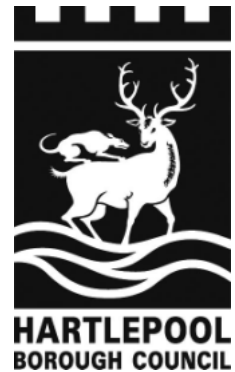


SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA



Friday, 19 March 2010

at 2.00 p.m.

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE:

Councillors C. Akers-Belcher, S Akers-Belcher, Barker, Brash, James, London, A Marshall, J. Marshall, McKenna, Preece, Richardson, Rogan, Shaw, Simmons, Wright and Young

Resident Representatives: Evelyn Leck, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February, 2010
- 3.2 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February, 2010

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

No Items

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS FROM COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

No Items.

6. **FORWARD PLAN**

7. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items

8. **CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING / CORPORATE REPORTS**

No Items.

9. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation

9.1 The Views and Experiences of Other Groups / Bodies in Hartlepool:-

- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Manager*; and
- (b) Verbal Evidence from a Variety of Hartlepool Groups and Bodies.

9.2 Progress / Activities against the Recommendations of the (ANEC) 'Tackling Child Poverty' Task and Finish Group Report – *Scrutiny Manager*

9.3 Feedback from "The Northern Money Conference 2010 – Finance for All" - Covering Report – *Scrutiny Manager*.

9.4 Feedback from the New castle Child Poverty Beacon Open Day – 26 January 2010:-

- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Manager*; and
- (b) Verbal Feedback from Attendees.

Scrutiny Final Reports

9.5 Final Report – Car Parking on Estates in Hartlepool – *Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum*

Members Attendances Working Group

9.6 Update Report – Members Attendances Working Group - *Chair of the Members Attendance Working Group*

Monitoring of Agreed Recommendations Made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

9.7 Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Recommendations Made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees – *Scrutiny Manager*

10. CALL-IN REQUESTS

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of Next Meeting: 26 March 2010 commencing at 2.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

5 FEBRUARY 2010

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors Christopher Akers-Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belcher, Jonathan Brash, Francis London, Ann Marshall, Arthur Preece, Jane Shaw, Chris Simmons, Edna Wright and David Young.

Resident Representatives: Evelyn Leck, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields.

Also Present: Councillors Rob Cook, John Coward, Steve Gibbon and Sheila Griffin.

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves, Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Di Robertson, Government Office North East (GONE)

Rob Mitchell, Association of North East Councils (ANEC)

Carol Jones, Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership

Officers: Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Commissioning
Penny Thompson, Childcare Market Officer
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

156. Apologies for Absence

Members of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee: Councillors Barker, Richardson, and Wright.

Children's Services and Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

Members: Councillors Cranney, Fleet, Worthy. Resident Representatives John Lynch and Co-opted Member David Relton.

Councillor Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods.

157. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor James declared a non-prejudicial interest in minute No. ??

158. Minutes of the meetings held on 15 January and 29 January 2010

Deferred.

159. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

160. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members

No items.

161. Forward Plan

No items.

162. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

No items.

163. Consideration of financial monitoring/corporate reports

No items.

164. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation – Evidence from the Mayor and Portfolio Holders (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, was present at the meeting and outlined his views on the issues of child poverty and financial inclusion. The Mayor submitted apologies for Councillor Jackson, the Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder, who could not attend the meeting.

The Mayor indicated that the issue of child poverty affected nearly every part of his role. Economic regeneration, reducing worklessness, and ensuring fair pay were all high priorities that target the reduction of family poverty and thus child poverty. The Mayor indicated that his role as chair of the Local Strategic Partnership was to ensure that all the partner organisations

understood their role in tackling child poverty. Hartlepool's position in national statistics for child poverty meant this was a priority for all partners but the effects of work now would take a long time to show through.

Household income is a major issue in the town with unemployment major ongoing concern. There were positives and hopes for the future. The potential for regeneration through the booming wind-farm industry was one. Hartlepool had to take advantage of the new big industries of the future. There were though skills shortages in heavy industry with an aging workload and no new young workers coming through.

Another positive in Hartlepool was Surestart. Hartlepool was the first place in the country with town wide coverage. Surestart was not just aimed at children but at families by helping getting parents back into work. School pupil achievement was another area where Hartlepool was starting to see improvement. Children who do well at school do tend to lead more successful adult lives. Great effort was also being made to reduce the numbers of young people not in education employment or training.

Cabinet takes child poverty into consideration through all its decision making. For example, the Dyke House decant to the former Brierton site. Cabinet made exceptional decisions on transport reducing the distance for qualification from 3 to 2 miles for those children affected to assist their families during this process.

There were still many areas to improve. Through the recent budget consultation, Members have highlighted child poverty as a major issue. An action plan for the authority has been developed ahead of new government policy. The Mayor also reported that he was to sign the Child Poverty Pledge on behalf of the town on 25 February.

The authority was maintaining its support to businesses through the recession in order to help maintain jobs. The quality of housing in the town, particularly rented accommodation was a major issue and a lot was being done to address our housing needs; the new empty homes strategy for example.

The Mayor commented that Councillor Hargreaves maintained a high profile on Child Poverty issues, not only locally but regionally through the Association of North East Councils. It was not only the responsibility of Councillor Hargreaves on the executive but was now an important part of all Cabinet portfolios.

Members highlighted one of the major causes of continued poverty for some families; continuing debt. Many were trapped into paying high interest rates through high street stores and catalogue companies. There was also the persistent problem of loan sharks. It was welcomed that Cabinet was considering extending assistance to the Credit Union but many Members did feel that as an authority we can do more to publicise those agencies that can help people in financial difficulty, like the credit union. The Council needed to

work with private landlords to bring rented accommodation up to standard; there were too many instances of poor standards of maintenance.

In relation to the additional transport being provided while Dyke House was decanted to the Brierton site, there was some criticism that the assistance hadn't been well enough publicised and explained to parents. It was also suggested that free transport should be extended to all school children.

There was comment that it was sometimes very difficult for families to claim benefits, some of the forms were difficult to follow and there was insufficient face to face help for people. A Member commented that in a recent local survey, the council came third in agencies that could offer help with claiming benefits. The council needed to do more to publicise the benefits and the assistance that was already available. The Mayor stated that there was assistance for people wishing to claim benefits through the contact centre, remote working staff and the Housing Options Centre.

The Mayor indicated that the Financial Inclusion Partnership was doing some excellent work with some pioneering schemes. Debt is still, however, one of the taboo subjects. The Council have been lobbying Ministers for three years, to allow local authorities to set up banking and loans schemes, but to no avail. The Council does try and work with people who are in debt with council tax etc. The authority was now paying all its bills within ten days and this had made a significant difference to local businesses.

Recommended

That the Mayor be thanked for his presentation to the Committee and response to Members questions.

165. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation – Evidence from Government Office North East (GONE) *(Scrutiny Manager)*

Di Robertson, Child Poverty Advisor with Government Office North East (GONE) gave a presentation to the meeting outlining her role at GONE. Mrs Robertson's presentation also outlined some of the important comparators for child poverty showing the depth of the problem and its association with a wide range of other indicators linked to unemployment, low incomes, poor health and low educational achievement. The presentation went on to give a brief overview of the government's proposed Child Poverty Bill.

Di Robertson also highlighted the need for local authorities and partner organisations to produce Needs Assessments and Strategies. There were good practice examples in the North East, such as Newcastle City Council as a Beacon Authority and a number of other excellent projects around the north east tackling child poverty. There was a number of funding regimes coming to an end in 2010 and 2011 but tackling child poverty needed to be seen as a long term process.

Members commented that while there was many well meaning words said in

meetings like this, they needed to be backed up with direct action. Councils were starting to tackle this issue head-on, but there needed to be support nationally. Government legislation limiting the interest rates that could be legally charged by loans and other companies would be one way in which government could help those on low incomes.

Recommended

That Di Robertson be thanked for her informative presentation.

166. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation – the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) (Scrutiny Manager)

Rob Mitchell, Association of North East Councils (ANEC) outlined the work undertaken by the Tackling Child Poverty Task and Finish Group, Chaired by Councillor Pamela Hargreaves. Copiers of the report were circulated to the meeting.

The Task and Finish Group had been a member led group looking specifically at Child Poverty. It was accepted that in the time allowed, the group could only overview the issue, but it had highlighted some excellent case studies in the North East and had formulated a series of recommendations.

Some of the issues tackled by ANEC had a cross-cutting effect. Discussions had been on-going for quite sometime with the Department of Work and Pensions to change its telephone number to a freephone 0800 number. The DWP was asking this further and had persuaded eight mobile operators to make 0800 numbers free of charge. Many people on low incomes didn't have a home phone but tended to rely on pay as you go mobile phones.

Hartlepool's Credit Union was one scheme that was seen as an excellent project by ANEC. There were still not enough families on low incomes accessing this type of support though. The wider health role was also being tackled through working with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). Saving people on low incomes in rented accommodation was also a major area and the report section on housing showed the work on the push towards zero carbon homes. Home fuel prices were only going to rise in years to come.

In terms of Hartlepool's work and how you may want to work with ANEC, Mr Mitchell indicated that ANEC was a lobbying and advisory body which could assist in linking into the work of other authorities to share best practice.

Councillor Hargreaves who had chaired the Task and Finish Group thanked Rob Mitchell and the officers from ANEC for their support in carrying out the work of the group and producing the final report. Councillor Hargreaves commented that when the group set off was quite evident quite quickly that this is a massive agenda and it was difficult to know where to finish. This is only a start, only scratching the surface.

When looking at many of the case studies, it was quite heartening to see that Hartlepool was already doing many of these things. Credit had to be given to all of the people in the authority that are dedicated to this task.

This was as much about family poverty as child poverty. The report's aim was about making the North east a good place to grow up, not highlighting that this is a poor place with low employment. When talking to new companies about inward investment and we highlight these problems, who would want to come? It was essential that we highlight the positive and promote the qualities we have.

It was true that lots of people and groups were talking about this issue but more action was now needed. Councillor Hargreaves indicated that she would like to see the advisory group putting pressure on central government to address this issue in a coordinated manner with the finance to support it in the long-term.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hargreaves for her comments and indicated that when the financial inclusion partnership started five years ago it looked at national research and to what that meant locally. As a town Hartlepool loses £4m each year through low income families paying high interest rates to loan companies, catalogues and loan sharks. How much difference could that money make if it spent in the local community?

Members highlighted the work of excellent schemes in the town, such as the Family intervention project which has had great success in supporting families in Hartlepool. There was, however, no guarantee of the money from central government to maintain such schemes and government departments now want us to pick up the funding. The government should put that into the central grant. More than 10% of families qualify for that intervention, but we only support 6 families a year.

The problems of alcohol and drug abuse in low income families was also highlighted and officers commented that this was an area of particular concern and the Council was working closely with the Health organisations on this. The alcohol strategy was high on the agenda in Hartlepool and was being investigated by the Health Scrutiny Forum.

There was concern in relation to the DWP's proposal that their support for local schemes would be coordinated through one central voluntary organisation – in the Tees Valley area it was anticipated that this would be Thornaby Five Lamps. There was concern at how this may affect important local projects such as the Credit Union. The Chair indicated that she was aware of this potential move and was meeting those concerned.

Recommended

That Rob Mitchell and Councillor Hargreaves be thanked for their presentations to the meeting and that the ANEC report "Child Poverty: Tackling Child Poverty Task and Finish Group" be welcomed and received.

167. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation – A Review of Work Undertaken in relation to Child Poverty *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Chair asked that the presentation from the Child and adult Services Department be brought to a future meeting on this investigation.

Recommended

That the presentation be deferred to the next meeting of this investigation.

168. Any Other Business

The Chair commented that during the recent bad weather there had been many issues in relation to gritting around the town. Several voluntary groups had offered to assist the Council in gritting areas such as elderly people's bungalows. Unfortunately due to the shortage of grit, this had not been able to be accepted. The Chair indicated that she had spoken to the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities, the Chair of the Neighbourhoods Services Scrutiny Forum and the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and wished to formally ask them with producing an emergency plan for the neighbourhoods of the town to assist in periods of bad weather. The Chair commented that she wished to thank the department for attending to those people who were at particular risk who had contacted the council for assistance.

Recommended

That the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities, the Chair of the Neighbourhoods Services Scrutiny Forum and the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods report to this Committee on an emergency plan for the neighbourhoods of the town to assist in periods of bad weather.

168. Request for Funding From the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Scrutiny manger reported on a request for funding of £116 for attendance at The Northern Money Conference 2010 – Finance for All conference as part of the evidence gathering in relation to the ongoing Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation.

Recommended

That the request for funding for attendance at the above conference totalling £116 be approved from the dedicated overview and scrutiny budget.

169. Call-In Requests

No items.

The meeting concluded at 4.10 p.m.

MARJORIE JAMES

CHAIR

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

12 February 2010

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belchers, Jonathan Brash, Ann Marshall, Arthur Preece, Carl Richardson, Trevor Rogan and Chris Simmons

Resident Representatives:

Evelyn Leck, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields

Officers: Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director (Planning and Services Integration)
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Penny Thompson, Child Care Market Officer
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present:

Councillor Ged Hall, Adult and Public Health Portfolio Holder
Louise Wallace, NHS Hartlepool
Carole Jones, Financial Inclusion Partnership

170. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caroline Barker, Frances London, Michelle Plant, Jane Shaw and Edna Wright.

171. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor James declared a non-prejudicial interest in minute number 180.

172. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2010

Due to the unavailability of the minutes, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

173. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

174. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members

None.

175. Forward Plan – February 2010 to May 2010 (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Scrutiny Manager submitted the Executive's Forward Plan for February to May 2010 November 2009 to February 2010 to provide an opportunity for Members to consider whether any item within the plan should be considered by the Committee or referred to a particular Scrutiny Forum.

With regard to:-

Decision Reference CE37/10: Review of Car Allowances. In relation to the activities of the Workforce Services Working Group, it was highlighted that the entry was incomplete. Members noted that the entry did not reflect that the Working Group was currently ongoing and that its findings would be reported to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. It was requested that this entry be amended to reflect these arrangements.

Decision Reference ED68/10: Allotment Development Strategy scheduled for decision in March 2010, a Member commented that a decision in this regard should not be taken until the draft allotment strategy had been further considered by the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum at the end of February and feedback in response to the consultation process had been received from allotment holders. It was suggested that this be highlighted with the appropriate department.

Decision Reference NS112/07: Victoria Park. Members queried why the H2O centre was still included in the information to be considered by decision makers given previous indications that the centre was no longer to be provided. Members asked officers to explore the need to amend the entry accordingly.

Members also emphasised the importance of Scrutiny involvement in the consultation / decision making process on this issue. The Chair of the Committee agreed to write to the Mayor to seek an assurance that there will be clear and planned Scrutiny involvement in the 'run up' to any decision

and seek clarification as to how and when it is expected that Scrutiny will be consulted as part of the decision making process.

Decision Reference: RN12/09: Consultancy Service Delivery Options Review. A Member queried how this proposal linked in to the previous investigation into use of consultants to which the Chair agreed to request a response to this regard.

Recommended

- (i) That the report and Members comments, be noted.
- (ii) That the comments of this Committee relating to the importance of all Members being involved in the decision making process of Victoria Park be referred to the Mayor.
- (iii) That a response be provided on the links between the Consultancy Service Delivery Options Review and the previous investigation into use of consultants.

176. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

177. Consideration of financial monitoring/corporate reports

None.

178. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion – Evidence from NHS Hartlepool *(Joint presentation from the Acting Director of Health Improvement and Assistant Director of Children's Commissioning)*

As part of the Forum's investigation into Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion the Acting Director of Health Improvement and Assistant Director of Children's Commissioning, NHS Hartlepool, had been invited to attend the meeting to provide the Committee with an understanding of the work undertaken by NHS Hartlepool, as one of the Council's partners, in dealing with the issue of child poverty.

