

**Open Report on behalf of the Executive Director Adults and Children's**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>5 March 2012</b>
Subject:	<b>Child Poverty Strategy – Consultation</b>

**Summary:**

The Lincolnshire Child Poverty Strategy went out to consultation for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012. Several responses have been received from a number of key stakeholders, including the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's informal working group, who were also asked to consider a recommendation to transfer outstanding actions from the Narrowing the Gap agenda to the Child Poverty Action Plan.

In a separate exercise, consultation was carried out with parents in areas where there are high numbers of children living in poverty.

All responses are currently being collated and analysed. The next steps are to review the strategy document and to develop an action plan building on the responses to the consultation and the findings of the needs analysis.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse the informal working group's responses to the consultation.

**1. Background**

The draft Lincolnshire Child Poverty Strategy, "Improving life chances and economic prosperity through raised aspirations", went out to consultation for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012. Stakeholders that were specifically targeted included organisations listed as statutory partners in the Child Poverty Act, plus providers of services to children and families; the documents were also available publically on the Lincolnshire Research Observatory (LRO) web site.

In a separate exercise, a consultation was carried out with parents in areas where the number of children living in poverty is high. This was carried out by Birchwood Access Training Centre through face to face contact with parents in Lincoln and North Kesteven. Over 50 parents participated in this exercise.

The next step is to:

- Collate and analyse responses
- Revise the Strategy document
- Develop an Action Plan

At the start of the consultation the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee expressed a wish to participate in the consultation via an informal working group that would meet with the Strategy authors. Following a discussion about the Strategy document the responses of the working group were collated and subsequently returned to them to be checked.

In summary responses included:

- Overall support for the strategy, links to the Early Intervention Strategy and agreement that it should incorporate the former “Narrowing the Gap” agenda
- Agreement that it should be a targeted strategy
- There needs to be a stronger emphasis on the fact that the strategy is not just about Lincolnshire County Council; nor is it just about Children’s Services
- Agreed that services need to be co-ordinated in a way that provides more intensive support for individuals and families; services need to be co-ordinated via a lead agency

A separate report has been prepared for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that:

- Provides progress information relating to objectives in the Narrowing the Gap action plan
- Recommends that outstanding actions be transferred to the Child Poverty Action Plan

An example of how Narrowing the Gap activities closely relate to the Child Poverty agenda is the “Free Entitlement for Disadvantaged 2 Year Olds”:

*‘As part of a coherent framework of services for families announced in 2011, and in addition to having increased free early education for all three and four year olds to 15 hours a week, the Government will offer all two year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds the free entitlement to 15 hours early education by 2013’ (Families in the Foundation Years, DfE 2011)*

Since September 2009, Lincolnshire has been delivering a Department for Education (DfE) pilot project to offer 171 early years places for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds. Children are offered a place based on specific government defined criteria relating directly to an individual family’s economic circumstances. In Lincolnshire this has been linked directly to the CAF process. The 2 year old pilot began in September 2009 and the children who have accessed the initial round of funding have not yet reached the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Therefore, Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national data

collected at the end of the reception year cannot yet be used to measure impact and progress until July 2012.

However, the 2 year old funding has enabled the most disadvantaged children to access early years' provision which has supported early identification of children with additional needs. Individual Education Plans have been developed by the settings in partnership with the Birth to Five Service and external agencies to ensure children's progress is carefully monitored. Progress can be particularly demonstrated in outcomes relating to speech and language as fewer of these children are requiring intensive support on entry to school.

This particular example supports two of the key themes of the Child Poverty Strategy: Access and Aspiration.

**2. Conclusion**

The recommendation is that:

- The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee endorses the responses of the informal working group and agrees for them to be submitted for inclusion along with those from other key stakeholders and parents.
- The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee accepts the recommendation to close down the Narrowing the Gap action plan and to transfer outstanding actions to the Child Poverty action plan.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Informal Working Group members
Appendix B	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Informal Working Group responses to the Child Poverty Strategy consultation
Appendix C	Summary of collated responses to the consultation

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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