

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	6 th October 2022	
	Council		17 th November 2022	
Subject:	Sefton Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2030: Tackling Child Poverty in Sefton			Wards Affected:
Report of:	Director of Public Health	Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Cabinet Portfolio:	Health and wellbeing			Included in Forward Plan:
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes	
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No			

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy: Tackling Child Poverty in Sefton 2022-2030. The strategy is a major step in ensuring that our residents are offered opportunities, support, advice, and information that will address the causes and challenges of childhood poverty.

Recommendation(s):

1. To approve the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2030 for adoption and implementation by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
2. To approve the continued engagement of our community, partners and community and voluntary sector organisations to develop a robust set of action plans, aligned to the objectives set out in the strategy and the performance framework which will underpin the strategy.
3. To continue to commit all available resources to underpin strategy delivery using available funds from Public Health, Communities, Education etc. with a commitment to producing an annual summary detailing key achievements and challenges faced in the preceding year.
4. To agree to a multi-agency, launch of the strategy in November 2022

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Living in poverty has negative impacts in other aspects of people's lives and is not just about money – it impacts educational attainment, access to good paying work, increases the risk of developing poor health conditions and reduces life expectancy. It also means that many people are not able to take part in the normal life of a place as experienced by other residents.

If we are unable to support the most in need families right now, the biggest challenge will be on the poorest in our society, increasing those who most rely on public services who will be limited even further in trying to support their own families and turn their lives around.

Approval of this strategy and its focus on pockets, places and prospects will lead to a fairer and more inclusive Sefton, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The strategy focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need, those most at risk and in need of accessing our services.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are a number of funding sources that are already contributing to the priorities identified in the strategy, including the WRAP support programmes such as Household Support Fund, ELAS programme and direct grants to several community and voluntary organisations which are currently delivering against some of the outcomes identified in the strategy.

There are various commissioned programmes through Public Health and wider Council which will continue to support the delivery of the strategy which focus on initiatives to support improved health and wellbeing in communities. There is also a commitment to identify additional funding and opportunities which would contribute to the delivery of the strategy. This would be subject to approval at a future Cabinet meeting once funding was secured.

(B) Capital Costs

No additional capital costs identified

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from the proposals
Equality Implications: The strategy focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need, those most at risk and in need of accessing our services. The strategy provides a framework to prevent people from falling into poverty as well as

supporting those who are already struggling. The strategy will have an overall positive effect across all equality strands. Delivery of the ambitions of the strategy will make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of our local communities and tackle health inequalities. Equality and diversity considerations are an integral part of our approach to addressing poverty in Sefton

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	Y
Have a neutral impact	N
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N

The Child Poverty Strategy will have a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged and most in need including the delivery of specific commissioned services and through ensuring that all of Sefton’s most vulnerable communities are able to access advice / support for young people and families.

There is no specific climate and environmental impact that may arise from implementing the strategy however there is potential for positive impact in developing initiatives to reduce fuel poverty.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: YES

The strategy is designed to protect the most vulnerable by focussing on families who were already managing challenges caused by inequality and were further impacted by the double shock from the pandemic and high cost of living. The strategy is centred on families who are encountering the severest impact of this current cost of living crisis and who are the poorest in society and rely most on public services.

The strategy is corroborated by extensive research in our most vulnerable communities. Our current investment in long term community programmes has also been developed in partnership with local people and our voluntary sector and is rooted in communities hardest hit by reforms to the welfare system and economic disadvantage. Much of our commissioned work has been developed by listening to residents and brought to life through multi-sector partnerships. We will continue to develop this asset-based approach and will listen and engage with local people as the action plan for the strategy is developed.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: YES

Poverty presents a major setback for children, young people and families trying to alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty in everyday life. This strategy takes a holistic perspective with a focus on many of the causes of poverty. The main target areas are rooted in pockets, prospects, and places which is an important step towards building confident and resilient communities and realising a fairer and more inclusive Sefton with

fewer children living in poverty. The focus is to work with communities and reduce the level of poverty and time spent in poverty now, minimise the harmful effects of poverty on educational achievement, health, and wellbeing now and later in life and prevent future poverty for today's children and young people.

Commission, broker and provide core services: YES

The emphasis of the strategy is to work across broad partnerships in the borough to build a collective approach where everyone is able to prosper, explore their potential and feel fulfilled. This multi-agency approach will foster a core philosophy to ensure all partners understand their own role in tackling childhood poverty. This approach will maximise all opportunities for partners to consider how commissioned and core services will tackle major issues and barriers and ensure commissioners work closely with families to develop and redesign services that meet local need.