The Acting Director of Health Improvement provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which included the following:-

- NHS Hartlepool - Key Strategic Partner, key partner in Children's Trust Board
- NHS Hartlepool Board endorsed draft Child Poverty Strategy and was committed to addressing the causes and consequences of poverty

- with other partners
- Why is Child Poverty an Important Public Health Issue
- Known Health Implications of Child Poverty
 - low birth weight babies
 - high levels of smoking in deprived wards and cardiovascular disease and cancer
 - long term sickness in adulthood
 - majority of teenage pregnancies are in deprived communities
 - low rates of breastfeeding
 - imbalanced nutrition – childhood obesity
 - rising levels of alcohol related harm
- How can the NHS support this agenda?
 - Provide services such as midwifery, health visiting, school nursing
 - Service specification for Health Child Programme
 - Partner in Children's Centres
 - Universal public programmes – immunisation
 - Statement in each service specification to address child poverty
 - Health Trainers and stop smoking services
 - Healthy Start Vouchers
 - Healthy Eating Initiatives
 - MEND – Physical Activity Programmes
 - Healthy Schools Standard
 - Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
 - Breastfeeding Support Strategy
 - Commission alcohol treatment services
 - Child and Adolescent mental health services
 - Tackling fuel poverty
 - Child protection
 - Sexual health services
 - Drug treatment services
- How will we know we have made a difference?
 - Increased number of women breastfeeding
 - Reduced number of teenage conceptions
 - Lower levels of childhood obesity
 - Increased number of children eligible for free school meals and taking this up
 - Good take up of immunisations and vaccination programmes
 - Raised aspirations – ensure children are physically and mentally well to achieve their ambitions

Following the conclusion of the presentation, discussion ensued which included the following issues:-

- (i) It was highlighted that as a result of a recommendation by this Committee those children eligible for free school meals would automatically receive these unless they opted out of the scheme. This would hopefully result in an increased take up of free school

- meals.
- (ii) In response to a query as to whether the availability of free formula milk contributed to the low levels of breastfeeding, the Committee was advised that there was no research or evidence to suggest this was the case. However, it was acknowledged there was a need to ensure premises were breastfeeding friendly and to actively promote breastfeeding as a first choice.
 - (iii) In relation to joint working between the local authority and the PCT and the Government's view of the local authority as a strategic leader on the child poverty agenda, the importance of a co-ordinated approach at a strategic level, between the PCT and the local authority was highlighted.
 - (iv) It was pointed out that despite the strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy rates and increase the take up of free school meals the results remained poor. The Acting Director reported that actions were taken on any suggestions made. It was envisaged with strong partnership working and actions on feedback provided would help to address these figures.
 - (v) A lengthy discussion ensued on the low take up of free school meals, the need for a balanced and nutritious diet, how to address the stigma around free school meals, the links between poverty and teenage pregnancy rates and the need to tackle the poverty issue first.
 - (vi) A Member commented on the role of the health trainers, the lack of information displayed in community centres and the need to ensure services of this type were communicated effectively to the public.
 - (vii) It was suggested that work needed to be undertaken in educating parents on budgeting and cooking skills to encourage healthy eating.
 - (viii) A number of suggestions were made on how to encourage breastfeeding which included highlighting the benefits of breastfeeding in the educational curriculum, reviewing current breastfeeding facilities and providing sufficient breastfeeding friendly premises, the possibility of introducing incentives and encouraging the clothing industry to provide appropriate clothing. The Acting Director advised that the strategy included Positive Parenting courses in Children's Centres which included cooking skills and healthy eating issues.
 - (ix) Some concern was expressed in relation to a recent advert for a Breastfeeding Co-ordinator and the essential requirements of the post was that the candidate must be a qualified nurse or midwife and educated to degree level. It was considered that this criteria may restrict a number of suitable applicants. The Assistant Director provided details of how the essential requirements had been determined and indicated that the Breastfeeding Strategy would be delivered by a number of support staff with various skills and backgrounds.
 - (x) The role of Health Trainers and the importance of Health Trainers being a professional role model for the service they were

- promoting was emphasised.
- (xi) Reference was made to the Healthy Child Programme and food poverty and the benefits of healthy start vouchers.
 - (xii) The Committee discussed smoking and alcohol related health concerns including alcohol accessibility and price. Concerns were raised regarding the cost of non-alcoholic drinks and that this may be a contributing factor to the high levels of alcohol consumption.
 - (xiii) Following discussion on teenage pregnancy statistics, it was suggested that previous strategies to engage with young people which demonstrated the effects of drug and alcohol on babies and the use of electronic pregnancy empathy bellies should be further utilised.
 - (xiv) Teaching young people to cook healthy meals and housekeeping skills in school technology classes was suggested.
 - (xv) A Member queried whether any evidence had been collated on the reasons why mothers choose bottle feeding over breastfeeding. Members were advised that no research in this regard had been undertaken. However, this was an area that needed to be explored. Members went on to outline the benefits of conducting such research.
 - (xvi) A query was raised in relation to publicising the work undertaken and services provided by NHS Hartlepool and the effectiveness in terms of take up of the services provided. The Assistant Director referred to the positive outcomes as set out in a recent report.
 - (xvii) In response to a question regarding the availability of funding for community groups to assist with child poverty issues, it was reported that alongside the child poverty action plan, the Economic Development Division worked closely with community groups to source relevant funding. Economic Development were the accountable body for the Going Forward Project, in partnership with the Connexions Service and had secured funding for training providers to deliver innovative activities for 14 to 19 year olds at risk of becoming disengaged from mainstream schooling or who were currently classified as not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Recommended

That the information given be noted and suggestions be utilised to assist the Committee in completing its investigation.

179. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion – Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health *(Scrutiny Manager)*

In accordance with the wishes of the Committee, invitations had been extended to the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health Services to attend the meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing

investigation into 'Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion'.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health was in attendance and addressed the Committee in relation to the key questions as highlighted in the report with regard to roles and responsibilities in relation to the prevention of child poverty and financial inclusion, his views on child poverty levels, his views on the levels of child poverty locally in comparison to national and regional levels, what initiatives and practices could have a significant impact on the reduction of child poverty together with any suggested areas for improvement.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that his role was to respond to town wide issues which included deprivation in terms of poverty and health. It was well documented that some wards in Hartlepool were the most deprived in the country. However, it was acknowledged that there were areas of concern in more affluent areas. The importance of poverty targets continuing to be challenging was highlighted and the level of unclaimed benefits which contributed to poverty. The need to address the wider issue of benefit stigma was emphasised. The Portfolio Holder referred to a number of factors that contributed to poverty and which included the level of unclaimed benefits and the need to address the wider issue of benefits stigma, the lack of budgeting and cooking skills as well as fuel poverty. It was highlighted that the tax credit system had assisted a number of families out of poverty.

In relation to the Portfolio Holder's priorities in addressing this issue, the Committee was advised that the local authority needed to continue to work in partnership with other sectors to raise awareness. Reference was made to the impact of child/family poverty being a consideration in all Council decisions and the need for inclusion as a standard item on all Council reports.

The Portfolio Holder made reference to Connected Care and its effectiveness in demonstrating what the voluntary sector could do in an area to bridge the gap between individuals and professionals.

Recommended

That the information given, be noted and the comments of the Committee and evidence provided be used to assist with the scrutiny investigation.

180. Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion Investigation– Evidence from Financial Inclusion Partnership – Covering Report (*Scrutiny Manager*)

As part of the Forum's investigation into Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion a representative from the Financial Inclusion Partnership had been invited to attend the meeting to provide a presentation on the impact of

financial exclusion on the issue of Child Poverty nationally and locally and the work being undertaken nationally and locally to deal with the issue.

The representative provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which include the following issues:-

- Tackling Financial Exclusion – integral part of Government's anti-poverty initiative
- Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) Priorities
 - Increase access to banking
 - Increase access to affordable credit
 - Increase access to face to face money advice
- Financial Inclusion Task Force and Financial Inclusion Fund established to drive these initiatives forward
- Definition of Financial Exclusion – no assets, no savings, no insurance, no bank account, no affordable credit, no access to money advice
- 6.1 million families report difficulties meeting debt repayments and household bills
- Reliance on mail-order catalogues, doorstep and illegal lenders
- Contributory factors to financial exclusion, debt and poverty
- Areas of deprivation in Hartlepool
- Financial Inclusion National Progress
 - In 2004 2.8 million adults were without access to bank account
 - Improved in 2006 to 2 million adults
 - Since 2006 third sector lenders eg Credit Unions and Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI) have made 46,000 low cost loans
 - 500 new Money Advice Advisors have been trained
 - Research shows that the under 40's have lower financial capability
 - Under 25's more vulnerable when making financial decisions
- Financial Inclusion in Hartlepool – Progress
 - In 2007 95.35% of people have a bank, post office or building society account
 - 47% of all households in the Borough have poor credit rating
 - Hartlepool in bottom 50 of over 400 local authority areas in UK
 - CAB and West View Advice Resource Centre report 85% of enquiries are money advice/debt related
 - Applications for Debt Relief Orders and bankruptcies are increasing rapidly
 - 5 out of 9 households fall into groups described as 'on the breadline', 'credit hungry' or 'elderly deprivation'
- 26% of population in Hartlepool described as on the breadline households
- 13.7% of population in Hartlepool described as credit hungry families
- 15.2% of population in Hartlepool described as elderly deprivation families
- How our partners are tackling Financial Exclusion and Child Poverty
- Actions to date
 - promoting benefits of Credit Union membership

- provision of free legal advice outreach service
- raising awareness of and access to free money advice
- articles and press releases to residents re: predatory lenders, financial scams etc
- referral arrangements between partners
- best practice and experience sharing
- Ongoing and future work
 - loan shark campaign, developing outreach services, developing additional financial capability support in schools, developing advice and information services for students, rolling out money matters road shows, presentations to community groups, seeking closer links with community groups, neighbourhood panels, residents associations, seeking closer links with PCT/NTHNHS Trust/GPs/Health Professionals, developing mentoring service on FIN matters with local businesses, promoting opportunities for income maximisation, reducing fuel poverty, winter warmth campaign

CLLR PREECE LEFT THE MEETING FOLLOWING WHICH IT WAS NOTED THAT THE MEETING WAS NOW INQUORATE

Discussion ensued which included the following issues:-

- (i) In response to a request for clarification on the wider advantages to the local economy of supporting the financial inclusion partnership, Members were advised that the work and advice of the partnership, as detailed in the presentation, raised awareness of access to free money advice including benefit maximisation which should result in benefits to the local economy.
- (ii) Reference was made to the number of households without access to any kind of bank account, the excessive profits of high interest loan companies, loan shark problems and methods of addressing these issues. .
- (iii) It was suggested that alternative methods of communication be utilised on the benefits of the financial inclusion partnership as well as wider publication of this information. The possibility of including information on annual council tax envelopes and providing practical examples of price comparisons to assist lenders in making the right choice were recommended.
- (iv) In response to a query regarding the number of people affected by loan sharks, the representative from the Financial Inclusion Partnership stated that no figures had been collated at this stage, however, this issue could be further explored with those affected.
- (v) The Committee were of the view that there was a need for the Council to work in partnership with other agencies with a view to securing capital investment to relieve financial poverty and assist families in need.

Recommended

That the information given, be noted and the comments of the Committee and evidence provided be used to assist with the scrutiny investigation.

181. Feedback from the Newcastle Child Poverty Beacon Open Day and Verbal Feedback from Attendees – 26 January 2010 *(Scrutiny Manager)*

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

182. Request for Items for Discussion – Joint Cabinet/Scrutiny Event of 15 March 2010 *(Scrutiny Manager)*

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next meeting

183. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees *(Scrutiny Manager)*

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

184. Scrutiny Involvement in the Service Planning Process for 2010/11 - Timetable *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that as in previous years, Scrutiny involvement continued to play a key role in the development of the authority's service planning arrangements and, as such, consideration was sought of a timetable for the 2010/11 process.

A timetable for the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and four standing scrutiny forums with the exception of the Health Scrutiny Forum had been devised in consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, a copy of which was attached at Appendix A.

Recommended

That the proposed timetable and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's and four standing scrutiny forums involvement in the service planning process for 2010/11, be noted.

185. Call-In Requests

None.

The meeting concluded at 4.52 pm.

CHAIR

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: CHILD POVERTY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION –
THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF OTHER
GROUPS / BODIES IN HARTLEPOOL – COVERING
REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members that representative's from a variety of groups and bodies in Hartlepool will be in attendance at today's meeting to contribute to the Committee's ongoing child poverty / financial inclusion investigation.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 18 September 2009, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Committee for this scrutiny investigation. As relevant sources of evidence Members identified a number of bodies and groups that they would like to be invited to participate in the investigation.
- 2.2 In accordance with the wishes of the Committee, invitations have been extended to the following groups / bodies to attend today's meeting, subject to availability:

- Child Poverty Action Group;
- Hartlepool CAB;
- Department of Work and Pensions (Job Centre Plus);
- Children's Trust;
- Banardos;
- Learning and Skills Council;
- HVDA and Community Network;
- Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group;
- Connected Care;
- Hartlepool Families First;
- West View Project; and
- Manor Residents Association.

2.3 In inviting today's meeting each of these organisations has been asked to consider the following questions:-

- 1) What work have / are you involved in, in tackling this issue of Child poverty in your area?
- 2) What are your views on the work being undertaken in Hartlepool on this issue, including in relation to partnership working?
- 3) What else do you think can or needs to be done to tackle this issue?

2.4 Please note that these questions are only intended to form a starting point for discussions with the representatives present and all other questions and views will be welcomed. At the time that this report being circulated confirmation had been received of attendance by representatives from Connected Care and Manor residents Association. Confirmation of representatives from other bodies will be available closer to the meeting.

2.5 Should Members wish an invitation to be extended to any other groups, who where not previously identified as part of the scoping process, please do not hesitate to contact the Scrutiny Manager before today's meeting who will endeavour to facilitate this.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That Members note the content of both this report and evidence provided by those representative's present from other groups and bodies in Hartlepool, seeking clarification on any relevant issues where felt appropriate.

Contact Officer:- Joan Nominton – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
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Email: joan.nominton@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Child Poverty' - Scoping Report' presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18 September 2009.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: 'CHILD POVERTY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION' -
PROGRESS / ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE (ANEC) 'TACKLING
CHILD POVERTY' TASK AND FINISH GROUP
REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update in relation to the Council, and its partners, views / activities in relation to the recommendations of the Association of North East Council (ANEC) 'Tackling Child Poverty' Task and Finish Group report.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 5 February 2010, a report was presented by Rob Mitchell from ANEC regarding the outcome of research and work undertaken by ANEC in relation to the child poverty issue. During the course of discussions, attention was drawn to the ANEC Task and Finish Group's 'Child Poverty: Tackling Child Poverty' report, with particular emphasis placed on the importance for all local authorities taking into consideration / working towards its recommendations. This view was supported by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development who had been a member of the Task and Finish Group and continues to play a key role in dealing with the issue of child poverty in Hartlepool.
- 2.2 A copy of the Task and Finish Group report is provided at **Appendix A**.
- 2.3 Given the view expressed at the meeting on the 5 February 2010, the Committee may find it useful to obtain an understanding of, and explore, our authority's (and partners) views and activities in relation to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. In order to facilitate further discussion, this information is provided at **Appendix B** (please note that information was still being awaited from partners at the time of production of

this agenda. As such, Appendix B will be circulated under separate cover prior to the meeting).

- 2.4 Members are asked to consider the information provided with a view to the identification of possible recommendations for inclusion in the Committee's final report.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members note the content of Appendices A and B, seeking clarification on any relevant issues, and identify possible recommendations for inclusion in Committee's final report.

Contact Officer:- Joan Nominton – Scrutiny Manager
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Tel: 01429 284142
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Child Poverty' - Scoping Report' presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18 September 2009; and
- (ii) Reports and agendas from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meeting on 5 February 2010.



CHILD POVERTY:

Tackling Child Poverty Task And Finish Group
October 2009

ASSOCIATION OF NORTH EAST COUNCILS FINAL REPORT: TACKLING CHILD POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

"This should be the best place to grow up"

Foreword

When the Association agreed to set up this Task & Finish Group, Cllr Chris McEwan, Darlington Borough Council said,

"Tackling child poverty? This is precisely the kind of issue that persuaded me to get actively involved in politics and stand for election as a councillor in the first place – so I could do something about it."

This sentiment is echoed throughout the North East. There is a drive and determination amongst politicians at all levels and in all political parties to eradicate child poverty, once and for all. Councillors right across the region will be using their ward surgeries, their lobbying and partnership skills and their corporate responsibilities to tackle this most challenging of issues, on a daily basis.

In the North East, we have a long history of partnership working across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. The Association will continue to build on this strength and work closely with the North East Child Poverty Coalition, which brings many key partners together in a single grouping – so that we can channel our efforts to those areas where we can make a real difference across the region.

The challenge of tackling child poverty is very real. New legislation will soon establish local government's leadership role, working with partners, to tackle the issue. The work that the Association has so far done, through this report, is a start and, I hope, a significant contribution as we strive to make this region the 'best place to grow up'.



Cllr Mick Henry, Chair,
Association of North East Councils



Introduction

The title of the report, adopted from the North East Child Poverty Coalition, encapsulates the ambition of councillors in setting up the Task & Finish Group to look at child poverty. Child poverty still blights the North East. This report, with a range of recommendations for local government, partner agencies and the Government, is intended to promote action on a number of fronts to help reduce and ultimately eradicate child poverty from the region.

Councillors on the Task & Finish Group were acutely aware that the child poverty challenge is significant. It is deep-rooted, highly complex and requires a concerted effort by so many people at all levels in our organisations, from political leaders and chief executives, to front-line staff who can spot opportunities to make life just that little bit easier for some of our most vulnerable children and families.

With this in mind, it was never possible to examine all aspects of child poverty. Some areas, like the economy as a sustainable route out of poverty, would require a Task & Finish Group of its own. Councillors had a clear challenge: to identify a small number of areas where we could examine specific themes in some detail and arrive at some recommendations for action.

Our work through the Association's Task & Finish Group is just a start. There are many more areas to consider that were beyond the scope of this work. We know that this work has provided a stimulus for others in the region. For example, this report is being used to support reviews of Sustainable Community Strategies, scrutiny reviews of child poverty and councils' preparations for meeting the challenges of the new Child Poverty legislation. All of this, of course, builds on the excellent work already being undertaken over many years by the region's councils and partners in

tackling child poverty and the case studies set out in this report provide a small illustration of what is being done locally.

