

# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 43

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Child Poverty Summary  
**Date of Meeting:** 20 January 2010  
**Report of:** Director of Children Services  
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**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In 2007/08 there were 2.9 million children living in relative low income in the UK, and 2.2 million children living in relative low income and material deprivation, according to Government figures. The Government has a longstanding aim to eradicate UK child poverty by 2020, and is refocusing its efforts through the introduction of the Child Poverty Bill.
- 1.2 Prior to the announcement of the Bill, child poverty was already identified as a priority in Brighton & Hove being one of the selected National Indicators in the city's Local Area Agreement. This paper details plans to reduce child poverty in Brighton & Hove, including forthcoming requirements placed on the local authority in the Child Poverty Bill.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to nominate up to two representatives to sit on a child poverty task sub-group of the city's Local Strategic Partnership (para. 3.16).

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

##### National Context

- 3.1 In 2008 The Treasury, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Children Schools and Families jointly published *Ending child poverty: everybody's business*, alongside the Budget. This detailed spending plans to put the UK back on course to meet the Government's 2020 target to eradicate child poverty. The resulting Child Poverty Bill was announced in the Queen's speech in November 2009 and is expected to come into effect in spring 2010.

### The Child Poverty Bill

- 3.2 The Child Poverty Bill will require the Government to publish a national child poverty strategy, to be refreshed every three years, evaluating progress towards the 2020 vision according to key targets and setting out aims for future action across a range of policy areas. It will require local authorities and their partners to work together to tackle child poverty (covered in paras. 3.11-3.13).
- 3.3 The Government's strategy will set out what action, if any, needs to be taken nationally across the 'building blocks', four key areas aimed at driving sustainable progress. These are:
- More parents in work that pays
  - Financial support that is responsive to families' situations
  - Improvements in children's life chances so that poverty in childhood does not translate into poor outcomes
  - Safe, cohesive communities that support children to thrive

### Child poverty pilots and Beacon Councils

- 3.4 *Ending child poverty: everybody's business* announced £125 million for child poverty pilots in 2008–2011, to explore practical approaches to reducing child poverty. These include:
- Tax credit advisors based in Children's Centres providing signposting and guidance
  - Work focused services through Children's Centres, with dedicated Job Centre Plus Advisors
  - New Family Intervention Projects for families who experience poverty, coordinated by an assertive key worker
  - Child Development Grants offering parents financial incentives to enhance their child's early development
  - Housing, health and learning support provided to teenage parents living independently in supported housing
  - Local Authority Innovation grants to develop innovative approaches to tackling child poverty with partners
  - Childcare Affordability Programme in London offering cash incentives to parents to take up support and tackle barriers into work
- 3.5 Three local authorities – Cornwall Council, London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council – have been awarded Beacon status for 'Preventing and Tackling Child Poverty' in 2009. All three Beacons share a common overriding approach; an understanding of the needs of the local community, developed through engagement with them, and used to inform strategic priorities and service delivery in partnership with other agencies.

### **Local Context**

- 3.6 The Reducing Inequality Review (2007) found that the city contains some of the most significantly deprived areas in England, particularly in East Brighton,

Queens Park and Moulsecoomb and Bevendean wards. However, it also determined that there are large numbers of individuals in other neighbourhoods who also experience high levels of deprivation. There are also expectations that high levels of in-work poverty exist within the city, compounded by the high relative cost of private housing. A more detailed account of factors contributing toward child poverty levels within in the city is included at Appendix 1.

- 3.7 Brighton and Hove is one of 45 local authorities to have included the child poverty measure (NI 116) in its Local Area Agreement (LAA). However, there are currently limitations on how accurately we can use this to determine levels of poverty in the city due to a lack of existing local data. The new national Child Poverty Unit has committed to providing this level of detail, though it is now overdue.
- 3.8 Reducing child poverty and health inequality has been identified as one of four overarching improvement priorities in the new Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP), the governing document for all children and young people's outcomes in the city. Progress on the CYPP will be monitored bi-annually, with more regular quarterly updates on actions to address measures that do not meet targets.
- 3.9 Services that aim to raise income and increase wellbeing for families, are already coordinated across the city focussing particularly on take up of childcare allowance and employment advice and training. Co-location of advice and services in Children's Centres is a key way of reaching families. A summary of selected activity is included at Appendix 2.
- 3.10 Pilots are underway in Brighton & Hove aimed at remodelling the way in which core services are delivered to reduce inequality and end the cycle of disadvantage for families, such as *Turning the Tide* in the neighbourhoods covered by the Selsfield Drive housing office and the CYPT Family Pathfinder to improve the lives of families living in East Brighton.