The holistic approach will be broad across relevant commissioned and core services and include, working with families who have little or no qualifications or skills training, consideration of how to mitigate the impact of fuel poverty on families and how current core services can best support them. It will also include existing work across partnerships to increase affordable housing, work with services and agencies to design appropriate services to meet the needs of unemployed families who are in receipt of out of work benefits and ensure support is available for young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment, or training is relevant and appropriate

Place – leadership and influencer: YES

Systems leadership and a whole system approach has been the core philosophy driving the development of this strategy which has been coproduced in consultation and discussion with partners, elected members, service providers, public health, housing, and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCF.

The Welfare Reform Anti-Poverty Group, a multi-agency partnership has provided oversight in developing the strategy and will be instrumental in progressing an outcomes and performance framework which will underpin the action plan. The strategy will be kept under regular review as new evidence and learning emerges from the impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis so we can continue to be informed of emerging issues in Sefton.

The close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all the communities in Sefton to ensure those who experience poverty first-hand remain at the heart of what we do.

Drivers of change and reform: YES

Research and innovation are central to the strategy delivery as we recognise that the current crisis and challenge, post pandemic as well as the increasing costs of living will demand a different way of working which will require input and action from all relevant partners. Driving change means that acknowledgement and crucially, ownership by the Sefton partners will be required as we move this important agenda forward. To do this, the strategy will be launched at a multi-partner event in autumn 2022 where partners will agree a plan of action aligned to a performance framework which will be developed to measure our success against the delivery of the outcomes.

Ongoing research will ensure that change is dynamic, rooted in community need with all aligned services and support made relevant to local people.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: YES

The strategy highlights the importance of economic prosperity and acknowledges the benefits of equipping Sefton residents with the education, skills and knowledge to maximise all opportunities to move out of poverty. Local insights tell us that access and availability barriers are both important and the strategy focuses on issues such as roles that pay the National Living Wage, offer contractual security, opportunities for development and progression, and enable flexible working for those with caring responsibilities.

Challenges have been considered in terms of Sefton's economic base being comprised of a large public sector and a private sector largely comprised of small businesses. Historically, this combination has not been able to deliver secure, adequately paid, good quality work to all employees. Our multi- agency approach will aim to tackle this issue as the strategy develops the action plan with our partners.

The strategy also considers access to available opportunities which can also be a limiting factor, for example the cost and availability of childcare and transport and limited capabilities around literacy or online access or from additional health or learning needs - these can all be barriers to maximising income from benefits as well as work.

Maximising incomes is essential to reducing childhood poverty in Sefton. Our drive to do that will be supported by a comprehensive action plan which also seeks to address the persistent inequalities faced by families living in poverty. We aim to prevent people from experiencing poverty in the first place, as well as mitigating the impacts of poverty and supporting people to lift themselves out of it.

Greater income for social investment: YES

Poverty-proofing actions have a big part to play in achieving our child poverty goals and investing in local people. The strategy endorses fully the importance of strengthening people's skills and capacities and how we can support them to participate fully in employment and socially.

Our focus includes education, quality child care, health care, training , job search assistance and support. This includes identifying and reducing or removing cost and other barriers linked to poverty that stop low-income families from benefiting from opportunities and support. By applying concepts of added social value, and Anchor Institutions to the full, our Pockets priorities lowers the risk of continuing childhood poverty today and helps to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty in years to come.

The strategy includes examples of how the Council have invested heavily in boosting Sefton's economy, with a particular focus on improving youth employment rates through our Sefton@Work programme, which has made a real impact. We have refocused InvestSefton to specifically address inequalities. It supports business and inward investment and leads on supporting economic growth in the borough. The objective is simple, to make Sefton an attractive and easy place for businesses to start, operate, grow and thrive. The team has made a significant impact to the local economy and together with the Councils Business Rates team has delivered £97.7 million of business support grants to 23,000 recipients in Sefton.

We also ensure that our families living in poverty have discretionary access to our Leisure offer, in addition to providing positive activities and support to our children and young people that address their physical health and mental wellbeing which all support social

investment.

Cleaner Greener YES

We will ensure that the poverty emergency workstream complements and strengthens the Climate Emergency Declaration workstream. We will develop a strategy and action plan which takes a people and planet approach.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6936/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5136/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Wide consultation has been undertaken with desk top analysis reviewing the quantitative and epidemiological data and qualitative analysis via stakeholder engagement with Sefton Council officers in Education, Communities, Public Health, Children’s Services and the Voluntary Community and Faith sector.