The title of this report, "This should be the best place to grow up", is the vision for tackling child poverty adopted by the North East Child Poverty Coalition. In working towards that vision, the Coalition has identified four over-arching themes to shape its work and in recognition of the value of working in partnership to eradicate child poverty, the recommendations in this report have been summarised in an appendix under those themes which are: **BEST START**-All children in the North East have the best start in life; **BEST SUPPORT**-All parents in the region have the resources and skills to provide for their children's needs; **BEST SERVICES**-All children in the region are supported by the best services offering the best opportunities; and **BEST PLACES**-All communities in the region will be places where all children have opportunities to realise their potential.

There are also opportunities to share our work with and learn from colleagues in the European Union as part of "2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion".

Councillors on the Task & Finish Group were united in wanting to ensure all councillors use all opportunities to take steps to eradicate child poverty from our region.



Cllr Pamela Hargreaves
Chair, Task & Finish Group

Child Poverty – The Context

National Policy Framework

Since announcing its aim in 1999 of eradicating child poverty by 2020 the Government has pursued a national strategy based on:

- An economic strategy to maximise employment;
- Policies to encourage entry to work – the New Deals;
- Policies designed to make work pay including the national minimum wage, improvements in in-work benefits (child benefits, child tax credits, working tax credits and child care tax credits);
- Improvements in out of work benefits;
- Large increases in public expenditure on education, health, transport and childcare.

In 2007 the Government set up the Child Poverty Unit (CPU) to bring together key officials in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and HM Treasury. The CPU has developed a range of pilot schemes to test and explore new approaches to tackling child poverty. The 2008 Budget provided £125 million from 2008–2011 for this activity to enable local authorities, with their partners, to develop innovative approaches to tackling child poverty tailored to their local context. In the North East the following schemes are part of these pilot activities:

- *Tyne Gateway Partnership – Community Entrepreneurs* joint project in North and South Tyneside (see case study below)
- *Work-focused Services in Children's Centres* are being established in Redcar and Cleveland (see case study below).
- *Child poverty Family Intervention Projects* are being established in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, and South Tyneside
- Newcastle has been awarded Beacon status on *Preventing and Tackling Child Poverty*.

Government policy on child poverty is comprehensive covering almost every sphere of life, including housing, financial inclusion, health, transport, education, parenting and many other things. Tackling child poverty involves cross-Government effort. While the child poverty target is owned by HM Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions, it is clear that several other departments have major contributions to make. As well as the income poverty headline targets, other targets have been set through the national Public Service Agreements and the negotiation of Local Area Agreements for health, employment, education, social care and transport which have resonance with the child poverty and social inclusion agenda.



Following publication of *Every Child Matters*, children's services were brought together under a new Minister for Children and Families. These changes supported more joined-up policy development and delivery for early years services, education, parenting support and wider children's services. *Every Child Matters* highlights the Government's aim of putting support for parents and carers at the heart of its approach to improving outcomes for children, and its wish to create more and better universal and targeted services open to families as and when they need them. The Government's vision is for all parents to be supported in their parenting roles, and to have access to universal parenting support in the form of information and advice. This approach is targeted on the social aspects of child poverty.

In June 2009 the Government introduced a draft Child Poverty Bill which will enshrine its commitment to eradicate child poverty in legislation. As well as providing a definition of what child poverty eradication means and how it will be measured the Bill makes a number of key proposals. It commits the government to producing a national strategy to provide a cross departmental drive for sustained action addressing issues affecting child poverty. To support and direct the national strategy a national commission of independent experts will be set up to advise the Government. To ensure child poverty remains a priority and that Government is accountable for it, annual progress reports will be produced. To ensure local action on child poverty by local authorities and their partners there is also a requirement that local authorities lead on the production of a local needs assessment and local strategies for child poverty. To ensure others are committed and contribute to this the Bill will include a duty to cooperate on a list of named bodies.

The Regional Challenge

There are at least four reasons why child poverty matters. First, poverty damages the lives of children. Second, poor children tend to become poor adults. Third, poor adults tend to produce poor children. Fourth, this creates a cycle of poverty that causes major damage to society. The latest available data on the Government's standard relative income poverty measure (household income below 60% of the contemporary mean) shows that for 2007/08, before taking into account housing costs, 28% of children in the North East were at risk of being in poverty. This represents a total of 140,000 children. If housing costs were taken into account these figures rise to 33% and 165,000 respectively.

In this region the child poverty rate is, amongst the different household categories, highest in lone parents (46%), workless families (66%) and tenants of social landlords (58%). Poverty is not exclusive to these household types. Data shows that 52% of the region's poor children live in 'couple' families, 45% have a parent in employment and 33% live in homes which are owned by the parent / carer. Data derived from the Family Resources Survey shows that children in the North East experience levels of deprivation second only to London in the areas such as not having sufficient bedrooms, not having at least a 1 week holiday away from home each year and not having friends coming around for meals.

Data on the proportions of children living in households dependent on out of work benefits shows the region has one of the highest rates nationally. The pattern of this also varies across the region in distribution and patterns of concentration. CLG data on child well-being also shows, across the different aspects of well-being, the region rates poorly nationally and with similar variations in distribution. This makes the need for greater flexibility and targeting of child poverty interventions at a local level of greater importance.

Case Study: Tyne Gateway Partnership – Community Entrepreneurs National Pilot Project

North and South Tyneside Councils were jointly awarded over £1.5m by DCSF for a project to tackle child poverty. The project is delivered by a joint LSP Board called the 'Tyne Gateway Partnership' and aims to recruit 20 parents or carers to become 'community entrepreneurs' who will work in their own neighbourhoods to develop their own pathways out of poverty. Through the existing local authority, health and voluntary / community services over 50 local people have been identified who were already working to improve things for families and children. From these 50, 30 have been selected to take part in a course specifically designed for this project.

The course involves helping people recognise and develop their personal strengths, deal with challenges and difficulties, improve their basic skills, job application and interview skills as well as identifying how they would like to improve their communities. Half way through the course they will be able to apply for one of the 20 full time posts. Those appointed will work as a team across the two authorities, making the

links between all public sector services in deprived areas, increasing take up of key benefits, and creating route-ways into employment opportunities in partnership with local employers in the public and private sector. Working across the two authorities as one team is important as expanding the boundaries – both geographic and aspirational – is an important part of broadening the opportunities open to children and families in the area.

For the Community Entrepreneurs, making this big step into employment is a significant challenge and so they will be supported by tailored packages of work-based learning, family support and mentoring by senior council officers. Commencing in 2010 they will undertake the first level of a Foundation degree in 'Community Entrepreneurship' which will make the links between community development, economic development and family support. Each Community Entrepreneur will then work with up to 10 families in their own neighbourhoods and begin to build their 'pathways out of poverty' – whether they be through increasing access to services for families, skills development to link with local employment opportunities or supporting new business ideas.

Case Study: Redcar and Cleveland 'Pathways to Prospects'

Redcar and Cleveland Council successfully bid to become one of 10 national 'Work Focussed Services in Children's Centres' projects. The child poverty pilot builds upon an established successful partnership between Children's Centres and Jobcentre Plus. The pilot targets parents who are at varying stages of readiness for employment. Some parents experience a deficit in the basic employment skills e.g. self-confidence or basic literacy skills whilst others will almost be ready to start work. The target group of parents will consist of a mixture of families who are



already accessing Children's Centres plus those whose first contact with the centre will be through this pilot.

Following stakeholder and community launch events in January 2009 at each of the three pilot Children's Centres many parents signed up to the pilot. Each centre has a full time Jobcentre Plus Advisor, (Pathways to Prospects Advisor), who work as part of the multi-disciplinary team in the Children Centres. These Advisors are linked, as an integral part, to all current service delivery to raise communities' knowledge of this enhanced service.

The Pathways to Prospects Advisors work with Project Workers who have been specifically recruited to take part in the programme. It is the responsibility of the Project Worker to ensure that all families are able to access the pilot, with a special focus on vulnerable families and those who may be considered hard to reach. Each parent has a Personalised Intervention Plan (PIP) which is outcome based and focuses on moving successfully into or towards employment. The PIP includes an individual Learning and Development Programme linked to an employment pathway.

Through the project it is anticipated that an increased number of families, including the hard to reach, will access services and training designed to raise self esteem and support the development of basic skills. There will also be an increased number of parents participating in the Children's Centres volunteer programme and parents will have appropriate support from the Children's Centre Employment Buddy scheme to ensure that the Children's Centre Employment Services are tailored to meet individual need. In addition the Pathways to Prospects Advisor will support parents to make significant and measurable steps towards gaining employment. Parents who are successfully employed will receive continued support from the programme for as long as needed. As of September 2009, 167 individuals have

engaged in the pilot with nine offered employment and 14 volunteers recruited. In addition 56 people are engaged in training and an increasing number of families have been provided with support to access correct benefits and manage debts and 20 parents have been supported with applications and shortlisted for interview at Tesco for a "family friendly" shift.

Case Study: Northumberland Community Trust based services to tackle poverty

Northumberland County Council is committed to transforming the way that it does business. The commitment is to develop community focused services with the capacity and capability to understand fully and address comprehensively the needs and requirements of families and households.

The aim is to develop Community Trust arrangements that will, with support and challenge from the centre, be enabled to define local priorities and then shape and commission services to deliver better outcomes.

A proof of concept pilot is being supported in Berwick where poverty has been defined as a key issue. The Berwick Community Trust will bring together partners to form a task and finish group, from such organisations as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the Children's Centre, the Integrated Social Care Team, Schools, Community Policing and Safety, the voluntary and community sector and others to develop shared and integrated approaches to poverty including information, advice and guidance; community awareness raising on issues relating to poverty; staff briefings on welfare rights; community transport and childcare plans designed to ameliorate the impact of poverty; and the promotion of free school meals eligibility and take-up.

The need to address the causes as well as the effects of poverty

Two key issues were agreed early on by the Task & Finish Group in relation to the overall approach to tackling child poverty. First, the Group was clear that it was important to examine the causes and effects of child poverty. Members agreed that it was not simply an economic issue of household income levels, but that many aspects of social, economic and environmental policy may impact on child poverty, reflecting local government's wider societal role and the role of partner agencies. In particular, Members were keen to ensure that poverty of aspiration and opportunity were noted as key to breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty. Linked to this, it was noted that the term 'child poverty' may not be adequate as the child may be in poverty due to the circumstances of the family. It was agreed to ensure the work of the Group reflected family poverty.

Benefits

The Group considered a range of issues in relation to the benefit system, noting the economic downturn may require changes to the way benefits are administered and the way services are provided. The region was represented on the Government's independently chaired Child Poverty Taskforce, by Newcastle's Welfare Rights Manager. Early findings of the Taskforce were that benefits and tax credits are essential to tackling poverty. The Government provides financial support to make sure that work pays and help families who cannot work. The tax and benefit system is designed to provide help for all, and extra help for those who need it most, whilst still maintaining incentives to work.

Many families fail to take up the financial support that they are entitled to as demonstrated by the following Taskforce figures.

Take up by non-pensioner benefit units 2006/7	Expenditure (% of national budget for each benefit actually spent)
Income Support	87% - 95%
Housing Benefit	84% - 92%
Council Tax Benefit	75% - 84%
Jobseeker's Allowance (income based)	52% - 64%
Child Tax Credit	89% - 93%
Working Tax Credit	79% - 85%

Further work undertaken in the region to estimate the impact of this in the North East suggests some significant under-claiming of benefits with consequently major impacts on the local economy.

According to figures based on a calculation derived from estimated take up rates, unclaimed benefits¹ in this region are estimated to be in the range of £501 and £894m p.a. (based on 2006/07 figures). A Local Multiplier (LM3) tool has been developed by New Economics Foundation (NEF) to calculate the multiplier effect in the local economy. It has worked with Newham Council Social Regeneration Unit in London and Lancashire County Council on benefit take up. Newham calculated an LM3 score of 1.77 which means that each £1 spent generates £1.77 in the local economy. If the LM3 score of 1.77 is replicated in the North East, the benefit to the economy could be between £887m and £1.58bn p.a. at 2006-07 levels.

¹ Estimated unclaimed council tax and housing benefits, pension credit, income support, job seekers allowance, working tax credit and child tax credit



The Government Taskforce noted that barriers to take-up include:

- Complexity of benefit system, lack of knowledge
- Language and literacy problems
- Stigma – mixed messages from Government
- Loss of stability of income
- People aren't always better off – e.g. those with a mortgage
- Problems accessing tax credits and benefit offices for those without landlines
- Lack of affordable childcare

Recommendation: That Government instigates a whole scale review of the tax credit and benefits system with the aim of making the system simpler. This would encourage take-up of entitlements and more closely fit with the overall strategy for helping people off benefits and into work and in turn help to create a culture of work as the norm for the region's children. The review should build into the benefits system more incentives to take up work e.g. around tapering of the reduction in benefit payments to ensure personal incomes rise with paid employment; moves towards a single form for accessing all benefits, with information shared across benefits 'providers'; and become more flexible to respond to families' changing circumstances, e.g. irregular earnings from jobs, so that a stable (but low) income from benefits is not seen as more attractive to families than working. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to identify a suitable North East location to pilot new approaches.

Members noted that many front line staff that come into contact with low income families could be better equipped to be alert to ask if they are claiming their full entitlement and to sign-post them on to advice agencies appropriately. This may require certain employers to consider some additional training to integrate child poverty into mainstream activity. The kinds of professional front-line staff would include teachers, children's centre staff, health visitors, etc.

Recommendation: That Children's Trusts be asked to consider a regional approach to increasing the capacity of front-line staff (including voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers) to help increase benefit entitlement take-up.

There are many practical measures that councils and partner agencies can do to help increase benefit take-up. The Task & Finish Group heard from one such authority, Durham, which had successfully implemented a Free School Meals Take-up campaign (see case study).

Case Study: Co Durham free school meals (FSM) take-up campaign

In January 2007 County Durham Welfare Rights Team undertook a campaign to help raise awareness and take-up of free school meals (FSM) across both primary and secondary schools. The aim was to help families in greatest need by addressing child poverty and obesity by increasing take-up of healthy school meals and FSM funding entitlements. As an added financial incentive DCSF funding rules at the time meant that secondary schools above a 20% FSM threshold qualified for additional funds. The campaign was based on a combination of leaflets, posters, press/radio media messages and direct welfare rights

advice and support targeted at key locations. As a result of the campaign 131 additional FSM allocations were made to secondary school children worth over £40,000 (per annum) to their families and 5 extra secondary schools qualified for DCSF funding equating to over £600,000. In the primary schools an additional 441 extra FSM allocations were made equating to over £137,000 (per annum) of payments to families in greatest need.

The benefits of this campaign have informed a further Free School Meals initiative in Durham, in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust – see the 'health' section.

Recommendations: That councils, through LSPs, the Regional Welfare Rights Managers' Network and partners including Jobcentre Plus, instigate a range of practical take-up campaigns and initiatives including consideration of installing a free to use telephone in certain locations for potential claimants to access benefits, removing the barrier of the cost of phone calls to apply, and the availability of space for welfare rights staff to confidentially discuss benefits issues with potential claimants.

That the DWP be encouraged to implement the Government's Social Security Advisory Committee guidance to adopt the '03' telephone code for all enquiries for its benefits as a way of removing cost of calls as a barrier.

The Task & Finish Group noted that part of the responsibility for removing stigma lies with Government. Whilst Government campaigns to both increase take-up of benefits, e.g. Working Family Tax Credits, and to reduce benefit fraud are both laudable in their own right, care is needed to ensure the timing of both and the messages portrayed do not add to stigma associated with benefits and claimants, thus deterring some families claiming their entitlement. The Government's Child Poverty Unit should be asked to consider this given its cross-Government remit.

Recommendation: That the Child Poverty Unit be asked to co-ordinate, across Government Departments, publicity campaigns around benefits (take-up and anti-fraud) to minimise stigma, under the "Real Help Now" banner.

Finally, it was noted that the most effective way to increase take-up of benefits is through dedicated face-to-face support. Public and voluntary & community sector provision is stretched to capacity, especially in the current recession. The role of other agencies in supporting benefits take-up should be considered in more detail and the Government may wish to consider commissioning research into the wider social, health and economic impacts of benefit take-up campaigns. The following examples focus on health, although the same may be applied to other parts of the public sector.

In relation to health, there is some evidence that there are some real health benefits to be derived from increased take-up, indicating that multi-agency funding for welfare rights services should be considered. Research by Moffatt and Scambler, (Ageing and Society, 2008, Cambridge University Press) found that through increased take-up of benefits amongst the older population, 'the impact of additional resources was considerable and included: increased affordability of necessities and occasional



expenses; increased capacity to cope with emergencies; and reduced stress related to financial worries'. Further research would be required to test whether health benefits would be derived amongst children and families where benefit take-up campaigns are aimed at them.

Research by Reading, Steel and Reynolds (2002, Blackwell Science Ltd, *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 28,1) into the impact of Citizens Advice in primary care for families with young children concluded that 'it may have positive effects on maternal and child health' and 'an advice service is a useful component of primary health care for young families'.

