

CHILD POVERTY REVIEW GROUP

28th October, 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (Chair), Councillors Crudass, C. Taylor and Wright.

OFFICERS – Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Crumbie, C. Hughes, L. Vasey, T. Richmond; and Emma Coltman.

PURPOSE OF MEETING – Members considered Ward level data for child poverty for 2006 and 2011. The maps showed each ward with the level of child poverty, and each ward was also broken down by super output areas within wards. The Map clearly showed the highest areas of child poverty and there were 7 clear 'hot spots'.

Definition of Child Poverty being : 'a family earning less than 60 per cent of the median average income'.

ISSUES RAISED AND DISCUSSED –

- The revised Sustainable Community Strategy addresses child poverty 'the proportion of children living in poverty'.
- A need to address the gaps across the borough and seek to reduce inequalities geographically and demographically which in turn will give direction to service strategies.
- A Onedarlinton Strategy is in the process of being drafted
- New data being collated which will give an opportunity to review the current Child Poverty Strategy which was approved in 2011.
- November 2012 the Government launched a consultation on the indicators used to measure child poverty and this consultation closed in February, 2013. Any changes to these measures will require Darlington's Child Poverty Strategy to be amended to reflect this.
- A need to move away from solely looking at income and to look at a more multi-dimensional measurement of poverty.
- There is a need to have data to show a correlation within wards to other data ie. obesity/children ready for school.
- Implications on data collection of the boundary review and the new wards as from May 2015.

- Similar ward picture emerges in 2006 and 2011 and Members predicted that this would potentially always be the same as child poverty is defined by a percentage of the average income. Income may increase but these Wards will potentially always be lower than the average income so will always show as the most deprived areas.
- There is a need to improve inequalities against the opportunities for improvement within those Wards with the highest level of child poverty.
- There is a need to put in place interventions within those 'hot spot' wards but also to have in place an effective way of collating information on whether the interventions are having a positive effect on child poverty and effective monitoring of data.
- There are clearly 'hot spots' within the borough and it was suggested that a multi-agency approach is required to target these areas only and to point resources/services at the weakest points with a purpose of making a difference.
- Changing the focus of other organisations to have a joint approach to targeting the worse affected wards.
- Aspirations/Family cohesion and society drivers required to promote children's ambitions.
- Are all Council policies/plans and strategies addressing child poverty and supporting this aim?
- Are children spread out equally across the town? Useful information to have before targeting 'hot spots' of low income Wards.

ACTIONS – Information to be brought to a future meeting of the Review Group :

- (1) To receive an update on the results of the Government Consultation and any changes to the national measures of child poverty.
- (2) Application of other data to the 'hot spot' areas to see correlation.
- (3) What other policies are in place targeting specifically these 'hot spot' areas.