#### Requirements of the Child Poverty Bill for Local Authorities

- 3.11 Once implemented, the Child Poverty Bill will require each responsible local authority to prepare and publish a needs assessment for children living in poverty in its area, according to guidance that will be issued by the Secretary of State once the Bill gains Royal Assent.
- 3.12 The council will also be expected to work in cooperation with statutory partners to produce a joint child poverty strategy, in order to reduce and mitigate the effects of poverty. These partners are represented by the existing Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Bill will allow for the creation of pooled budgets to tackle child poverty with partners.
- 3.13 The council will also be required to 'have regard' to its local arrangements for delivering the Bill in the local Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). A refresh of the Brighton & Hove SCS is currently being undertaken by the LSP and is due to be completed and published by March 2010.

## Brighton & Hove delivery arrangements

- 3.14 Having been one of the first local authorities to create a Children & Young People's Trust (CYPT), Brighton & Hove already has a number of joint staffing arrangements, and shared budgets and priorities with the health service. A number of discussions with other partners have already been held on child poverty, and there is a willingness and recognition that we need a citywide approach to the issue.
- 3.15 Despite early progress and clear examples of good practice there is still much to do if we are to achieve the kind of impact proposed by the Government. Therefore, a child poverty sub-group of the LSP will be convened, under the CYPT thematic partnership, ahead of and ready for implementation of the Bill. This would consist of a strategic 'task' group to coordinate and oversee progress and an officer level 'finishing' group to conduct necessary research and analysis.
- 3.16 **CYPOSC is asked to nominate up to two of its members to sit on the task group.**
- 3.17 The first action for the task and finish group will be to draw together quickly existing actions that contribute to tackling child poverty from various strategies; the SCS, the CYPP and across the 7 themes of the LAA. The aim is to identify any gaps that exist in order to understand better and maximise the collective impact on child poverty.
- 3.18 An officer level CYPT performance board is being established to monitor service performance and workforce information on a monthly basis. In addition the CYPT Board will receive focussed reports on the CYPP, produced through the Interplan performance management system, referred to in para. 3.8.
- 3.19 The Brighton and Hove Local Intelligence System (BHLIS) allows for detailed analysis of geographical patterns (down to the smallest level – the 'super output area') and is being developed to deliver data in support of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and to map progress against the four strategic objectives of the CYPP, including child poverty.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 A themed discussion on child poverty was undertaken by internal and external staff representing the city's major partnerships at Partnership Managers Group (PMG) on 26 June 2009. This group includes colleagues from a number of agencies named as statutory partners in the Bill.
- 4.2 On 04 December 2009 an update was taken to PMG on the Child Poverty Bill and the plans for implementation in Brighton & Hove, as detailed in this paper. There was acknowledgment from partners around the table that the issue reaches beyond the CYPT partnership and will need support from all agencies.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no additional costs as a result of this report and any current initiatives will continue within existing funds and resources

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington                      Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The review will assist the agencies within the CYPT to deliver their duties in this area, both under statute and within the national framework and expectations outlined in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson                                      Date: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Plans to reduce child poverty will make provision for those individuals, groups and communities most at risk of falling into poverty (see Appendix 1). The Children & Young People's Plan includes Child Poverty as one of four overarching strategic objectives, and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced for the CYPP. A separate Equalities Impact Assessment may be carried out if an independent child poverty strategy is required, once the details of the Child Poverty Bill are made available.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Plans to reduce child poverty will promote the *Sustainable Communities* priority of the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy. The Child Poverty Bill will require the council and partners to engage directly with service providers and users to establish local need. It will build on existing partnership arrangements with the shared aim of reducing poverty, thereby creating a greater sense of pride and cohesion within neighbourhoods to the long term benefit of the community and local environment.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There is strong evidence that childhood poverty can lead to a cycle of generational poverty and low aspiration, particular in more deprived neighbourhoods. Reducing poverty and increasing engagement in education and community activity will help create community cohesion and reduce instances of anti social behaviour. Increased income for families will alleviate the associated emotional stress of poverty on households and should lessen instances of violence or criminal behaviour.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Plans to reduce child poverty will directly contribute to delivery of Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the priorities of key city strategies, including the Children & Young People's Plan, the Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy. Therefore failure to deliver against targets on child poverty could have a detrimental impact on achieving city priorities.

The multiple issues which can lead to child poverty determines that a wide number of services, both internal and external to the council, have a role in reducing poverty. Therefore, as captured by the Bill, there is an opportunity to build on existing partnerships to reduce the negative social and financial impacts of poverty on the city.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 As described above, coordinated activity to reduce child poverty will contribute to delivery of a range of corporate and citywide priorities. Given the evidence that, in many cases, child poverty is intergenerational, tackling the causes of poverty now will potentially reduce the dependency of future generations on state financial support, associated costs of intervention and secure the future economic and social vitality of the city.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Child poverty in Brighton & Hove
2. Action to reduce child poverty in Brighton & Hove

### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

- 1.
- 2.