Finally, a systematic review of the health, social and financial impacts of welfare rights advice delivered in healthcare settings (Adams et. al. see <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/81>) looked at 55 separate studies as part of its review and concluded, 'there is evidence that welfare rights advice delivered in healthcare settings results in financial benefits. There was little evidence that the advice resulted in measurable health or social benefits. This is primarily due to a lack of good quality evidence, rather than evidence of an absence of effect'.

Recommendation: That the region's Institute for Local Governance and Centre for Translational Research in Public Health be asked to liaise to ensure that research is carried out into the health (and other) gains of increased welfare benefits take-up amongst children and families in poverty.

Although there was not the scope in the Task & Finish Group to explore employability as a route out of poverty, the following case study is offered as just one example of a project aimed at supporting families off benefits and into work.

Case Study: Families Work, Gateshead

The Child Poverty Initiative project was delivered in 2008-9 and was established to target employability interventions to households and families, in particular those with a household income of less than £20,000 per annum. The project differed from existing mainstream provision, which mainly targeted residents on benefits and not those whose partners were claiming benefit on their behalf.

The project aimed to provide a direct contribution to the Regional Employability Framework by working to reduce the number of working age families with children dependent on key benefits. It aimed to promote formal childcare and the benefits of accessing this to enable beneficiaries to return to work. Specifically the project aims to contribute to halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020, reducing the proportion of children living in households where no-one is working, helping 70% of lone parents back into work and encouraging second earners in the family and increase the take up of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

The project was delivered by the Family Learning department of Gateshead MBC and was promoted within a range of community centres and venues across the target areas but was focused on three centres in the Borough. The project was successful in coordinating delivery with existing events at the three community centres, taking advantage of opportunities to engage with target clients on an informal basis. The informal and flexible approach adopted (Childcare Chats) proved effective in engaging with target clients and signposting them to available support.

Engaged clients were encouraged to attend a weekly Families Work training scheme. This was an effective method of encouraging the clients to take more ownership of their own learning and also provided benefits in terms of strong retention rates. Childcare was provided on-site at each of the community venues. This was critical as many of the clients had limited experience of placing their children in the care of others.

The project engaged with a total of 118 people in community settings of which 65 had taken part in Childcare Chat sessions and been provided with relevant information about childcare. Of these 20 beneficiaries enrolled on and completed a Families Working Together course, as a result 15 of these enrolled on further courses including Family Maths (10 week course) and/or Happy and Healthy Eating (6 week course).

Early Years and child care

Members examined the approach taken by staff at New Silksworth Infant School, Sunderland as a means to helping to alleviate child poverty.

Case Study: New Silksworth Infant School, Sunderland

New Silksworth Infant School has developed a family centred approach to learning. A DVD has been produced showing how this was achieved featuring contributions from staff, parents and the children themselves. The process started with an all staff training day which identified that the children should be at the centre of learning through a teacher, child and family philosophy. Through this the school has developed different expertise including areas such as health.

The school provides a completely flexible service across daycare, nursery and the main school. Through this provision, staff maintain contact with parents and families which is seen as part of the service but also enables the early signs of family difficulties to be picked up. In response to some of these issues, staff have also developed local agreements with other service providers e.g. Jobcentre Plus who come into the school to deliver training and other advisory services directly to parents and carers. Staff have also been successful in getting parents to contribute to school policy and practice through informal coffee mornings. An example of this is the introduction of a 'healthy packed lunch' policy which was developed with direct input from parents.

The child centred approach offered by staff at New Silksworth Infant School was seen as an exemplar and bodies like the RIEP, Schools North East and others should be encouraged to share such examples, especially when backed with hard evidence of the impact that is being made on children's and families' lives.

Of particular concern to the Group, however, was the extent to which services offered by children's centres were reaching the most needy in our communities. The Government's own research in 2005 into the early effectiveness of the Sure Start programme, 'National Evaluation Report', noted that those who were able to make the most of new services and resources were effectively sucking away resources from those in greatest need. There continues to be much anecdotal evidence about how effective Sure Start is at targeting families and children in greatest need, especially in relation to Government policy for blanket coverage. The Task & Finish Group would welcome a commitment to undertake thorough research into this. If the policy towards children's centres is to help boost the outlook for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, does the profile of children's centre users



reflect this ambition? If not, what are the barriers to ensuring people from more disadvantaged backgrounds can access services and how can they be overcome? Is there sufficient research in this area in the North East?

Recommendation: That the region's Children's Trusts examine the take-up of services through Children's Centres to see if they are delivering benefits to those most in need and, if not, seek to identify and overcome the barriers to achieving this policy objective.

In relation to initiatives that are offered through Children's Centres to support families out of poverty, Stockton Council has 'Together for Children Guidance Advisors' which use referrals from various services to offer parental support.

Case Study: Together for Children Guidance Advisors, Stockton Council

Through different referral routes such as housing services and Jobcentre Plus parents wishing to access training or seeking employment are identified for tailored support. These referrals can range from help with basic to multiple skill needs including employment skills such as numeracy and life skills like building self-confidence. In addition help can be given with more short term practical needs such as preparation of curriculum vitae (CV).

Once identified parents are allocated a Guidance Advisor based at the Children's Centre who holds an initial training and employment guidance session with them. This aims to agree a tailored package of help and support based on existing programmes such as Adult Options and Adult Directions as part of a skills and learning pathway.

The Guidance Advisor works with the parent to identify and source the most relevant and appropriate provision to help with their learning and work goals. The Advisor also offers advice and help with practical issues such as childcare to enable participation in the learning programmes. In developing the learning pathway Advisors are also able to advise and support the parent with other issues which may affect their participation in the programme. This can cover issues such as benefit entitlement, help with housing and other personal wellbeing issues.

The Group noted that the development of policy and funding in relation to childcare and support, through Sure Start and other initiatives, has been incremental and may need a review, especially to ensure that it is consistent with other policies. For example, the provision and funding of childcare could be examined to promote a more flexible system that enables parents to access training etc on a short-term basis (helping to tackle worklessness). Currently, such funding and provision of childcare is geared towards long-term placements for parents already in work.

Attendance at school is seen as being of critical importance for the future prospects of children and their capacity to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty. The Task & Finish Group is keen to support work undertaken by Children's Trusts and others in a co-ordinated approach to boost school attendance.

Parental skills

As an addendum to the work of the Task and Finish group, members have requested that further work be undertaken on the theme of parental skills, covering the whole range of skills required by parents to help break the inter-generational cycle of poverty. This may include parenting skills, basic finance, confidence building and skills to help access training and job opportunities. This was felt to be beyond the scope of the Task and Finish group within its timescales and so it is proposed that the Child Poverty Coalition examines this issue in more detail.

Recommendation: That the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to consider parental skills within the context of tackling child poverty.

Health

Child poverty cuts across many aspects of the commissioning and provision of health services, including but not exclusively in relation to the provision of children's health services. There are many health services involved in helping to break the cycle of child and family poverty, including services around the birth, maternal health, children and young people and services for adults.

The North East has a regional health strategy, Better Health Fairer Health. Child poverty cuts across many of the strategy's themes, including economy, culture and environment; tobacco; obesity, diet and physical activity; alcohol; and, of course, early life. The strategy provides a great opportunity to ensure a consistency of approach between health, local government and all partners in ensuring tackling child poverty is integrated into the public health agenda.

In a presentation by the joint Assistant Director (Commissioning) Stockton PCT and Head of Children and Young People's Strategy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council it was confirmed that poverty is one of the biggest risk factors linked to poorer health outcomes. Directors of Public Health in the region have said that smoking is the biggest factor in tackling health inequalities. According to Fresh North East, around 10,000 children aged 11-15 smoke in our region - and unless they quit, one in two will die from it. It is the nation's biggest killer and costs the NHS £2.7bn a year.

The NHS Next Stage Review states that poorer children are less likely to be breastfed, more likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke and more likely to be injured on the roads. Young women experience high rates of teenage pregnancy if they come from poorer backgrounds.

It was further reported that in the UK as a whole, those with the highest incomes are currently more likely to get support from health visitors than lower income groups². To illustrate, figures for families receiving support through pregnancy and the early stages of childhood rise from 41.5% of households on incomes of less than £3,000 to 57.4% of households on incomes over £52,000. This is evidence that wealthier people tend to access services more.

In the North East, according to the Information Centre for Non-Medical Workforce Census, between 2004 and 2006 the provision of both health visitors and school nurses fell. Other regions also tended to show a reduction in the numbers of health visitors and, in contrast to the North East, tended to show increases in the numbers of school nurses.

The joint Assistant Director (Commissioning) suggested that a number of conclusions may be drawn from this, including that child preventative services

² Source: Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion, Cabinet Office 2006



need to have high priority. There may be a lack of clarity about what child health services PCTs are expected to commission. Health visitors and school nurses need to be adequately trained and equipped to do the work required by them – a key challenge for World Class Commissioning in respect of children's health services. The NHS may consider setting a target for each locality in the region to have a dedicated resource for commissioning of children's services, to ensure priority vis-à-vis acute and adult services. Mental health and well-being should also be developed as a key priority in Children and Young People's Plans and that support services are integrated at the point of delivery.

Recommendation: The PCTs' World Class Commissioning framework in the region is developed to ensure commissioning in all localities targets outcomes around child health and health inequalities, thus ensuring services are further targeted to areas and communities in greatest need.

Breastfeeding was often cited as a key challenge for tackling health inequalities in the region and is illustrative of the extent of the challenge to tackle health inequalities that is replicated across other outcome areas. Professionals in children's services and health argue that there is a challenge to increase the prevalence of breastfeeding at birth and at 6 weeks. In the North East, 2005 figures show that the rates are around 57% and 32% respectively, the lowest figures for any English Region.

According to the Department of Health, younger mothers, mothers from lower socio-economic groups and mothers with lower educational levels appear to be least likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding. Mothers from these groups are also more likely to introduce solids, follow-on formula and additional drinks at an earlier age – all factors associated with childhood obesity.

³ Source: Infant Feeding Survey 2005

Many localities have introduced a range of practical measures to encourage breastfeeding, ranging from posters, leaflets, coffee mornings, home visits, baby clinics, breastfeeding 'peer supporters' etc and there have been numerous national campaigns run, e.g. in National Breastfeeding Awareness Week. There is some evidence that breastfeeding rates are increasing, but the North East still lags behind other regions.

Recommendation: That the Early Life Regional Advisory Group to the Better Health, Fairer Health Strategy continues to prioritise effective approaches to increasing the take-up of breastfeeding.

Members felt that it was important to encourage as many people as possible to access services and facilities through children's centres, to break taboos around venues associated with authority and to increase awareness of services aimed at improving health and tackling inequalities. In particular, it was felt that certain professionals, who already have the confidence of priority families, could be relocated into children's centres. Youth services could become more closely linked to children's centres so that youths, who may become the harder-to-reach adults, are already familiar with the venues, services and facilities. This may be particularly valuable in terms of targeting action around smoking, alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy services towards younger people.

In the near future, Carer Partnership Managers will be appointed in Jobcentre Plus (one per District) and the Department of Health's Carers Strategy will support the provision of respite care enabling carers to take a route to employment.

Case Study: Family Nurse Partnership Programme, Darlington and Durham

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) Pilot is delivered in Darlington and County Durham through a partnership involving Darlington and County Durham Primary Care Trusts (PCT), Children's Services (DBC) and Children and Young People's Services (Durham County Council). The FNP is an evidence-based nurse home visiting programme designed to improve the health, well-being and self sufficiency of young first time parents and their children. It involves weekly or fortnightly structured home visits by specially trained nurses from early pregnancy until children are 24 months old. The programme is designed for low income mothers who have no previous live births and starts in the second trimester of pregnancy.

Based in Children's Centres a Family Nurse provides a three part programme of support for up to 20 families. The families are from a range of wards, however, the majority live in the poorest wards. The programme delivers structured home visits in close partnership with Community Midwives and consists of three parts with 14 visits during pregnancy, 28 during infancy and 22 visits during 'toddlerhood'.

Although in its early stages the positive effects of this intensive early intervention programme are evident.

- An increase in the self esteem of young parents on the programme
- Young parents engaging in the programme and willing to learn about the development of their child and health related issues.
- Excellent attendance at antenatal appointments
- Greater interest by dads/partners
- Breastfeeding initiation at birth by 59%, with 50% continuing to six weeks.

- 50% of mothers and partners were smoking when recruited onto the Programme; 22% stopped during pregnancy and continue to be non-smokers and 89% choosing to have a smoke-free home.
- Parents have reduced their alcohol intake and have a more responsible attitude to alcohol.

Recommendations: That the **extended hours initiative for health services be further developed, especially for GP and dental services, to ensure they are timely and responsive to local circumstances, e.g. local labour market patterns in one locality which may require a different pattern of access to services in other localities.**

That, given the high priority given to tackling smoking and excess alcohol consumption through the region's LAAs, the Fresh and Balance regional offices should continue to produce targeted campaigns with a particular focus on reducing tobacco and alcohol use amongst young people, especially smoking during pregnancy.

That action to implement "Aiming High for Disabled Children" is taken by PCTs and local authorities to support breaks and respite for parents and carers of disabled children, but also to support parents' / carers' routes back into training and employment for more sustainable routes out of child and family poverty.

That the provision of ante- and post-natal care and initiatives is reviewed by PCTs to examine if the supply of skills in this area of care to link with strategies for raising aspirations and employment and training opportunities, especially for people in low income households.

That each PCT sets out specific priorities, actions and targets in relation to local health inequalities in



Children and Young People's Plans and that progress towards clearer strategic action in the new plans from 2011 is clearly mapped out.

Case Study - County Durham Free School Meal Pilot – Primary Age Pupils

Working in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust, schools, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health, Durham County Council has successfully bid to operate a Free School Meals pilot, covering 244 schools and potentially 36,000 pupils, for the period September 2009 to August 2011.

The early signs from the pilot are encouraging with some schools reporting 100% take up. This has been positively embraced by parents and pupils. The financial benefits for families are significant, especially those with 2 and 3 children at £8.75 per pupil per week to pay for school meals.

There is evidence that some pupils previously entitled to a free meal on parental income grounds are now deciding to take a meal and this is especially beneficial to those parents just above the Free School Meals eligibility criteria.

Well fed pupils are expected to learn and behave better, be healthier and the lunch time experience should have social skill spin offs and improve their knowledge of food and choices away from school.

Housing

The new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has a key role to play in tackling child (and family) poverty through its strategic role in the region, which goes beyond the obvious investment in social and affordable homes to recognise its ability to influence Registered Social Landlords and others in the delivery of sustainable development and tenancies. It is about tackling 'poverty of place', noting that the many causes and effects of poverty can become synonymous with where people live. Not only is there a need to secure joint working across housing sectors in the provision of housing opportunities and prevention services but also to provide joint and seamless support for those in crisis. Nationally two thirds of homeless households contain children, and 9% of the total is young people leaving care. All housing stakeholders need to be party to the commitment to help create housing and support services to deal with this level of crisis and create sustainable solutions to the housing needs of those in poverty.

The HCA vision states that it will create opportunity:

- For people to live in homes they can afford in places they want to live
- For local authorities and communities to deliver the ambition they have for their own areas

In the North East in 2008, HCA achieved:

- 1,043 new homes for rent
- 262 new homes for sale
- 1,223 starts on site
- 180 homes purchased from developers for rent

The Director of Housing Projects at the HCA reported on three key areas which should be priorities for tackling child and family poverty through housing: worklessness, quality of housing (and places) and stability of neighbourhoods.

First, the investment in housing can be part of a strategy to reduce worklessness in the region. The HCA has a local labour or social clause in many of the construction projects they fund or part fund which encourages local employment and apprenticeships where appropriate. In Eppleton, County Durham, the HCA is working with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to provide targeted recruitment and training and a Family Employment Initiative. There are other examples of such clauses being developed in the region, including through the Construction Employment Integrator Project which secures local labour in the construction and end-use of capital projects.

Recommendation: That the HCA and local government continue to share their experience and expertise around local labour or social clauses to maximise the impact capital investment in housing can have on up-skilling local people and tackling worklessness.

The current design standards have helped drive up housing quality in the public sector. First, design standards need to be used to help ensure the region matches housing supply to its regional economic aspirations. Design standards are being reviewed; local government should continue to work with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) on reviewing design standards. Specifically in relation to tackling poverty, members noted that housing design and allocation can have a significant impact on family and child aspirations. For example, spare bedrooms allow families to receive visitors to stay, a natural occurrence for many home owners. Having a dedicated dining room, study room etc allow for enhanced family experiences and childhood development.

Recommendations: That the HCA continues to work closely with local authorities and housing partners, as part of its approach to the development of its 10-15 year investment strategies and three year plans that help to alleviate aspects of child poverty, e.g. around decent and zero carbon homes, thus ensuring that strategic decisions are taken with child and family poverty in mind.

That as a follow up to the current decent homes standard, councils should encourage a follow up to the programme that considers future investment in the existing housing stock (i.e. more than 90% of the current housing stock in the UK) to make them more 'liveable' and cheaper to run.

Stability of neighbourhoods is critical to tackling poverty. Families that are forced or choose to move will have their children moved from school to school, breaking circles of friends, reducing their social capital and family support networks.

