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**DRAFT CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Cyndi Hughes,  
Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of People**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the Draft Child Poverty Strategy attached at **Appendix 1**.

**Summary**

2. The Child Poverty Act 2010 imposes a duty upon all Local Authorities to prepare and publish a Child Poverty Needs Assessment. The Act also requires Local Authorities to work with partners to produce a Child Poverty Strategy.
3. Darlington's Draft Child Poverty Needs Assessment was published and launched at Darlington's Children's Trust Annual Conference in November 2010. The key findings of the Needs Assessment are as follows:-
  - (a) Darlington has a relatively high level of child poverty, standing at 21.2%.
  - (b) Analysis of data and information shows that need is most concentrated within 10 wards.
  - (c) A number of specific groups have been identified who are particularly vulnerable to child poverty and its associated negative effects.
  - (d) The Child Poverty Strategy will require a targeted focus on a limited range of key issues and priority communities and groups.
  - (e) Early intervention and prevention is a theme that should transverse all issues and resultant actions.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Draft Child Poverty Strategy.

## Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) To ensure compliance with the Child Poverty Act 2010.
  - (b) To ensure that the Council and its partners have a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the causes and impact of Child Poverty.

**Murray Rose,  
Director of People**

## Background Papers

Draft Child Poverty Needs Assessment

Julian Kenshole : Extension 2071

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are links between poverty and rates of crime and offending behaviour.
Health and Well Being	The Child Poverty includes action to improve the health & well-being of children and families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty.
Carbon Impact	None
Diversity	The Child Poverty strategy, whilst acknowledging that all groups and sectors of the community can experience poverty, identifies defined groups who are at greater risk.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	Children and families living in poverty and those at risk of living in poverty.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not constitute a change to the budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	The report does constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	The report does not require an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy will make positive contributions to both the One Darlington and Perfectly Placed Priorities
Efficiency	The Child Poverty Strategy seeks to mitigate the impact of poverty and the future costs this has both for individual families and collectively for society.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. The Child Poverty Act 2010 imposes a duty upon all local authorities to prepare and publish a Child Poverty Needs Assessment. The Act also requires local authorities to work with their partners to produce a Child Poverty Strategy.
7. Darlington has a relatively high level of child poverty, standing at 21.2%, concentrated in a small number of wards. There are a number of groups in Darlington who are vulnerable to child poverty and the negative outcomes associated with it. Analysis of data and information from the Needs Assessment shows that need is concentrated within the following wards:-
  - (a) Bank Top
  - (b) Central
  - (c) Cockerton West
  - (d) Eastbourne
  - (e) Haughton East
  - (f) Lascelles
  - (g) Lingfield
  - (h) Northgate
  - (i) North Road
  - (j) Park East
8. Additionally, the Needs Assessment identified the following groups to be most vulnerable to child poverty:-

#### **Children/Young People:-**

- (a) Looked After Children
- (b) First time entrants to the youth justice system
- (c) Pupils who have been excluded from school
- (d) NEETs
- (e) Children receiving free school meals
- (f) Children with three or more siblings, and
- (g) Children with a disability

#### **Parents/Carers:-**

- (h) Long term unemployed and those who are benefit dependent
- (i) Those who may be drug or alcohol dependent
- (j) Parents/carers with mental health issues
- (k) Lone parents
- (l) Teenage parents;
- (m) Parents/carers with low level or no qualifications; and,
- (n) Parents/carers in low paid work.

### Outcome from consultation and key conclusions

9. Consultation on the Needs Assessment was launched at the Child Poverty Conference in November 2010 and has been supplemented by a number of complementary consultation

exercises including through the Child Care Sufficiency Audit and Children’s Centre Survey. Key conclusions and issues identified from the Needs Assessment are as follows:

Issues to Mitigate	Issues to Maximise
Poor health, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower life expectancy;</li> <li>• Low levels of breastfeeding;</li> <li>• Higher incidence of childhood obesity, and</li> <li>• Higher incidence of teenage conceptions.</li> </ul>	Early intervention and prevention to assist target families and groups.
High number of families on benefits	Employment opportunities
High levels of debt	Access to debt advice
Poor family friendly working practices	Benefit take up
Low levels of skills	Childcare opportunities
Households in fuel poverty	Training opportunities
Poor housing conditions	Household income
The needs of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System	Narrowing the gap between the attainment of vulnerable groups and their peers

### Strategy Development

10. The Children’s Trust Provider Forum has reviewed the findings of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and completed a task of aligning the issues identified in Paragraph 8 above to Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and performance measures. Through this process, a suite of performance measures were identified and a series of Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) ‘Turning the Curve’ workshops conducted to identify supporting actions. The actions have been grouped under each of the following strategy priorities:-
  - (a) Economy and Skills: To develop the economy; create the conditions for job creation, and provide opportunities for vulnerable groups to improve their skills and gain sustainable employment;
  - (b) Financial Inclusion: To provide the community with quality and timely information, advice and guidance that enables them to maximise their income and life opportunities and to mitigate the impacts of forthcoming welfare reforms;
  - (c) Early Years and Health: To decrease the health inequalities between the most deprived and the most affluent communities within Darlington;
  - (d) Early Intervention and Prevention: To ensure that assessments are effective and undertaken in a timely manner and that interventions are put in place at the earliest stage possible, and
  - (e) Housing and Sustainable Communities: To create cohesive and inclusive communities where residents take pride in their area and housing is suitable and of a high quality.
  
11. The draft strategy has been informed by emerging policy and recently published reports including Frank Field’s report – The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults, the recently published White Paper - Healthy Lives, Healthy People

and the Graham Allen Review into Early Intervention. All these reports share a focus on early intervention and prevention, the joining up of services to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable families (particularly around children's centres), and to the concept of a Foundation Phase in children's lives from pre-birth to five years.