Engagement with the multi- agency partnership, Every Child Matters Forum has provided stakeholder insight as well as externally commissioned research funded by the Cheshire and Mersey Health Equity programme – Marmot (which is still underway) will provide additional insight into the strategy action plan. (Research completion expected Oct/Nov 22)

Continuous close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all the communities of Sefton to ensure those who experience poverty remain central to what we do.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer:	Anna Nygaard
Telephone Number:	0151 934 3151
Email Address:	Anna.nygaard@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:
Sefton Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2030: Tackling Child Poverty in Sefton

Background Papers:

There are no background papers

1. Background/Introduction

1.1 Sefton Council declared a poverty emergency in March 2021. The Council was then presented with challenging findings of a review of child poverty in Sefton leading to the

recommendation that Sefton develop a childhood poverty strategy. Subsequently, the 'Tackling Childhood Poverty Strategy' responds to these challenges and provides the blueprint for our approach to tackling childhood poverty in Sefton.

1.2 The strategy has been developed during a global pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis presenting the toughest economic times for a generation. Its objective and focus are to provide short, medium and long-term support to our most vulnerable families, as well as poverty proofing in the longer term to work in partnership to secure our children's futures.

1.3 The strategy is designed to tackle poverty and deprivation and is particularly important in the context of the current financial pressures facing households. It will form part of our bold approach to improve social, environmental, and economic sustainability, which will help protect communities for future generations.

1.4 The strategy provides a strategic framework for how we intend to tackle childhood poverty. It has three key priorities:

- Reduce the level of poverty and time spent in poverty now
- Minimise the harmful effects of poverty on educational achievement, health, and wellbeing now and later in life
- Prevent future poverty for today's children and young people

1.5 Our focus will be on delivering.

- Fewer children living in poverty.
- Fewer families with no qualifications or skills training.
- A reduction of the impact of fuel poverty on families
- An increase in affordable housing
- An increase in average household incomes
- A reduction in families who are unemployed and in receipt of out of work benefits.
- Fewer young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment, or training

1.6 The strategy has been co-produced through the Welfare Reform Anti-Poverty Group, (WRAP) a Sefton partnership of officers, service providers, public health, communities, and voluntary and community representatives.

1.7 Collaboration is central to the strategy as we must work together to maximise our resources and focus on activities that are likely to have a lasting impact on reducing childhood poverty across Sefton and improve the lives of our local communities.

1.8 The strategy will add value to work already being undertaken. It will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued alignment with other policies and strategies and reflect the voices and involvement of people with a lived experience of poverty.

- 1.9 Through continued engagement and consultation, a detailed action plan and performance framework will be developed which will underpin the strategy, setting out how we intend to deliver our outcomes. A governance and performance framework including a risk register will be developed which will help to measure our success against the delivery of the outcomes and will be managed within the WRAP framework. This will be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board
- 1.10 The strategy considers what we can do to reduce the cost of living and to remove financial and other barriers so that low-income families can get early support. It outlines how we can improve physical and mental health of low-income families and considers how narrowing the educational attainment gap between children from low-income families and their better off peers is an essential driver of change.
- 1.11 The strategy considers how we can work together to ensure the places where we live are strong on the fundamental, universal things everyone needs to live well by creating more connected, accessible, and inclusive spaces, which support social cohesion, diversity, and participation.
- 1.12 The strategy is committed to strong leadership in how we, as a Council tackle poverty, and puts poverty at the heart of our role as a service provider, educator, employer, community leader and landlord. It highlights how charities; community groups and local businesses will work together to support our families and communities to be more resilient.
- 1.13 The strategy is aligned to 'Build Back Fairer'. In February 2020, 'Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on' was published which showed life expectancy between the least and most deprived has become steeper and those in the most deprived areas are experiencing shorter life expectancy than more affluent communities. The strategy highlights how partners will continue to work together to tackle inequalities, embed prevention and support better health outcomes for the children, families, and communities of Sefton.

2. Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy: Tackling Child Poverty in Sefton 2022-2030 for adoption and implementation by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.2 To approve the continued engagement of our community, partners and community and voluntary sector organisations to develop a robust set of action plans, aligned to the objectives set out in the strategy and the performance framework which will underpin the strategy.
- 2.3 To continue to commit all available resources to underpin strategy delivery using available funds from Public Health, Communities, Education etc. with a commitment to producing an annual summary detailing key achievements and challenges faced in the preceding year.
- 2.4 To agree to a multi-agency, launch of the strategy in November 2022