On renewal, the Mandale Estate in Stockton was an area of housing market failure with a poor reputation, suffering from anti-social behaviour. A 'grass roots' led strategy, building on strong community spirit, is securing mixed tenure, family accommodation combining green infrastructure and public art with homes and neighbourhoods that are desirable. This kind of approach to mixed communities can produce areas that:

- attract and retain households with a wide range of incomes;
- have good quality housing in attractive environments with access to good local schools and retail/leisure facilities and other services such as health;
- have a mix of housing size, type and tenure;
- attract and retain households by choice;
- have strong local economies and contribute to strong regional economies.



Furthermore, good estate management, tenancy support and community services (including environmental and infrastructure care and support) can be promoted as a feature of future housing provision in terms of the legacy of housing investment, ensuring local communities are involved in such schemes. Housing as an asset can be used to generate revenue and benefits in communities, e.g. through the development of non-profit sharing community interest companies, including housing maintenance schemes that target local people to carry out the work, and exploring further the notion of community funds which are generated by local agreements which retain a very small proportion of the sale value of a house when sold or include/apply service charges and divert it into schemes for community benefit.

Members have expressed concern about the behaviour of a minority of private landlords in adding to instability. Although the new Tenant Services Authority does not yet have responsibilities for the private rented sector, it is proposed that early discussions are sought with the TSA around better regulation and moves to improve the poor quality of some private rented stock which is effectively being funded through the public purse, through housing benefits.

Recommendation: That discussions are held with the new Tenant Services Authority aimed at stabilising the housing market, especially in the private rented sector, to minimise the impact upheaval of families through loss of accommodation has on the future prospects (loss of social networks, school friends, disruption to education etc.) of the family and child. It is realised that the TSA will not take responsibility for the private rented sector immediately but early discussion on quality standards and joint working with other providers would be beneficial if property and management thresholds are to be improved.

The recession has also highlighted the importance of the HCA working with local authorities, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and Registered Social Landlords (RSL) to put schemes and support in place to help avoid families easily losing their homes as a consequence of the economic cycle (noting that stability is a major factor in tackling poverty), encouraging the development of tenancy sustainment services, and providing support and advice for those on low or without earned income.

Affordability of rural housing should continue to be a feature of future discussions between the HCA and local government at different spatial levels, examining the scope for promoting wider use of Community Land Trusts for example which promote the use of homes by local people in property hot-spots where they would be squeezed out of the local housing market without support.

Financial Inclusion

In addition to consideration of the benefits system, members focused discussion on financial inclusion based on three approaches: how landlords can provide holistic support to tenants, including skills development; support for credit unions; and the role of the Regional Financial Inclusion Champions as set out in the following three case studies.

Case Study: Homes for Northumberland and financial inclusion

Homes for Northumberland is the largest social landlord in the county with 9,400 properties. As part of its 'whole service' approach for its tenants they fund a dedicated financial inclusion manager and have developed a financial inclusion strategy. Through this strategy they provide a range of support to tenants to help provide stability within the tenancy, reduce tenancy turnover while also helping to address issues of child and family poverty. This activity also helps them to meet targets for reducing fuel poverty. The strategy is based on two key objectives of maximising tenants' incomes and by promoting and building financial awareness and capability. Maximising income is addressed through ensuring take-up of benefit entitlement and provision of employment support services such as CV and interview preparation. They also provide financial help with initial costs of starting a new job such as additional travel and equipment costs. Through the normal housing contact with tenants, advice and support is also given on accessing and using basic banking accounts, affordable credit (credit unions) and the use of appropriate and affordable insurance services.

Case Study: Hartlepool Credit Union support

Hartlepool Borough Council identified that over 3,000 of its households were without a bank account and that there was generational dependency on door step lenders and loan sharks in some of its most deprived areas. So, working with a local credit union, Hartlepool has incentivised the opening of credit union accounts, into which housing benefit can be paid electronically (a £20 credit is paid by the council). The council is also looking at subsidising the £3 a month charge for the Credit Union Current Account (which gives the individual a visa debit card which can also be used at ATMs to withdraw cash). This account is particularly appealing to people who have difficulty opening or sustaining a mainstream bank account. The Credit Union has developed modern secure banking services (a new current account with VISA ATM card) that is available to many individuals who would often struggle to open a High Street bank account. These accounts provide a vehicle to allow the electronic payment of benefit and also an account into which earnings can be paid when an individual moves off benefit. They also allow direct debit payments by account holders which can remove the risk of excessively high penalty charges for late or missed payments through some existing High Street credit agreements. Since the scheme was launched in January 2009, 163 new accounts have been opened. Not only has this enabled Hartlepool to secure £500,000 of DWP Growth Fund money for the credit union but they are also making their own savings by reducing the need for paper based benefits payments by switching to electronic transfer payments.



Case Study: Regional Financial Inclusion Champions

The region has two financial inclusion champions, funded by government, covering the north and south of the region. Bronwyn Twizell, located with South Tyneside Council, covers the north and Ross Hume, located with Fabrick Housing Group in Middlesbrough, covers the south of the region. The Financial Inclusion Champion (FIC) role has built on the national 'now lets talk money' campaign which was designed to support the government's financial inclusion objectives through the development and implementation of local level action plans. The aim of the work is to provide a lasting legacy that will give the poorest communities and families access to:

- Affordable and responsible credit.
- An appropriate bank account.
- Free face to face money advice.
- Basic home contents insurance.
- Savings accounts.

The two teams aim to add value to existing partnerships and to support the establishment of new partnerships or networks where they are needed. They prioritise with partnerships the issues affecting a community and support them in taking action which will have the greatest impact potential. The FIC not only signpost people to existing financial services but will also work in partnership to develop new services in areas where people do not have access to the facilities others take for granted. The FICs have also been supporting the regional work being lead by ONE North East on identifying 'hotspot' areas in the North East suffering from over-indebtedness and a lack of access to affordable and appropriate credit.

Working with local partnerships and networks the FIC helps them to assess the evidence to establish a base line and mapping of current services allowing the gaps and needs to be identified. Once agreed the local partners develop responses to this including new forms of collaboration and working to meet the shortfalls and increase availability and access to existing and new financial services. Through this they encourage a greater sharing of information and good practice which can lead to influencing change to local and national policy and strategy. This in turn helps to embed change and leave a lasting legacy.

Good practice examples like the Homes for Northumberland Project should be shared across the region to promote the wider role a landlord may have in relation to supporting tenants, through maximising customer income, supporting tenants into training and employment, encouraging the use of credit unions, basic bank accounts and home contents insurance and maintaining contact with tenants.

On the role of credit unions, especially in the wake of the Credit Crunch, members are keen to see the role of credit unions strengthened in the region, tailored to local circumstances. Credit unions need to be established as attractive to paid employees as a way of them building up their asset base so that they can offer more affordable credit and consolidation loans to more vulnerable people. Councils may wish to consider adopting the Hartlepool model and work with existing credit unions to promote their sustainability through appropriate financial measures, e.g. low levels of charging and financial incentives for people to join.

Credit union current accounts can be promoted as a way of accessing cheaper finance (e.g. by opening up internet (cheaper) shopping including price comparison web-sites and making direct debit payments for bills which are often cheaper). This will help cheaper services, which are taken for granted by many, relatively wealthy people, to become accessible for lower income households. Money Advice services may be a way of signposting people to credit unions for financial support and ways out of financial exclusion.

At the same time as the Task & Finish Group was examining financial inclusion, One North East had commissioned some research into the availability of affordable credit, in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions. Rocket Science, who have been commissioned to undertake the research, was tasked to:

- Identify the current range of services offering affordable credit in the region
- Identify gaps and overlaps in these services
- Identify the level of need for affordable credit, and gaps between the levels of need and provision
- Outline ways in which gaps might be filled
- Identify potential funding models to fill those gaps, and
- Identify potential organisational and governance solutions to meeting those gaps

There are two key recommendations arising from the research which DWP are now seeking to take forward: that there should be fewer, larger credit unions across the region and, given that the amounts that credit unions can lend is limited by the amounts saved with them, that a regional fund be created that credit unions can access to increase the volume of affordable lending.

Localities may wish to consider the role of LSPs in tackling financial exclusion. The Region's Financial Inclusion Champions are keen to support LSPs in this.

Recommendations: That, given the recent publication of the One North East research into affordable credit, local authorities, through the Association and the Financial Inclusion Champions, work in partnership with DWP on a co-ordinated response to the research recommendations.

That, in terms of the sustainability of existing credit unions, council staff and councillors be encouraged to join and make regular payments to their local credit union and that councils use their community leadership role, through LSPs, to encourage other partner agencies to do likewise.

That the Association and the Child Poverty Coalition jointly work on a campaign to lobby Government for changes to improve the regulation of lending including provision of access to low interest consolidation loans to reduce debt levels, tackle extortionately high rates of interest and loan sharking.

It is not yet clear just what the economic impact of a reliance on door step lenders and illegal lenders is for the region. One North East is currently engaged in research to explore the implications of financial exclusion in more detail.

Recommendation: That One North East and local authorities clearly set out and communicate the economic case for promoting credit unions, in recognition of the large sums of money being drained from local economies to fund expensive (and sometimes illegal) loans – a practice referred to as 'welfare benefit leakage'



Performance and Good Practice

The Audit Commission published its final guidance on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in February 2009, replacing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This was on the back of the publication of the National Indicator Set in 2008. The key change marked by the move to CAA is the intention to move from a set of inspections of organisations or institutions, to a single report on the place. The report would draw on various inspectorates' service reports, e.g. OFSTED, but co-ordinated through the Audit Commission. CAA is about assessing how well a locality is delivering its priorities as set out in its Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and Audit Commission guidance specifically refers to addressing the needs of vulnerable people. The delivery arm of the community strategy, the Local Area Agreement (LAA), is a set of no more than 35 of the National Indicators (plus statutory Department for Children, Schools & Families indicators) plus optional local indicators that set out the improvements in outcomes each locality has agreed (with central Government) to work towards.

The Group felt it important to ensure that child poverty should be suitably highlighted in community strategies and LAAs and that this, in turn, would be used to ensure progress in tackling child poverty, and its associated story, is covered in CAA. It was further noted that localities use the opportunity to articulate child poverty in a way that reflected local circumstances. It was noted that most of the region's LAAs included the use of the 'child poverty' National Indicator, NI116 "the proportion of children in poverty", either as a national or local indicator, but that all LAAs included a proportion of indicators that reflected each locality's child poverty challenges.

Members identified a potential basket of indicators, primarily drawn from the National Indicator set, which could be used voluntarily by localities in their LAA refresh and preparations for CAA. It was intended that this basket be offered as a tool to support LSPs assess that they have covered all the key targets around child poverty in agreeing local priorities and to support localities in telling their 'story' of child poverty and progress towards reducing it as part of CAA. The basket is attached at Annex C and has been discussed with the LAA Roundtable Group of corporate leads.

It was noted that forthcoming legislation on child poverty may require the basket to be reviewed and it is understood that Government is also working to develop a basket of indicators to support LSPs to understand the wider determinants of child poverty. Work is underway to ensure that members' considerations about a basket of indicators for the North East inform Government's work in this area.

At the conclusion of the Task and Finish group meetings, Government published the Child Poverty Bill. In brief, the Bill sets out requirements for:

- The Government to meet four UK-wide targets relating to relative poverty, combined low income and deprivation, persistent poverty and absolute poverty
- The Government to publish a UK-wide child poverty strategy with annual progress reports to Parliament
- The establishment of an expert commission on child poverty, and
- For local authorities and their partners, a duty to co-operate in tackling child poverty, to prepare a needs assessment and produce a joint child poverty strategy, and for local authorities to take duties under the Bill into account when preparing Sustainable Community Strategies

Recommendation: That a basket of indicators covering the causes and effects of child poverty be used voluntarily by local authorities and partners in their reviews of their sustainable community strategy and LAA, as part of their approach to CAA and in response to forthcoming child poverty legislation.

That all 12 authorities be encouraged to include in their Corporate Self Assessment, their progress and challenges for eradicating child poverty as it relates to their Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement targets.

Both recommendations may assist local authorities and their partners in meeting new duties under the Bill, especially clause 23 on preparation of Sustainable Community Strategies.

As indicated above, all councils are undertaking considerable work aimed at tackling child poverty. Within the region, a number of child poverty 'pilots' have been secured and Newcastle City Council has also secured Beacon Status for its approach to tackling child poverty (see below). Other councils had bid for pilot or Beacon status and, although they may not have secured such status, will be working to implement and deliver their ambitions through other mechanisms. Although the Task & Finish Group did not consider the content of each of the pilots or Beacons, it was noted that the learning that is being developed in all the region's authorities should be captured and shared for the benefit of the region as a whole. Members were keen to ensure that, through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) and the Coalition, good practice and learning is shared.

Some of the sharing of good practice and learning from policy developments may be undertaken by corporate leads on child poverty coming together through a new Network which can help councils and partners, especially through Children's Trusts, deliver key targets in the area of child poverty.

At the time of writing, a proposal for the development of this network has been submitted, with the support of the Child Poverty Coalition, through the Children's Services Programme of the RIEP.

Finally, members are keen to ensure that the legacy of the Task & Finish Group includes an action-focused pledge to be signed by a range of agencies that would add value to local pledges already being developed and to their existing work at the local or sub-regional level. This provides an opportunity to highlight a small number of high profile actions that local government and its partners in the public, private and voluntary & community sectors, drawing in key agencies with responsibility for strategy, policy and resources at the regional level. The intention is that each agency would agree a set of actions addressing recommendations contained in this report, plus commitments arising from new child poverty legislation.

Recommendation: That a NE Child Poverty Pledge be developed based on key actions identified through the Task & Finish Group and that regional child poverty-related voluntary and community sector agencies be centrally involved in this work. Barnardo's in the North East has agreed to take a lead role in this work by co-ordinating input from other voluntary and community sector agencies in this regard. It is further recommended that the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to monitor progress towards meeting pledge actions.



Case Study: Newcastle upon Tyne City Council Beacon Award for Preventing and Tackling Child Poverty

The Sure Start Information and Resource Service (IRS) was established in the Cowgate and Blakelaw area of North West Newcastle in 2003 as a targeted service to reduce the number of children living in workless households. The area has high levels of deprivation, low levels of adult qualifications and skills and little social capital. In 2007/8 the IRS worked with 467 parents.

The IRS was initially designed and developed by NCH, and the council's Families Information Service (FIS). It was shaped through analysing need through data relating to the area; consultation with local parents and carers of preschool children to understand their specific needs and what help they needed to become economically active; and identifying existing provision and support services.

It became a pilot for this type of outreach delivery model in Newcastle and has continued to be re-shaped based on feedback from service users, other key partners and external evaluation.

Service description

The IRS focuses on the needs of each individual service user and supports them on their unique journey into work and training. Although some of the support described might seem unimportant to people who are easily able to locate and use services, it is these relatively simple actions that make the service successful in engaging some of the most socially excluded parents out of deprivation.

Development

This successful service is now being delivered within other Children's Centres in Newcastle. To maximise its reach and benefits, training is offered to reception and other staff to improve engagement, standardisation and the quality of advice offered to parents at the first point of contact.

Newcastle City Council was awarded Beacon Status in March 2009

Child poverty signals in the recession

The Group was keen to ensure that local authorities' work to lessen the impact of the recession addressed some key child poverty measures. Members agreed that the following were key issues to track: housing repossessions or homelessness; take-up of free school meals; take-up of child care; referrals to children's services and attendance. It was also noted that the effects of the recession on citizens and communities would be expected to continue for some time after the economy begins to recover. It is proposed that Authorities continue to monitor measures to track the impact of the recession in relation to child poverty.

On-going governance and leadership around child poverty

The Group is concerned to ensure that in the new arrangements for the 12 authorities working together, there should be a facility to monitor progress on tackling child poverty. This could be achieved in a number of ways and amongst other things it was felt important that elected Members should be invited to participate in the Child Poverty Coalition.

Annex A

Summary of Task and Finish Group recommendations, linked to the four strategic themes of the Child Poverty Coalition.

BEST START

That the region's Institute for Local Governance and Centre for Translational Research in Public Health be asked to liaise to ensure that research is carried out into the health (and other) gains of increased welfare benefits take-up amongst children and families in poverty.

That the region's Children's Trusts examine the take-up of services through Children's Centres to see if they are delivering benefits to those most in need and, if not, seek to identify and overcome the barriers to achieving this policy objective.

That the Early Life Regional Advisory Group to the Better Health, Fairer Health Strategy continues to prioritise effective approaches to increasing the take-up of breast-feeding.

That the provision of ante- and post-natal care and initiatives is reviewed by PCTs to examine if the supply of skills in this area of care to link with strategies for raising aspirations and employment and training opportunities, especially for people in low income households.

That each PCT sets out specific priorities, actions and targets in relation to local health inequalities in Children and Young People's Plans and that progress towards clearer strategic action in the new plans from 2011 is clearly mapped out.