### **Background Documents**

- 1.
- 2.

## **Child poverty in Brighton & Hove**

National Indicator (NI) 116, is defined as a reduction in the number of children in households living on less than 60% of the national median income. There is currently no accurate data to monitor household income at the local level, though the national Child Poverty Unit is committed to providing this (though it is now overdue).

Instead, the measure of child poverty currently used in Brighton & Hove is the proportion of children who live in households where out of work benefits are received. A figure of 21% was given by Government Office for the South East (GOSE) in 2007/08, prior to the recession taking hold, with a target set to reduce by 1% each year. In view of the recession this figure is almost certain to have increased and the Government has agreed to renegotiate with councils the targets for economic indicators in their LAAs.

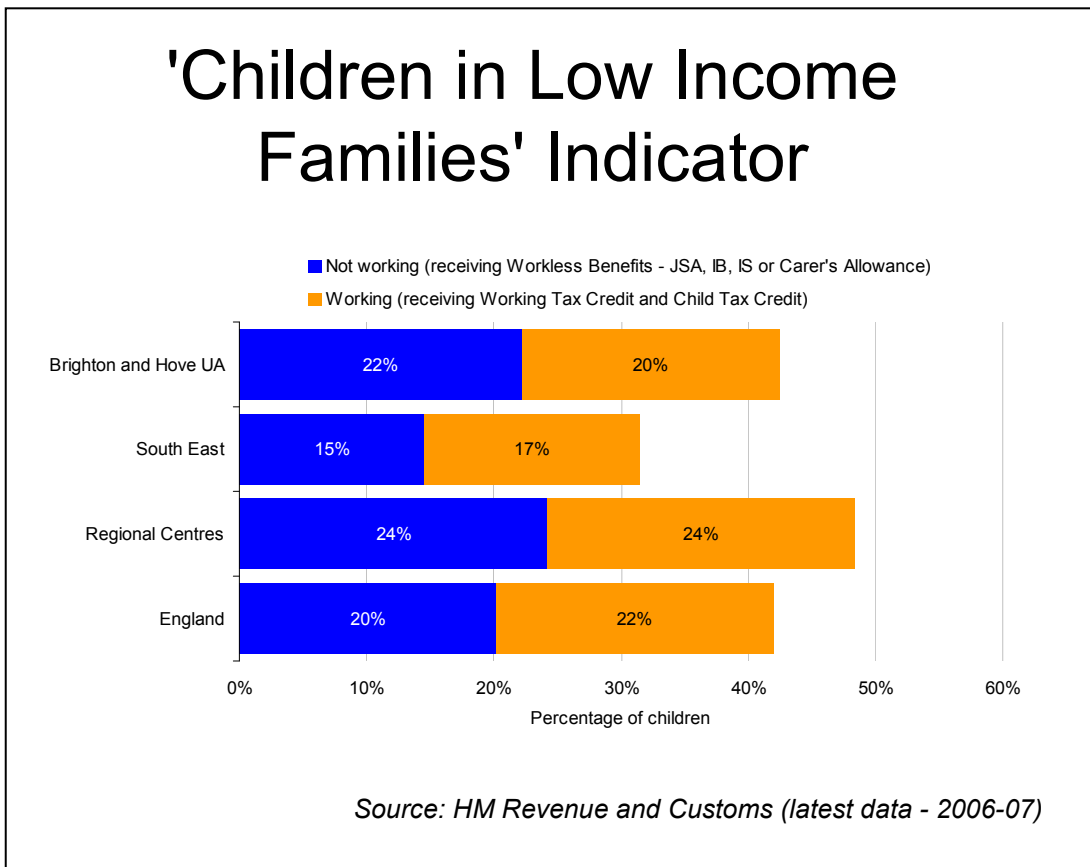
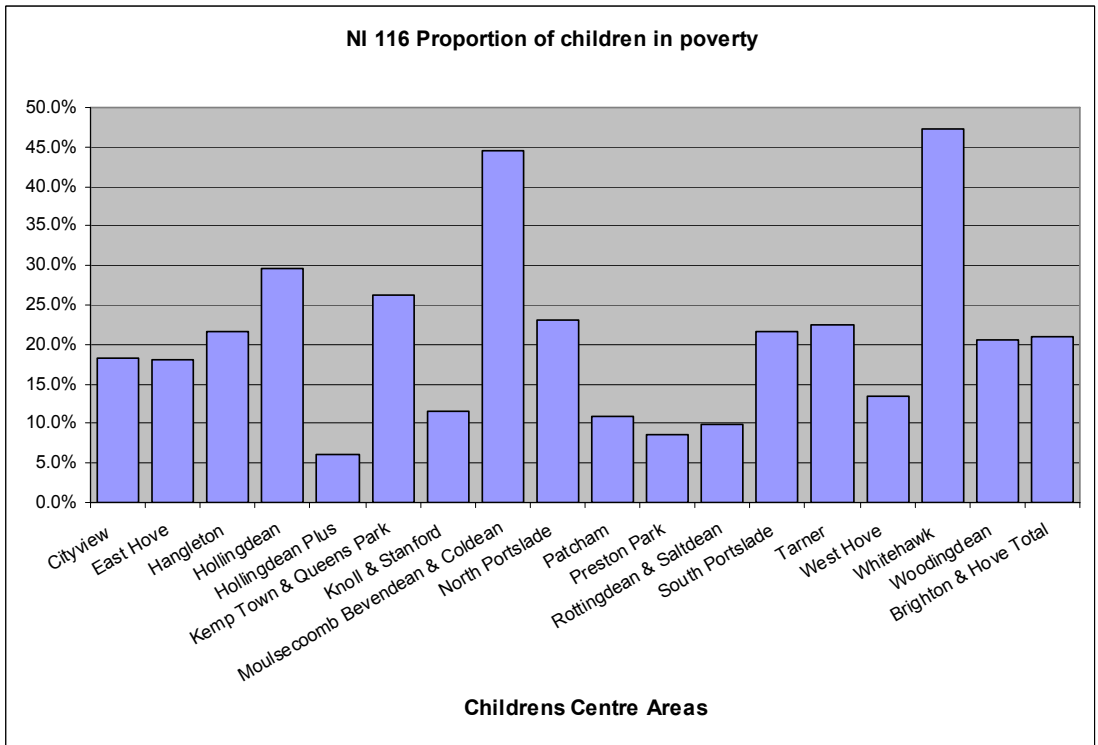
Work in itself is not a guaranteed route out of poverty for families. To account for families experiencing in-work poverty NI 118, the rate of take-up of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, is also measured. This equates to 21.83% children in the city, with a target set to reduce this number by 2% each year. In order to qualify for Working Tax Credit, families must be on low working incomes and work for 16 hours per week.

