CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE	Agenda Item 80
	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:		**Poverty-proofing the School Day**
Date of Meeting:		**Children, Young People and Skills Committee**
Report of:		**Pinaki Ghoshal**
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Ward(s) affected:		**All**

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 This report outlines the proposals to address the Fairness Commission's recommendation 49: 'The council, working with city schools, should bring to Brighton & Hove the 'Poverty-proofing the School Day' initiative to ensure no child misses out on the opportunities and experiences at school because of low family income.'

1.2 The decision about implementation will be made by the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2017 and is to offer the Poverty –proofing the School Day initiative to all schools in the city. The resource required of £150k has been identified as part of the budget strategy, subject to approval of the budget at Council on the 23 February 2017.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 That the Committee supports the proposed method for the introduction of Poverty-proofing the School Day

2.2 That the Committee is kept informed of the progress of the initiative through regular reports.

3. **CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 **National Context**
The Child Poverty Action Group outlines the impact of poverty on outcomes for children and young people and in particular for education.

- o 'Children from poorer backgrounds lag at all stages of education.
- o By the age of three, poorer children are estimated to be, on average, nine months behind children from more wealthy backgrounds.
- o According to Department for Education statistics, by the end of primary school, pupils receiving free school meals are estimated to be almost three terms behind their more affluent peers.
- o By 14, this gap grows to over five terms.

o By 16, children receiving free school meals achieve 1.7 grades lower at GCSE.'

3.2   Local Context

It is the case in Brighton & Hove that there is a gap between the outcomes for pupils in disadvantage and their peers and all schools have 'diminishing this difference' as a key priority. The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission considered these issues and one of the recommendations of the Commission is to introduce 'Poverty-proofing the School Day' into the City.

3.3   Background to Poverty-proofing the School Day

This project started in 2011 when Children North East sought to better understand what child poverty looks and feels like from a child and young person's perspective. With funding from the Webb Memorial Trust they distributed 1,348 disposable cameras across the North East and asked children and young people to tell them what poverty looked like where they live. 11,000 images were returned which powerfully conveyed strong themes and confirmed that child poverty is definitely not a thing of the past.

The feedback they gave showed that discrimination in schools was one of the biggest issues they faced. Children North East in partnership with the North East Child Poverty Commission with funding from VONNE's Policy and Representation Partnership, started to develop a way to 'Poverty Proof the School Day'. They developed a toolkit that has as its main aims to reduce the stigma and discrimination children and young people experiencing poverty face in schools; as well as to remove barriers to learning to support schools to reduce their attainment gap. The Toolkit can also be helpful to schools in helping to decide and plan the most effective way to spend their pupil premium allocation.

The process involves talking with all children and young people in the school, an online survey for governors, parents and staff and then the team work with the school leadership to develop an action plan, individually tailored to each school, to identify and remove barriers to learning, reducing the stigma and discrimination faced by pupils.

3.4   Impact of Poverty-proofing the School Day

The evaluation of the report, carried out by researchers at Newcastle University in February 2016, available on line at www.povertyproofing.co.uk and attached identified the following impact.

Key Findings of the evaluation of '*Poverty-proofing the School Day'*
1. There is evidence of and real concern in schools about the rising costs of the school day.
2. This is a high impact programme, which has revealed a huge array of generic issues that are routinely, if unintentionally, stigmatising children living in poverty and contributing to the increasing cost of the school day.
3. The audit is challenging but highly effective, delivering to the school a rare opportunity to give voice to its most disadvantaged pupils and their families and see their practices through the eyes of all pupils, parents and staff.

4. There are numerous benefits for the school as a result of going through this process, including a shift in whole school ethos and culture and the opportunity to make changes in response to the action plan, with maximum impact on pupils.
5. There is early evidence of increased attendance and attainment of disadvantaged pupils as a result of removing barriers to learning.
6. The audit provides a constructive opportunity to review pupil premium spending and through this and other actions, reduce the cost of the school day for pupils in real terms.
7. These impacts are dependent on the third party nature of the audit. Whilst it is very important to share good practice in this area, it is unlikely that the same benefits will be derived if a school reviews these issues in isolation through a self-evaluation process.
8. Whole school buy in, including senior leadership and Academy Trust or LA as appropriate, is crucial.
9. The fee is good value for money given the array of benefits the school derives from this programme, the whole school learning and shift in school culture which result, and the likely long-term impacts.

3.5 Introducing Poverty-proofing the School Day to Brighton & Hove schools: the proposal

3.5.1 The Fairness Commission considered several options for the introduction of Poverty-proofing the school day and have opted to offer this process to every school in the city. They are aware that Brighton & Hove school leadership teams are mindful of the costs that families face in the school day and that there are many examples of good practice in addressing this across the city. The Poverty-proofing process brings with it a strategic approach that could further develop good practice in this area citywide as well as a discussion based on the evidence that is collected in the school.