BEST SUPPORT

That Government instigates a whole scale review of the tax credit and benefits system with the aim of making the system simpler. This would encourage take-up of entitlements and more closely fit with the overall strategy for helping people off benefits and into work and in turn help to create a culture of work as the norm for the region's children. The review should build into the benefits system more incentives to take up work e.g. around tapering of the reduction in benefit payments to ensure personal incomes rise with paid employment; moves towards a single form for accessing all benefits, with information shared across benefits 'providers'; and become more flexible to respond to families' changing circumstances, e.g. irregular earnings from jobs, so that a stable (but low) income from benefits is not seen as more attractive to families than working. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to identify a suitable North East location to pilot new approaches.

That the HCA and local government continue to share their experience and expertise around local labour or social clauses to maximise the impact capital investment in housing can have on up-skilling local people and tackling worklessness.

That, given the recent publication of the One North East research into affordable credit, local authorities, through the Association and the Financial Inclusion Champions, work in partnership with DWP on a co-ordinated response to the research recommendations.

That, in terms of the sustainability of existing credit unions, council staff and councillors be encouraged to join and make regular payments to their local credit union and that councils use their community leadership role, through LSPs, to encourage other partner agencies to do likewise.

That the Association and the Child Poverty Coalition jointly work on a campaign to lobby Government for changes to improve the regulation of lending including provision of access to low interest consolidation loans to reduce debt levels, tackle extortionately high rates of interest and loan sharking.

That One North East and local authorities clearly set out and communicate the economic case for promoting credit unions, in recognition of the large sums of money being drained from local economies to fund expensive (and sometimes illegal) loans – a practice referred to as 'welfare benefit leakage'.

That the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to consider parental skills within the context of tackling child poverty.

BEST SERVICES

That Children's Trusts be asked to consider a regional approach to increasing the capacity of front-line staff (including voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers) to help increase benefit entitlement take-up.

That councils, through LSPs, the Regional Welfare Rights Managers' Network and partners including Jobcentre Plus, instigate a range of practical take-up campaigns and initiatives including consideration of installing a free to use telephone in certain locations for potential claimants to access benefits, removing the barrier of the cost of phone calls to apply, and the availability of space for welfare rights staff to confidentially discuss benefits issues with potential claimants.

That the DWP be encouraged to implement the Government's Social Security Advisory Committee guidance to adopt the '03' telephone code for all enquiries for its benefits as a way of removing cost of calls as a barrier.

That the Child Poverty Unit be asked to co-ordinate, across Government Departments, publicity campaigns around benefits (take-up and anti-fraud) to minimise stigma under the "Real Help Now" banner.

That the PCTs' World Class Commissioning framework in the region is developed to ensure commissioning in all localities targets outcomes around child health and health inequalities, thus ensuring services are further targeted to areas and communities in greatest need.

That the extended hours initiative for health services be further developed, especially for GP and dental services, to ensure they are timely and responsive to local circumstances, e.g. local labour market patterns in one locality which may require a different pattern of access to services in other localities.

That, given the high priority given to tackling smoking and excess alcohol consumption through the region's LAAs, the Fresh and Balance regional offices should continue to produce targeted campaigns with a particular focus on reducing tobacco and alcohol use amongst young people, especially smoking during pregnancy.

That action to implement "Aiming High for Disabled Children" is taken by PCTs and local authorities to support breaks and respite for parents and carers of disabled children, but also to support parents' / carers' routes back into training and employment for more sustainable routes out of child and family poverty.

That all 12 authorities be encouraged to include in their Corporate Self Assessment, their progress and challenges for eradicating child poverty as it relates to their Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement targets.

That a NE Child Poverty Pledge be developed based on key actions identified through the Task & Finish Group and that regional child poverty-related voluntary and community sector agencies be centrally involved in this work. Barnardo's in the North East has agreed to take a lead role in this work by co-ordinating input from other voluntary and community sector agencies in this regard. It is further recommended that the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to monitor progress towards meeting pledge actions.

BEST PLACES

That the HCA continues to work closely with local authorities and housing partners, as part of its approach to the development of its 10-15 year investment strategies and three year plans that help to alleviate aspects of child poverty, e.g. around decent and zero carbon homes, thus ensuring that strategic decisions are taken with child and family poverty in mind.

That as a follow up to the current decent homes standard, councils should encourage a follow up to the programme that considers future investment in the existing housing stock (i.e. more than 90% of the current housing stock in the UK) to make them more 'liveable' and cheaper to run.

That discussions are held with the new Tenant Services Authority aimed at stabilising the housing market, especially in the private rented sector, to minimise the impact upheaval of families through loss of accommodation has on the future prospects (loss of social networks, school friends, disruption to education etc.) of the family and child. It is realised that the TSA will not take responsibility for the private rented sector immediately but early discussion on quality standards and joint working with other providers would be beneficial if property and management thresholds are to be improved.

That a basket of indicators covering the causes and effects of child poverty be used voluntarily by local authorities and partners in their reviews of their sustainable community strategy and LAA, as part of their approach to CAA and in response to forthcoming child poverty legislation.

Annex B

ANEC CHILD POVERTY TASK & FINISH GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The member-led Task and Finish group was set up following the Association's Annual Meeting in 2008. It was asked to consider a range of themes including child poverty and benefits, early years, health, housing, financial inclusion and performance to identify a range of recommendations to present to the Association's Annual Meeting in 2009. The recommendations are summarised in Annex A.

Association members were invited to participate, or nominate members from their own authority. Members from a variety of backgrounds, not just children's services, were encouraged to take part. The Regional Overview and Scrutiny Network nominated two members to join the group making a total of 16 (see below).

At the outset, members were keen to ensure the Task and Finish group was able to draw on the experience of other key stakeholders. As a result, the following representatives were secured:

- A head teacher drawn from Schools North East
- Children's primary care
- Government Office for the North East
- Improvement and Development Agency
- Director of Children's Services
- Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
- One North East
- Child Poverty Coalition

The Association would like to express its thanks to all those who participated in the work of the Task and Finish Group.

Councils	Councillors
Darlington Borough Council	Cllr Chris McEwan
Durham County Council	Cllr Lucy Hovvels
Gateshead Council	Cllr Malcolm Brain
Gateshead Council	Cllr Ian Mearns
Hartlepool Borough Council	Cllr Pamela Hargreaves (Chair)
Middlesbrough Council	Cllr Janice Brunton
Newcastle City Council	Cllr Diane Packham
Newcastle City Council	Cllr Jackie Slesenger
North Tyneside Council	Cllr Linda Arkley
North Tyneside Council	Cllr Muriel Green
North Tyneside Council	Cllr Amanda Normand
Northumberland County Council	Cllr Valerie Tyler
Northumberland County Council	Cllr Tom Wilson
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	Cllr Brenda Forster
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	Cllr Ian Jeffrey
Sunderland City Council	Cllr Pat Smith

Support & Advisory members	
Association of North East Councils	Rob Mitchell
Association of North East Councils	Keith Lamb
Child Poverty Coalition	Sue Stirling
Government Office for the North East	Jackie McHanwell
Improvement & Development Agency	David Alston
New Silksworth Infant School	Gillian Mitchell
Newcastle City Council	Catherine Fitt
North East Improvement & Efficiency Partnership	Julie Brown
North Tyneside Council	Andrew Kerr
One North East	Robin Beveridge
Stockton PCT/Council	Peter Sellar
Sunderland City Council	Raj Singh

Annex C

BASKET OF CHILD POVERTY INDICATORS

National Indicator Set: Summary of Child Poverty Indicators

This is a selection of indicators from the NIS which have an impact on many of the issues around Child Poverty. It is not comprehensive, but is intended to provide a basis for consideration.

They have been clustered into six major, but overlapping, groupings. The right-hand column lists the local authorities which currently incorporate the indicators as priority targets (i.e. it does not include local targets) in their Local Area Agreement (LAA). This data has been taken from the IDeA LAA tracker and includes any changes which may have resulted from the 2009 refresh process.

Benefits and Worklessness

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI116 – Proportion of children in poverty	Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Redcar & Cleveland, Sunderland
NI117 – 16 to 18 years olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland
NI151 – Overall employment rate	Darlington, Hartlepool, Stockton, Durham
NI152 – Working age people on out of work benefits	Hartlepool, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead, Durham, Newcastle
NI153 – Working age people claiming out of work benefits in worst performing neighbourhoods	Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Darlington, Stockton, North Tyneside, Sunderland, Northumberland
NI173 – People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits	Durham
NI180 – Changes in housing benefit/council tax benefit entitlements within the year	
NI181 – Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims and change events	

Housing and related issues

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI154 – Net additional homes provided.	Middlesbrough, Darlington, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Sunderland, Newcastle, Gateshead, Durham
NI155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Redcar & Cleveland, Hartlepool, Darlington, North Tyneside, Northumberland Newcastle Gateshead, Durham
NI156- Number of households in temporary accommodation	Durham, Redcar & Cleveland
NI158 - % decent council homes	Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Durham
NI187 – Tackling fuel poverty	Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, Durham, Stockton

Inequalities

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI54 – Services for disabled children	Redcar & Cleveland
NI106 – Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education	Newcastle, North Tyneside, Sunderland
NI118 – Take up of formal childcare by low income working families	Northumberland
NI 81 Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	North Tyneside
NI 82 Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19	
NI 102 Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key stages 2 and 4 PSA 11	North Tyneside

Learning and skills

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI 91 Participation of 17 year olds in education or training	Darlington
NI 146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment;	Middlesbrough
NI 150 Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment	Middlesbrough, Gateshead
NI 161 Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy	Hartlepool, Sunderland
NI 162 Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy	Hartlepool, Sunderland, Stockton
NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher	Hartlepool, Sunderland, Redcar & Cleveland, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Northumberland,
NI 164 Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher	Hartlepool, South Tyneside, Durham, Darlington
NI 165 Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher	Gateshead
NI 174 Skill gaps in the current workforce reported by employers	
NI 45 Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, employment or training;	
NI 90 Take up of 14-19 learning diplomas	

Educational attainment and achievement

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI 72 Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy PSA 10	Statutory Indicator
NI 73 Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold) PSA 10	Statutory Indicator
NI 75 Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Threshold) PSA 10	Statutory Indicator
NI 76 Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2 (Floor)	
NI 78 Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths (Floor) PSA 10	
NI 88 Number of Extended Schools	
NI 92 Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest PSA 11	Statutory Indicator
NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities PSA 14	Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton

Health and disabilities

NI - Descriptor	LAs
NI 51 Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services	
NI 53 Prevalence of breast feeding at 6-8 weeks from birth	Newcastle, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Stockton
NI 54 Services for disabled children	Redcar & Cleveland
NI 55 Obesity among primary school children in reception year	Redcar & Cleveland
NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in year 6	Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Stockton, Sunderland
NI 112 Under 18 conception rate PSA 14	Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Darlington, Stockton, North Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle
NI 113 Presence of Chlamydia in under 25s	
NI 115 Substance misuse by young people	Middlesbrough, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside



The Association of North East Councils is the political voice and representative body for local government in the North East. It encompasses all 12 local authorities in the region, throughout Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and the Tees Valley, on issues of concern to them and the communities they serve.

It is a cross-party organisation, with all of its Members democratically elected and accountable politicians.

Chair:	Cllr Mick Henry
Vice Chair:	Cllr Nigel Martin
Chief Executive:	Melanie Laws
Deputy Chief Executive:	Hilary Knox

Association of North East Councils
Guildhall
Quayside
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3AF

Tel: 0845 076 0080
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Progress / Activities against the Recommendations of the (ANEC) 'Tackling Child Poverty' Task and Finish Group Report	
Recommendation	Action(s) Taken / Being Taken in Hartlepool
<p>Recommendation 1: That Government instigates a whole scale review of the tax credit and benefits system with the aim of making the system simpler. This would encourage take-up of entitlements and more closely fit with the overall strategy for helping people off benefits and into work and in turn help to create a culture of work as the norm for the region's children. The review should build into the benefits system more incentives to take up work, e.g. around tapering of the reduction in benefit payments to ensure personal incomes rise with paid employment; moves towards a single form for accessing all benefits, with information shared across benefits 'providers'; and become more flexible to respond to families' changing circumstances, e.g. irregular earnings from jobs, so that a stable (but low) income from benefits is not seen as more attractive to families than working. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to identify a suitable North East location to pilot new approaches.</p>	<p>FISH has undertaken work to promote the take up of tax credits and Hartlepool has one of the higher rates of take up in the region (2004-05 13.46%, 14.97% 2005-06, 16.86% 2006-07). This is still a low rate of take up and reflects the concerns and difficulties families have about the system, therefore a review and simplification of the system would be welcomed.</p> <p>A review and simplification of the system would be welcomed.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: That Children's Trust be asked to consider a regional approach to increasing the capacity of front-line staff (including voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers) to help increase benefit entitlement take up.</p>	<p>The development of a straightforward training programme for front line staff which could be delivered across the Children's Workforce would be welcomed and will be linked to the commissioning of welfare rights services.</p>

<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>(a) That councils, through LSPs, the Regional Welfare Rights Managers' Network and partners including Jobcentre Plus, instigate a range of practical take-up campaigns and initiatives including consideration of installing a free to use telephone in certain locations for potential claimants to access benefits, removing the barrier of the cost of phone calls to apply, and the availability of space for welfare rights staff to confidentially discuss benefits issues with potential claimants.</p> <p>(b) That the DWP be encouraged to implement the Government's Social Security Advisory Committee guidance to adopt the '03' telephone code for all enquiries for its benefits as a way of removing cost of calls as a barrier.</p>	<p>(a) No update available at this time.</p> <p>(b) Does not require local action.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: That the Child Poverty Unit be asked to co-ordinate, across Government Departments, publicity campaigns around benefits (take –up and anti-fraud) to minimise stigma, under the 'Real Help Now' banner.</p>	<p>Query with the Child Poverty Unit. Awaiting response.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: That the region's Institute for Local Governance and Centre for Translational Research in Public Health be asked to liaise to ensure that research is carried out into the health (and other) gains of increased welfare benefits take-up amongst children and families in poverty.</p>	<p>No update available at this time.</p>

<p>Recommendation 6: That the region's Children's Trusts examine the take-up of services through Children's Centres to see if they are delivering benefits to those most in need, and if not, seek to identify and overcome the barriers to achieving this policy objectives.</p>	<p>A data base has been established in Hartlepool's children's centres to monitor activity and take up of services. An outreach programme has been established to ensure services can be accessed by the most disadvantaged. Midwifery and Health Visiting provision to be delivered from Children's Centres.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: That discussions are held with the new Tenant Services Authority aimed at stabilising the housing market, especially in the private rented sector, to minimise the impact upheaval of families through loss of accommodation has on the future prospects (loss of social networks, school friends, disruption to education etc) of the family and child. It is realised that the TSA will not take responsibility for the private rented sector immediately but early discussion on quality standards and joint working with other providers would be beneficial if property and management thresholds are to be improved.</p>	<p>Does not require local action.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8:</p> <p>(a) That, given the recent publication of the One North East research into affordable credit, local authorities, through the Association and the Financial Inclusion Champions, work in partnership with DWP on a co-ordinated response to the research recommendations.</p>	<p>(a) No update available at this time</p>

<p>Recommendation 8 (continued):</p> <p>(b) That, in terms of the sustainability of existing credit unions, council staff and councillors be encouraged to join and make regular payments to their local credit union and that councils use their community leadership role, through LSPs to encourage other partner agencies to do likewise.</p> <p>(c) That the Association and Child Poverty Coalition jointly work on a campaign to lobby Government for changes to improve the regulation of lending including provision of access to low interest consolidation loans to reduce debt levels, tackle extortionately high rates of interest and loan sharking.</p>	<p>(b) No update available at this time.</p> <p>(c) Does not require local action.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: That One North East and local authorities clearly set out and communicate the economic case for promoting credit unions, in recognition of the large sums of money being drained from local economies to fund expensive (and sometimes illegal) loans- a practice referred to as ‘welfare benefit leakage’.</p>	<p>No update available at this time.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10:</p> <p>(a) That a basket of indicators covering the causes and effects of child poverty be used voluntarily by local authorities and partners in their reviews of their sustainable community strategy and LAA, as part of their approach to CAA and in response to forthcoming child poverty legislation.</p>	<p>(a) A child poverty score card is being developed to start a process of outcomes based accountability to engage partners in addressing issues of child poverty and so to make an impact on levels of poverty. This will incorporate a range of indicators that are felt to be most pertinent to the local situation.</p>

<p>Recommendation 10 (continued):</p> <p>(b) That all 12 authorities be encouraged to include in their Corporate Self Assessment, their progress and challenges for eradicating child poverty as it relates to their Sustainable community Strategy and Local Area Agreement targets.</p>	<p>(b) A child poverty strategy and action plan has been drafted for Hartlepool and a report will be going to Cabinet to establish governance processes and ensure a strong link to the LSP.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: That a NE Child Poverty Pledge be developed based on key actions identified through the Task & Finish Group and that regional child poverty-related voluntary and community sector agencies be centrally involved in this work. Barnardo's in the North East has agreed to take a lead role in this work by co-ordinating input from other voluntary and community sector agencies in this regard. It is further recommended that the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to monitor progress towards meeting pledge actions.</p>	<p>Hartlepool already has a local pledge with sign up from major stakeholders.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: That the Child Poverty Coalition be asked to consider parental skills within the context of tackling child poverty.</p>	<p>Hartlepool has a parenting strategy and pledge. A range of parenting courses/support is in place. This has been designed to provide a continuum from universal to specialist to reduce the stigma that might be associated with attending a targeted/specialist programme.</p>