The charts below show the breakdown of the Brighton & Hove statistics for NI 116 and NI 118 by Children's Centre area. The figures correlate with general deprivation statistics for the city, with high levels of child poverty in Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk combined with a very low take up of the Childcare Tax Credit. There are also relatively high numbers of families with disabled children and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance in the city.

However we also know from the Reducing Inequality Review, that inequality in the city is by no means confined to geographically specific areas and that large numbers of people experiencing inequality do *not* live in the most deprived areas. Of the more than 4,000 children living in low income, out-of-work families across the city, nearly 60% do not live in the most deprived 20% of areas.

Children with multiple issues are heavily concentrated in the most deprived areas – nearly one half of all children across the city experiencing *both* low income and Special Educational Needs live in the most deprived 20% of areas. The same is true of Bangladeshi and Black African populations, though not minority ethnic groups overall (RIR, 2007).

The local disability charity, Amaze, reports that a quarter of the 1,500 disabled children on their Compass database live in East Brighton and Moulsecoomb and Bevendean wards. Similar patterns arise for children and young people with a child protection plan, 16-18-year-olds not engaged in education, employment or training, teenage parents and a range of other groups.





## **Action to reduce child poverty in Brighton & Hove**

This is not an exhaustive list, but details a selection of the service activity taking place in the city with a view to minimising contributing factors to child poverty.

### *Sure Start Children's centres*

A citywide network of children's centres to improve the outcomes of children under 5 by providing integrated early childhood services, including information and advice to parents on training and employment.

### *Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit*

A universal campaign to promote take up of the tax credit to all parents and carers, along with targeted information for those families least likely to take up the tax credit.

### *Childcare Sufficiency Assessment*

Ensuring there is sufficient childcare for parents who wish to work or undertake training which will lead to work in accordance with duties under s.6 of the Childcare Act 2006. This duty includes providing childcare which is suitable for disabled children, and in Brighton & Hove funds are made available to ensure that the additional cost of including disabled children in childcare settings can be met

### *Free childcare for 2-4 year olds*

All 3 and 4 years olds are entitled to 12.5 hours a week of free early learning, extended to 15 hours for those areas with the highest proportion of disadvantaged children from September 2009 (available for all children from September 2010).

A pilot for funding 10 hours of free childcare for 104 of the city's most disadvantaged 2 year olds began in September 2009 and ends in March 2011.

### *Aiming High for disabled children*

Brighton & Hove is one of 21 areas in the country piloting a scheme to increase the availability of short breaks for parents and disabled children as part of the Aiming High programme

### *Attainment in education*

From April 2010 the council will take on responsibility for commissioning 14-19 education and training, implementing the new broader curriculum and the increased age of participation to 18 by 2015

### *Supporting adults into work*

The Adult Advancement and Careers Service prototype provides a new careers service for adults alongside more integrated working between organisations that provide learning and employment support