3.5.2 The Assistant Director, Education and Skills has written to school leaders outlining the process and asking school leaders for expressions of interest in being amongst the first schools to be part of the process.

3.5.3 The estimated cost of introducing the Poverty -proofing the School Day process to all school is £150,000 over two years. This is broken down as follows:

Element	Costs
The initial poverty proofing for five schools, includes quality assurance	10,000
The license for poverty proofing costs 14,000 a year and we would be looking to improvement this over a two year period, so would need two years	28,000
A lead for the role working 0.5 over two years. This person could be appointed, seconded from the LA or from a school.	70,000
The formal training programme for the teams that carry out the process and this costs £10,000. There are no limits to the number of people who can take part in the training and we would look to invite school staff. Supply costs for school staff would be paid and an expectation of a certain time commitment and an element of backfill would be needed for council staff	40,000

		148,000
Total		148,000

3.5.4 Implementation

Each school will have a team of at least two people working with staff and the community. This is to avoid concerns that were raised in several schools in the pilot about leading questions or other bias from the researchers. The table below shows the estimated total days that the poverty proofing team would be in each school. This has been allocated by size of schools to ensure that the team can speak to all members of the school community and will be reviewed as the project is delivered. Teams will vary in size from two people for half a day in one form entry primary schools to an allocation of five days of time for large secondary schools. The number of people in these teams will be agreed with the schools. Some schools in the pilot trained pupils as researchers and schools may wish to consider this.

	Time in days	Number of schools of this size	Total days
Nursery schools	1	2	2
250 or less place pupil primary school and nursery schools	1	19	19
251 - 400 pupil primary school and all special schools	2	20	40
401 - 500 pupil primary school	3	9	27
501 – 1000 pupil primary school	4	10	40
Secondary school – group less than 1000 pupils	4	4	16
Secondary school –more than 1000 pupils	5	6	30
			174

3.6   Consultation

The impact and evaluation of Poverty Proofing the School Day shows that it can make a real difference to the experience that young people have at school and it links well to the citywide priority to raise achievement of the most vulnerable. However, it is only effective if school leaders and school communities engage positively, are prepared to have hard conversations and take action. It is important that school leaders have ownership of the process. We are consulting school leaders to assess the level of commitment to the project.

We will:

Write to all heads and chairs of governors in the city explaining the project and asking for an expression of interest

Speak at a range of headteacher and governor meetings in the spring term to enable questions to be asked and discussions be had.

Invite headteachers to be part of a small steering group for the project

3.7 Conclusion

The evidence is that Poverty-proofing the school day can make a positive difference. The evaluation report states that it has the most impact when schools engage fully with it and are not afraid to have the hard conversations that arise during the process about their schools and are able to hear the voices of all. Whilst Poverty-proofing will be offered to all schools, the council cannot insist that all schools engage. The goal is to make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable, and the team will work to support and challenge schools to achieve this.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1   The Fairness Commission has been presented with four options to consider and school leaders are also being consulted on the most effective option to introduce Poverty-proofing to schools in the city.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1   Headteachers are being consulted on the best way to introduce this initiative. The Poverty-proofing process involves hearing the voice of the whole school community through on line surveys and interviews, so option one provides the greatest element of community involvement.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1   Poverty-proofing the School Day does have positive evaluations and could be an additional tool for schools to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to success at school. The achievement of vulnerable groups, such as those who are defined as disadvantaged is a priority citywide and as a result the Fairness Commission are considering the best option to take forward for the city that will make the most difference to the outcomes for families and young people.

6.2   The Children, Young People and Skills Committee will be kept informed of the outcomes of decisions made by the Policy and Resources Committee

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1   The estimated cost of £150,000 over two years, has been identified, within the Education & Skills branch of the Families, Children & Learning budget for 2017/18 & 2018/19.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore   *Date: 19/01/17*

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising from this report

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston   *Date: 25/01/17*

Equalities Implications:

7.1 Poverty-proofing the School Day is to ensure the voice of pupils and stakeholders is heard so schools can take further action to ensure that barriers to learning are minimised.

Sustainability Implications:

7.2 Poverty-proofing the School Day contributes to the health and happiness of the community

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.3 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Full evaluation of Poverty-proofing the School Day

2.
Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

1.1 Engaging young people in school and making them feel included could reduce crime

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

1.2   This is an opportunity to hear the voices of the community and use a successful tool to support educators in their work. Research shows that where schools engage positively then there is most impact. There is a risk with options 2,3 and 4 that not all schools are given this opportunity. There is also a risk that schools will not engage. Consultation with schools around the best way to introduce Poverty-proofing the School Day will mitigate this risk.

Public Health Implications:

1.3   Overcoming poverty will make a difference to the health of children and young people at school and in their futures.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

1.4   Poverty-proofing the School Day supports the citywide priority to raise achievement of the most vulnerable pupils and the corporate priority 'Live a good life'