 2:** Children, Education and Skills sub-committee receive a bi-annual performance report on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18.

**Recommendation 3:** Wallsend Children's Centre look at the possibilities of selling produce grown on its on-site allotment to parents at low cost price and that the possibilities of extending this scheme to other centres in the borough be examined.

**Recommendation 4:** Cabinet ask officers to conduct an analysis of the demand for learning courses at children's centres across the borough and provide additional courses or venues if demand outweighs current capacity.

**Recommendation 5:** Cabinet ask officers to explore the possibilities of utilising the after school room at Riverside Children's Centre to allow parents/carers to access some informal advice in relation to health and well-being issues.

**Recommendation 6:** Cabinet ask officers working within children's centres to prioritise outreach and integrated working with healthcare professionals to identify the most vulnerable families so that the provision available is directed to those most in need.

**Recommendation 7:** Cabinet ensure that officers from Public Health and Children, Young People and Learning continue to work together and prioritise the integration of health and children's services for children under 5.

**Recommendation 8:** Cabinet ask officers to liaise with the relevant authorities on order to obtain live birth data that will assist in the delivery of early intervention and prevention services.

**Recommendation 9:** Cabinet ask officers in Adult Social Care to ensure that all frontline services are aware of the Local Welfare Provision scheme, where to signpost individuals for assistance and that regular updates are provided where necessary.

**Recommendation 10:** Cabinet ask officers to regularly review the number of successful applications made to the Local Welfare Provision fund and the criteria used to assess applicants.

**Recommendation 11:** Jobcentre Plus incorporates / appends the Customer Charter to the Jobseekers Agreement or the Claimant Commitment (once it is in place).

**Recommendation 12:** Jobcentre Plus take account of the negative comments received from unemployed residents in relation to the service received, in particular about the attitude of some advisors and the intimidating environment which is created.

**Recommendation 13:** Jobcentre Plus hold regular reviews with advisors to ensure that they are meeting customer service standards and that this includes contracted staff such as Customer Services Officers employed by G4S.

**Recommendation 14:** The local Jobcentre raise claimants concerns at a national level regarding the intimidating environment created through Customer Services Officers wearing security style uniforms.

**Recommendation 15:** Jobcentre Plus ensures that claimants who receive sanctions understand the reason why this has happened and that they are made aware of the appeals process.

**Recommendation 16:** Jobcentre Plus ensures at the outset that new claimants are aware of the sanctioning process and the reasons why their benefit will be sanctioned.

**Recommendation 17:** Jobcentre Plus ensures that all advisors are up to date regarding the alternative support available.

**Recommendation 18:** Jobcentre Plus produces an information pack outlining the alternative support available and makes this available to claimants who have been sanctioned.

**Recommendation 19:** Head of Adult Social Care explores the possibility of allowing external agencies to speak on behalf of their client when applying to the Local Welfare Provision.

**Recommendation 20:** Jobcentre Plus as part of their programme to increase computers in local jobcentre offices ensures that this is at an adequate level to meet demand and that suitably qualified support is on hand to help claimants complete forms.

**Recommendation 21:** Jobcentre Plus ensures that all claimants who are not digitally ready are identified and given information on where they can access computers and IT support / training.

**Recommendation 22:** Head of Environment and Leisure Services explores the possibility of gaining external funding or partnership working in order to provide IT support across the library service.

**Recommendation 23:** Head of Environment and Leisure Services explores how unemployed residents can have more access to email on library service computers.

**Recommendation 24:** Jobcentre Plus ensures that Work Programme providers receive all the necessary details relating to a client prior to them commencing the programme and that they keep the Work Programme providers up to date with a client's change of circumstances.

**Recommendation 25:** The Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to highlight the issues which arose in relation to the suitability of the Work Programme in meeting the needs of clients with more severe health issues.

**Recommendation 26:** North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group considers as part of the new Talking Therapies contract to allow self-referrals or referrals from others, such as external agencies.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

### Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

### Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

### Option 3

Cabinet may accept part of the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 above and reject the rest.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This option will meet the statutory duty of Cabinet to respond to overview and scrutiny recommendations within 2 months of receiving them.

In providing its response Cabinet is asked to provide reasons for any recommendations which are not approved. Overview and Scrutiny Committee feel that accepting the

recommendations set out in the report will help raise the issue of child poverty and offer additional support to vulnerable families.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Overview and Scrutiny Report: Child Poverty

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Sharon Ranadé, Scrutiny Advisor, 643 5614  
Emma Fagan, Scrutiny Advisor 643 5315

## **1.10 Background information:**

1) Overview and Scrutiny Report: Child Poverty

# **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

## **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no financial implications at this stage.

## **2.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications at this stage.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

Members consulted with officers of the Council, Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme providers and members of the public in completing this work.

## **2.4 Human rights**

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

## **2.6 Risk management**

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

## **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

### **PART 3**

The following officers and Members have been sent a copy of the report for their information:

- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager, Policy, Partnerships, Performance and Communications