<p>Recommendation 13: That PCT's World Class Commissioning framework in the region is developed to ensure commissioning in all localities targets outcomes around child health and health inequalities, thus ensuring services are further targeted to areas and communities in greatest need.</p>	<p>It is through the Tees PCTs World Class Commissioning Strategy that targets and plans agreed. Actions already in place through this strategy include targets for teenage pregnancy, breastfeeding, childhood obesity, increased immunisation and vaccinations, smoking in pregnancy, smoking across the whole population.</p> <p>The Healthy Child draft service specifications which will support the commissioning of community services during 2010/11 clearly state the requirement of providers to contribute to the child poverty agenda and health improvement outcomes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: That the Early Life Regional Advisory Group to the Better Health, Fairer Health Strategy continues to priorities effective approaches to increasing the take-up of breast-feeding.</p>	<p>A breast-feeding strategy has been developed and a breast-feeding co-ordinator has been appointed. There is vigorous activity in place linking Health and Children's Centre resources to address the issue of low rates of breast-feeding in Hartlepool.</p>
<p>Recommendations 15:</p> <p>(a) That the extended hours initiative for health services be further developed, especially for FP and dental services, to ensure they are timely and responsive to local circumstances, e.g., local labour market patterns in one locality which may require a different pattern of access to services in other localities.</p>	<p>(a) Query raised by Joan with Ali Wilson regarding the feasibility and affordability of further developing extended hours in primary care. We already have full sign up from our GPs for extended hours which matches the funding we have available. We have also invested in a walk in health centre offering services from 8-8pm so I am not sure that we could direct any further resource at this at this time. As</p>

<p>Recommendation 15 (continued):</p> <p>(b) That, given the high priority given to tackling smoking and excess alcohol consumption through the region's LAAs, the Fresh and Balance regional offices should continue to produce targeted campaigns with a particular focus on reducing tobacco and alcohol use amongst young people, especially smoking during pregnancy.</p>	<p>far as dental provision is concerned – again we are fully meeting our NHS requirements although we are working with dentists to ensure that care is of the highest quality and that more people have access to NHS dental care. (We already have very limited private provision in the town.) May be worth noting that we have invested significantly in 'community dental services' which provide more specialist care to people (mostly children and young people) through the provision of fantastic new premises within One Life Hartlepool on Park Road..</p> <p>(b) Smoking cessation in pregnancy is addressed via Health and Children's Centre initiatives. Hartlepool has the second best performing smoking cessation services in the country and therefore these services will continue to target smokers to offer support, this included an incentive scheme to support women to stop smoking in pregnancy.</p> <p>Whilst Hartlepool has a red flag in its CAA for alcohol, further work is being targeted on developing the alcohol harm reduction strategy.</p> <p>Operation stay safe has been implemented to identify young people at risk on Friday nights. Additional youth activities on Friday and Saturday nights have been commissioned via the youth service with significant input from young people.</p>
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<p>Recommendation 15 (continued):</p> <p>(c) That action to implement “Aiming High for Disabled Children” is taken by PCT’s and local authorities to support breaks and respite for parents and carers of disabled children, but also to support parents’/carers’ routes back into training and employment for more sustainable routes out of child and family poverty.</p> <p>(d) That the provision of ante- and post-natal care and initiatives is reviewed by PCT’s to examine if the supply of skills in this area of care to link with strategies for raising aspirations and employment and training opportunities, especially for people in low income households.</p> <p>(e) That each PCT sets out specific priorities, actions and targets in relation to local health inequalities in Children and Young People’s Plans and that progress towards clearer strategic action in the new plans from 2011 is clearly mapped out.</p>	<p>(c) A local implementation plan has been agreed with the region (TDC) and is being implemented.</p> <p>Aiming High in Hartlepool is being developed with a clear objective of building in sustainability so that universal services can meet the needs of all children.</p> <p>(d) A workforce development strategy is being developed across the Tees PCTs.</p> <p>(e) A Teeswide PCT child health strategy has been developed, it links to the priorities of the CYPs and JSNA.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: That the HCA and local government continue to share their experience and expertise around local labour or social clauses to maximise the impact capital investment in housing can have on up-skilling local people and tackling worklessness.</p>	<p>Following the Children’s Trust Development Day, Public Health priorities will be key within the Children and Young People’s Plan as they currently are by 2011.</p> <p>In relation to local initiatives, Hartlepool has always been good at investing in fuel poverty initiatives. In addition to this, presentations on the issue to the Children’s Trust Board and Cabinet have resulted in the identification of additional investment.</p>

<p>Recommendation 17:</p> <p>(a) That the HCA continues to work closely with local authorities and housing partners, as part of its approach to the development of its 10-15 year investment strategies and three year plans that help to alleviate aspects of child poverty, e.g., around decent and zero carbon homes, thus ensuring that strategic decisions are taken with child and family poverty in mind.</p> <p>(b) That as a follow up to the current decent homes standard, councils should encourage a follow up to the programme that considers future investment in the existing housing stock (i.e. more than 90% of the current housing stock in the UK) to make them more 'liveable' and cheaper to run.</p>	<p>No update available at this time.</p>
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SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: 'CHILD POVERTY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION' -
FEEDBACK FROM "THE NORTHERN MONEY
CONFERENCE 2010 - FINANCE FOR ALL" -
COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members that the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will at today's meeting provide feedback following attendance at the "The Northern Money Conference 2010 – Finance for All".

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 5 February 2010, a request was made for funding to allow the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee attend the "The Northern Money Conference 2010 – Finance for All".
- 2.2 Given the intrinsic link between financial inclusion and child poverty, approval was obtained for attendance at this briefing as part of the Committees ongoing 'child poverty' investigation. The Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee subsequently attended the briefing on the 1 March 2010.
- 2.3 The Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee found the information and evidence provided during the course of the briefing highly informative. Details of this information will be fed back to Members at today's meeting for consideration, and further discussion, as part of the evidence gathering process for the 'child poverty' investigation.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members note the content of the feedback provided, seeking clarification on any relevant issues from the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, where felt appropriate.

Contact Officer:- Joan Nominton – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.nominton@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Child Poverty' - Scoping Report' presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18 September 2009; and
- (ii) Report Of The Scrutiny Manager Entitled 'Request for Funding From The Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget' Presented To The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 5 February 2010.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: 'CHILD POVERTY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION' –
FEEDBACK FROM THE NEWCASTLE CHILD
POVERTY BEACON OPEN DAY – 26 JANUARY
2010 - COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members that verbal feedback will be given at today's meeting by those who attended the Newcastle Child Poverty Beacon Open Day held on the 26 January 2010.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In looking to explore examples of best practice in the delivery of Child Poverty prevention services, Members were given the opportunity to attend the Newcastle Child Poverty Beacon Open Day held on the 26 January 2010. Given the short notice available for confirmation of attendance at this event, approval was obtained from the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for expressions of interest to be sought from Member to fill the three available places.
- 2.2 Places on the Open Day were subsequently taken up by Councillor Rogan, Carol Jones from the Financial Inclusion Partnership and the Scrutiny Manager. Feedback from Cllr Rogan and the Scrutiny Manager will be given today in relation to the workshops attended.
- 2.3 Workshops attended by Councillor Rogan were:-
- (a) Insight Into One Newcastle Parent's Journey From Inactivity to Employment;
 - (b) Tackling Fuel Poverty: Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Warm Zone; and
 - (c) Raising Parental Aspirations through Sure Start Children's Centres.
- 2.4 Workshops attended by the Scrutiny Manager were:-

- (a) Income Maximisation for Children and Their Families Including Benefit and Tax Credit Take Up;
- (b) The Family As A Learning Environment: Newcastle Family Learning's Contribution to Promoting A Culture of Aspiration and Economic Wellbeing in Families; and
- (c) The Role of Community Entrepreneurs in Developing Pathways out of Poverty: Exploring the Approach of the Tyne Gateway project.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members note the feedback provided and seek clarification on any relevant issues, where felt appropriate.

Contact Officer:- Joan Nominton – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.nominton@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Child Poverty' - Scoping Report' presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18 September 2009.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – CAR PARKING ON ESTATES IN
HARTLEPOOL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the findings and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its review of Car Parking on Estates in Hartlepool.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 24 July 2009, Members determined their Work Programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year. At this meeting Members highlighted that parking on residential estates had been raised by residents at the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums as an area of concern.
- 2.2 Therefore, it was agreed by Members of the Forum that as part of their work programme they would review car parking on residential estates, on a one meeting basis. Therefore, the approach adopted gathered evidence from the Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department and members of the public.

3. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum met formally on 23 November 2009 to receive evidence relating to car parking on residential estates in Hartlepool. A detailed report of the issues raised during this meeting is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

4. MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum:-

Councillors: S Akers-Belcher (Chair), C Barker, J Coward, T Rogan, E Wright

Resident Representatives: J Cambridge and B Loynes

5. FINDINGS

- 5.1 In order to formulate conclusions and recommendations the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum heard evidence from the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, the Traffic and Transportation Planning Manager and the Parking Services Manager. The findings are detailed below:-

Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department

- 5.2 Members received a detailed report from the Parking Services Manager in relation to parking policy and enforcement. The report highlighted that Hartlepool, like many other towns and cities has areas of housing where there is either little or no available parking space or where space is available demand often exceeds supply. The Forum heard that in the 1950's and 60's the planners who designed the housing estates had no idea that vehicle ownership would extend to its current level and therefore did not prepare for the amount of vehicles now on the road.
- 5.3 In Hartlepool there are many areas of terraced housing which have no available residential off street parking with the alternative being on street parking which is either limited or over subscribed. As a result residents maximise alternative space and park on grass verges, footpaths and cycle ways. Parking on footpaths causes an obstruction for pedestrians and mobility users, whilst damaged footpaths can be dangerous and parking on grass verges results in unsightly damage to the verges and often flooding, as water cannot drain away effectively. The issue of flooding also raised the question as to the type of material used for the conversion of grass verges, driveways and lay-bys to prevent flooding. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods clarified that any new driveways would be block paved, however, lay-bys and grass verges would still to be tarmaced.

5.4 *Photographs A and B: Grass verges and tarmacing of grass verges*



Control and Management of Parking

- 5.5 Members of the Forum were interested to hear about the measures adopted by the Council for the control of parking. The Parking Services Manager informed the Forum that the control measures are dependent on the extent or main cause of the problem. Often the attraction of nearby facilities such as retail, commercial, leisure facilities and schools attract additional traffic and result in an increase of parking in residential areas.
- 5.6 Members were informed that where parking is required to be restricted to residents only and involves preventing other vehicles parking within the area a 'residents only' parking control scheme is an option. The scheme restricts parking of vehicles to permit holders only. This type of scheme can often reduce the volume of vehicles at a particular location. Although, where the permit control scheme does not manage the parking problems, the only option is often to design additional parking space, where possible, by converting existing grassed areas; widening the highway by tarmacing grass verges; and / or allowing extra parking by strengthening footpaths and allowing controlled parking.
- 5.7 Of particular concern to both Members of the Forum and residents were the operational hours of resident parking schemes. The scheme currently enforced Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm, allows permit holders to park when the scheme is in operation. However, outside of the specified hours, residents found that trying to find a parking space was extremely difficult. It was highlighted by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods that if the operational hours of the scheme were to be extended this would likely lead to an increase in the cost of parking permits.
- 5.8 Parking outside of schools was highlighted by the Forum as an area of concern. Members were informed that to some extent parking outside of schools can be managed under road safety initiatives by preventing parking by traffic regulation orders. Although, this inevitably leads to vehicles parking in unrestricted areas which can lead to inconvenience for residents.

The Council actively works in partnership with schools to produce travel plans and examine alternative modes of transport as part of the safer travel programme. The Council's Parking Enforcement Team is actively involved in the schools education programme which is aimed at discouraging vehicle use outside of schools by encouraging walking, cycling or bus use.

- 5.9 The Forum questioned how parking was addressed through the design and planning process for the Building Schools for the Future Programme. The Traffic and Transportation Planning Manager highlighted that Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department worked very closely with those involved in the Building Schools for the Future Programme and looked at all the facilities and options for transport and parking. The Forum was advised that the schools that had been approved by the Programme had the best design option that was possible for the school and the surrounding area. Members agreed that all future schools need to have adequate parking and drop off facilities for parents and visitors in order to help alleviate parking problems at the schools and surrounding areas.
- 5.10 Members asked if the use of unused school land could be used for parking and drop-off areas. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods commented that any land that was not utilised for buildings was deemed as school playing field and the use of such land for any other use required Ministerial approval.
- 5.11 A further area which the Forum explored was the width of roads in particular on new housing developments. The narrowness of the existing residential roads presented problems for motorists when vehicles were parked on both sides of the road, in terms of manoeuvrability and restricting traffic flow to single file. Residents suggested that the introduction of one-way systems would allow the levels of parking to continue.
- 5.12 In terms of new housing developments, Members questioned how the width of roads on these developments was determined. The Traffic and Transportation Planning Manager informed Members that the Council has a design specification which includes the approved dimensions. A minor estate road is set at 4.8 metres, a distributor road at 5.5 metres, both of which are national standards and are adopted across the Tees Valley.
- 5.13 Members queried the actual parking provisions provided within new housing developments. Members were informed that parking provisions / controls are included within new developments as part of formal planning permission. The example referred to was Davison Drive / Warren Road, where a new housing development identified a need for additional parking facilities at the nearby shops. The provision of additional parking was incorporated into the scheme via a planning agreement and the developer had to provide the additional parking space as part of the residential scheme.

Funding and Budget Provision

- 5.14 In terms of budget provision for additional parking this is provided partly by the Local Transport Plan (£30,000) per annum and the Local Neighbourhood Action Plans. Members were informed that schemes are identified from requests via the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums / Ward Members or directly from residents. The North, South and Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forums consider individual improvement projects and manage and prioritise possible schemes with the cost being met from their Minor Works Budget. Although additional funding can sometimes be provided from the Local Transport Plan via highway improvement schemes. The examples cited of improvement schemes included Catcote Road, Duke Street and the rear of Stockton Road. The Forum highlighted that the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums have a small amount of funding to address parking issues with the funding not stretching very far.
- 5.15 The Forum noted that previous funding for traffic management and parking schemes had also been sourced from regeneration schemes such as Single Regeneration and New Deal for Communities, which provided a significant financial contribution. However, this funding is no longer an option. Where appropriate, and there is significant benefit to residents, a financial contribution may also be sought from Housing Associations. The Forum highlighted that there is definitely an opportunity for the Council to work in partnership with the Housing Association, Housing Hartlepool, to address the existing parking problems.

The Role of the Local Authority and Police in Enforcement

- 5.16 The Forum was pleased to receive evidence from the Parking Services Manager on parking enforcement and legislation. Parking enforcement is delivered by the Council's Parking Enforcement Team from legislation provided under civil law rather than criminal law. The Forum noted that much of the jurisdiction for traffic management and parking traffic regulations, previously a responsibility of the Police has transferred to the Council and is now controlled and enforced by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers. However, some areas of obstruction do still remain under the jurisdiction of the Police and continue to be enforced under criminal law.

5.17 *Photographs C and D: Obstruction by parked cars / narrow roads*

5.18 Members of the Forum were very interested in how an obstruction is classified. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods notified the Forum that traffic regulation by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers is very factual but the Police have a degree of discretion in their decision making. This is particularly evident when considering the obstruction of footpaths. An obstruction is a subjective matter for an individual Police officer. The Police who have responsibility for this type of enforcement will only take action against motorists if the vehicle blocks the footpath sufficiently to obstruct access. The Forum was informed that where parking restrictions or regulations exist, then action can be taken by either the Council or the Police. However, if there are no regulations in place, then it is for the Police to determine whether a parked vehicle does or does not constitute an obstruction.

5.19 The Forum expressed concerns that it was unclear to members of the public who to contact with a parking problem as there was uncertainty of what actually equated to a parking offence and the enforcement roles of the Council and the Police. As such, the Police and the Council both recognise that parking, and in particular the obstruction of footpaths is a major concern for members of the public and are both working on a joint initiative to raise awareness in this area. The Forum heard that joint publicity and enforcement visits had been carried out, with advisory notices issued where motorists had parked inconsiderately and caused an obstruction. The success of the initiative is being evaluated and the intention is that Civil Enforcement Officers will be able to issue advisory notices to motorists on behalf of the Police who will then issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the offending motorists.

5.20 The Forum noted that the Traffic Management Act has recently been amended to assist with the management of traffic and the control of parking. A new regulation of parking across dropped kerbs has been included under the Council's jurisdiction to improve pedestrian access and assist people with disabilities and mobility users. Members were informed that additional powers relating to moving traffic offences and the use of camera technology

will compliment the Parking Enforcement Team and enable additional enforcement once officially introduced by the Department for Transport.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That the existing residential roads are narrow and when vehicles park on either side it becomes difficult for motorists to manoeuvre as it restricts traffic flow to single file. Therefore, one – way systems would alleviate this problem and allow the levels of parking on either side of the road to continue;
- (b) That resident parking schemes do help to alleviate parking problems, but outside the hours of operation parking still remains a problem;
- (d) That parking outside of schools is a major problem and needs to be looked at in detail when considering all future planning applications for school developments;
- (e) It was evident that both Members of the Forum and members of the public were not fully aware of the reporting arrangements for parking problems and who to contact should a parking issue arise;
- (f) That it was crucial to work with partner organisations, such as Housing Hartlepool to help alleviate the existing parking problems; and
- (g) That the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums have a small amount of funding to address parking issues with the funding not stretching very far.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from the Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department and Members of the Public to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:

- (a) That the Council explores the viability of extending the operational hours of resident parking schemes to include evenings and weekends;
- (b) That the Council explores ways of publicising the reporting arrangements and points of contact for parking problems;

- (c) That the Council explores with Housing Hartlepool ways of providing off – street parking and the funding options available;
- (d) That the Council examines the possibility, where practicable, to introduce one-way systems for the residential streets where parking on both sides of the road restricts access to single file traffic;
- (e) That the Council as part of its planning process includes a requirement for all school developments to have adequate ‘drop – off’ and parking areas for parents and visitors; and
- (f) That the Council develops a process to monitor and review the impact of the Minor Works funding allocation available to each individual Neighbourhood Consultative Forum on a ward basis.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The Forum is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of the scrutiny review. We would like to place on record our appreciation for all those witnesses who attended the Forum. In particular the Forum would like to thank the following for their co-operation during the scrutiny review:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Dave Stubbs – Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Mike Blair – Traffic and Transportation Planning Manager

Phil Hepburn – Parking Services Manager

Julia Pinchen - Business Liaison Manager NDC Commercial Areas

Resident Representatives

External Representatives

Members of the public who participated and contributed at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 November 2009.

COUNCILLOR STEPHEN AKERS-BELCHER CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

Contact Officer:- Laura Starrs – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Car Parking on Estates – Evidence from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department – Covering Report' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 November 2009.
- (b) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods entitled 'Parking – Housing and Residential Areas' presented to Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 November 2009.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Chair of the Members Attendance Working Group

Subject: UPDATE REPORT – MEMBERS ATTENDANCES WORKING GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report to Members:-

- (i) Progress to date on in the work of the Members Attendances Working Group; and
- (ii) Seek consideration of the Working Group's proposal for the introduction of a series of 'The Life of a Councillor' articles in Hartbeat to raise the profile of work undertaken by Members on a day to day basis.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In light of the increased national profile of expenses claimed by Members of Parliament, Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee wished to ensure that the reporting of Members expenses, allowances and attendances in Hartlepool is done in the most clear and transparent way possible. On this basis, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, on the 17 July 2009, considered a detailed report outlining statutory / existing requirements for the publication of expenses, allowances and attendances.
- 2.2 Following consideration of the information provided, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee recommended to Council, on the 30 July 2009, a way forward in relation to the recording and publication of Members expenses and allowances. Council approved these recommendations and noted the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's decision to establish a Working Group to further review the issue of 'what' and 'how' Members attendances should be recorded and published.
- 2.3 To date meetings of the Members Attendances Working Group have taken place on the 11 September 2009, 27 November 2009 and the 26 February

2010 and a copy of the minutes for each meeting are attached at **Appendix A, B and C.**

3. ISSUES CONSIDERED BY WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 Recording of Members Attendances - At its inaugural meeting on September 2009, the Members Attendances Working Group agreed its overall aim and terms of reference and requested a range of evidential and comparative information for consideration. This evidence was considered by the Working Group on 27 November 2009 and resulted in the introduction of a trial (between December 2009 and January 2010) in respect of recording 'other' attendances (i.e. those not formally recorded by Democratic Services).
- 3.2 A 'pro-forma' to be used by Members to submit their 'other' attendances was agreed by the Working Group, together with the additional categories of meetings, and made available in paper and electronic form. The trial was extensively publicised.
- 3.3 The outcome of the trial was reported to the Working Group on the 26 February 2010. During consideration of the results of the trial, the Working Group noted that work was currently ongoing in relation to the centralisation of administrative services. As part of this process, a key role for the Central Services Manager was to review / assessment the areas, and methods of working that were to be transferred into the new arrangement.
- 3.4 Given this ongoing process, and any possible administrative implications of the introduction of an additional or expanded database, the Working Group agreed that the Central Services Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader should undertake additional work. This additional work will explore the future use of the attendances database and how the activity can be linked into other administrative functions in order to ensure the most efficient use of resources.
- 3.5 Members are asked to note that the outcome of this further work will be considered by the Members Attendances Working Group in due course to aid the production of a final report on the recording of Members attendances. A further report will then be submitted to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for consideration.
- 3.6 Raising the Profile of Work Undertaken by Members - At the meeting on the 27 November 2009, attention was drawn to the potential benefits of utilising Hartbeat to raise the profile of work undertaken by Members on a day to day basis. In order to do this, Members suggested that the introduction of a series of regular articles entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' should be explored.
- 3.7 In accordance with the wishes of the Working Group, exploratory work was undertaken to identify a possible way forward to facilitate the delivery of such a range of articles. The Working Group, at its meeting on the 26 February

2010, explored a number of options, as outlined in the report circulated at **Appendix D**.

3.8 Taking into consideration the options outlined in the report provided, the Working Group agreed as follows a way forward for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

3.9 Following consideration of the report provided, the Working Group has devised the following process for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

3.10 Suggested Process:-

- i) A total of four Members to be selected each year (on a rolling programme).

(One Member to appear in each of the 4 Hartbeat publications spanning the 12 month period)

- ii) One Member from each of the following categories:

- Executive;
- Backbench;
- Chairs; and
- New Members (i.e. those in their second year of office).

3.11 Suggestions for Operational Implementation:-

- i) Articles to be titled 'The life of a Councillor'.
- ii) Expressions of interest be sought from all 48 Members.

(Letter from the Public Relations Unit to include details of the process and the method of selection)

- iii) Selection process from a hat from each of the above categories (drawn by the Chair of the Council)
- iv) Article running order to be on an alphabetical basis.
- v) Where members will come up for election during the 2 year programme, the running order will be adjusted to ensure that they do not appear in the March publication prior to their respective election period.
- vi) First 'Day in the Life' article to appear in the Summer Hartbeat edition (July) then in the publications in September, December and March.
- vii) Public Relations Unit to start preparation work with successful Members as soon as possible on the production of their articles. The content and

structure of the articles to be dealt with by the Public Relations Unit in conjunction with individual Councillors.

- 3.12 On the basis of the above suggestion, Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee are asked for their views on the establishment of a process for the introduction and implementation of a series of 'The Life of a Councillor' articles in Hartbeat.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Members note the work undertaken by the Members Attendances Working Group and await a further report.
- 4.2 That Members approve the process, as outlined in Sections 3.10 and 3.11 of this report, for the introduction and implementation of a series of 'The Life of a Councillor' articles in Hartbeat.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
- (i) Minutes and reports of the meetings of the Members Attendances Working Group held on 11 September 2009, 27th November 2009 and 26 February 2010.
 - (ii) Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30 July 2009.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

Joan Nominton, Scrutiny Manager
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MEMBER ATTENDANCES WORKING GROUP

11 September 2009

Chair: Councillor Marjorie James

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Jonathan Brash, Arthur Preece and Chris Simmons.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 (ii), Councillor Caroline Barker attended as a substitute for Councillor Edna Wright.

Officers: Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team Manager
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Exploration of Procedures for the Recording and Publication of Members' Attendances – Scoping Report

The Scrutiny Manager sought agreement to the overall aim of the Working Group which was to explore and agree methods for the collation and reporting of Member attendances to enable the fullest disclosure possible and publication alongside expenses claimed from September 2010. The Democratic Services Team Manager presented the report to Members which provided the background to the consideration of this issue and outlined existing practices and current arrangements for recording and reporting Members' attendances.

It was highlighted that current practice was that the Democratic Services Team recorded formal meetings only which were input onto a spreadsheet, including where apologies had been submitted and where substitutes had been in attendance. It was acknowledged that the official figures produced did not currently include the number of times where Members had attended meetings as a substitute and it was suggested that this could be included to provide a fuller reflection of a Members' attendance at meetings. Members attention was drawn to a review of how attendances were recorded which was undertaken by the Assistant Chief Executive in conjunction with Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (then Portfolio Holder for Performance) in September 2007. Details of the outcomes of this review and changes introduced following this review were included within the report.

A Member referred to paragraph 5.4 of the report which highlighted that Members' individual attendances were not released to another Member or Group and questioned how a local newspaper could ascertain this information under a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. It was noted in the report that this practice was undertaken following advice from the

Chief Solicitor in accordance with data protection guidance. A Member noted that all Members' attendances at formal meetings were included within the minutes of that meeting which were published when attached to the agenda of the next meeting. However, it was pointed out as part of a FOI, the information must be presented in an easily digestible format. It was suggested that if the information was published on a regular basis, any requests for that information could be directed to the last figures published. Members felt that clarification on the Data Protection Act should be provided to help them prepare an informed view of this issue.

Members were concerned that a fair record of the amount of work individual Members undertake was not currently recorded including when they attended meetings as a substitute for other Members or when attending meetings other than formal meetings in an official capacity as a Member, Chair of a Committee or Forum or Leader of a political group. It was suggested that the current electronic storage of Members' attendances could be made available to nominated officers across the authority to record when Members attend meetings within their department. In addition, it was suggested that once a system was agreed, other layers of information could be included, for example when Members were invited to attend meetings in their capacity as Group Leaders or Chairs of committees or forums attend briefing meetings. Furthermore, Members were of the view that meetings such as transformation boards or school governor meetings should also be included within the individual Member's attendance record.

The Democratic Services Team Manager drew Members' attention to paragraph 5.6 (iv) of the report which indicated that a new procedure had been introduced to record Members' attendances at any outside bodies which Members were appointed to by the Council. However, Members were asked to note that this system tended to be used by a very small proportion of Members and 'nil' returns were regularly received.

A Member suggested that as all Members have access to emails, either at home or in Members' Services, that they email a list of all meetings they have attended as an official Council representative on a template covering the 8-week cycle of Council meetings, this would then enable easier checking of attendances at all meetings. It was noted that some Members prefer to use paper rather than emails and it was noted that if Members preferred they could print off the proforma and send that to the appropriate officer. However, there was some concern at the reliance on Members to complete this information to ensure it was accurate and up to date.

It was noted that some Members were more proactive than others in putting themselves forward to sit on official meetings of the Council and in light of this, it was suggested that the presentation of attendance information be amended to reflect this including the maximum number of attendances that each individual Member could have achieved. A

Member commented that an increasing number of informal meetings were scheduled which clashed with official meetings of the Council. The Democratic Services Team Manager confirmed that it had been hoped that the recent implementation of an electronic diary which included all official meetings, to which all officers across the authority had access to, would have helped alleviate some of the clashes with meetings.

There was some concern that including lots of different types of meetings would detract from the formal meetings that Members' attended and it was suggested that meetings could be categorised to ensure meaningful information was collated and presented. Members felt that consideration should be given to publishing Members' attendance information in the Council's *Hartbeat* magazine which was published quarterly.

A Member noted that the current system of recording attendances included Members' attendances at seminars and there was a general feeling that seminars should be taken out of the equation as Members were not nominated to take a seat on seminars as they were with official meetings.

The Scrutiny Manager sought clarification on the terms of reference of the Working Group and suggested that how Members' attendances were identified and how to ensure that all work undertaken by Members' in an official capacity was recorded should be considered. In addition, a Member referred to the special responsibility allowances paid to Members for their additional responsibilities and felt that attendance in this capacity should be recorded separately as they were meetings that no-one else could attend on their behalf. It was proposed that an additional meeting be held to further explore the information to be input and collated through a database or spreadsheet and the types of meetings Members wished to be included. At this meeting, evidence of how other local authorities record and present Members' attendances information would be included for Members consideration.

Recommendation

- (1) That the overall aim of the Working Group be agreed as follows:

"To explore and agree methods for the collation and reporting of Member attendances to enable the fullest disclosure possible and publication alongside expenses claimed from September 2010."

- (2) That the terms of reference of the Working Group be agreed as follows:

That the Working Group examine how meetings attended by Members were identified and how they were recorded fairly to reflect the work undertaken by Members in an official capacity.

- (3) That an additional meeting of the Working Group be scheduled on Friday 27 November 2009 at 12.30pm, immediately prior to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, to:-
- (i) Give further consideration to what types of meetings were to be included within the official Members' attendance figures and how they should be categorised;
 - (ii) Consider examples of how other local authorities collate and present Members' attendances;
 - (iii) How Members' attendance information could best be published (i.e. frequency, format and route); and
 - (iv) Seek clarification on the Data Protection Act and how this affects the request for information on Members' attendances.

Meeting concluded at 2.00 pm.

CHAIR

MEMBER ATTENDANCES WORKING GROUP

27 November 2009

The meeting commenced at 12.30 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Marjorie James

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher and Chris Simmons.

Also Present: Councillor John Coward as substitute for Councillor David Young, In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 (ii).

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Jonathan Brash, Arthur Preece and David Young.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group held on 11 September 2009

Confirmed.

4. Exploration of Procedures for the Recording and Publication of Member Attendances (Assistant Chief Executive)

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the report which addressed the concerns and issues set out by Members at the previous meeting. The main focus of the report was the table set out in section 3 which dealt with each of the individual issues highlighted at the meeting on 11 September. Each of these issues was dealt with in turn by the Working Group and the following comments/questions were raised.

- The report set out a response provided by the Chief Solicitor in relation to Members' request for clarification on the issue of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, particularly those relating to member attendances. The Chair commented that she could not see why the authority should spend significant time responding to FOI requests for attendances when the information was readily available to the public. The Assistant Chief

Executive indicated that he would question the issue further with the Chief Solicitor.

- The categories of meetings, as set out in the table, were noted for use with the 'proforma' to be used by Members to submit their 'other' attendances. It was highlighted that a similar system for registering Members attendances at other meetings had been instigated two years ago in conjunction with Councillor Hargreaves, the then portfolio holder for Performance Monitoring. The new form would be circulated to Members each month to encourage a greater response. The form would be available to Members both in paper and electronic forms. Members questioned if a form detailing Members individual outside body appointments could be utilised, but the Assistant Chief Executive indicated that that may be difficult to populate and that it was not only outside body attendances that were to be monitored. Recording the attendances as simple figures on the current tabulation would not cause significant issues.
- Members asked if any record of when a Member had not attended but had appointed a substitutes were recorded. It was indicated that apologies and a substitute member being appointed were recorded but it would be difficult to display those records in a meaningful manner.
- The Chair commented that it would be worthwhile running a short trail of the process to measure Members' responses and to assess any difficulties that may arise in the recording of the submitted information.
- The issue of publishing Members attendance statistics regularly in Hartbeat had caused some concern for the Public Relations Officer. The Public Relations Team had been working over recent years to get the publication of Hartbeat to a cost neutral position for the council and that had nearly been achieved. The officer's concern was in identifying further space in the publication for the statistics. It was suggested that using some of the council's 'article' space to run some 'day in the life of a councillor' stories might be more productive in highlighting to the public what councillors actually did on a day to day basis. Some councillors questioned this approach but the Working Group did support giving the public an insight into the real work of a community councillor.
- It was highlighted that other Councils did only record the attendances at formal meetings as set out in the responses obtained in Appendix 2 to the report.
- The proposed method of displaying the attendance information in a fashion similar to that used by Lancaster City Council in appendix 3 to the report was supported. The Working Group did suggest that the list be banded to so those with SRA's were listed together.
- There were concerns at how illness may be reflected in the attendance statistics.

In concluding the discussion the Chair asked that the trail of the forms for Members to complete should run through December and January. Formal statistics could then start to be collected from the start of the new Municipal Year to be published in conjunction with the financial statement in September. It was also suggested that a brief item be included on the Chief Executive's report for the next Council meeting highlighting the trail and encouraging Members involvement.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the trial of recording Members other attendances be undertaken during December and January with statistics being recorded in accordance with the meeting groups set out in the report.

2. That in addition to a letter being sent to all Members outlining the trial, a brief item be included in the Chief Executive's report to Council on 10 December 2009.

That a report on the progress of the Working group be made to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

5. Any Other Business

No items.

The meeting closed at 1.30 p.m.

CHAIR

MEMBER ATTENDANCES WORKING GROUP

26 FEBRUARY 2010

The meeting commenced at 1.30 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors Chris Simmons and David Young.

Officers: Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
 Christine Armstrong, Central Services Manager
 Hayley Martin, Constitutional and Administrative Solicitor
 Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
 Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team Manager
 David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

6. Apologies for Absence

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, Brash, Preece and Wright.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2010 and Matters Arising

Minutes Confirmed.

Matters Arising

A note had been circulated with the minutes setting out the Chief Solicitor's response to the Working Group's questions on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Essentially, if the authority held information that didn't fall within one of the twenty three exemptions set out within the FOI Act, then the authority had to release that information. There were issues in relation to the use of FOI requests to seek information that was already freely available and also if requests were considered to be vexatious. The Constitutional and Administrative Solicitor highlighted under the Act that a response to an FOI request was to 'the world at large'.

Members expressed their concerns in relation to FOI requests that they considered to be vexatious and for malicious purposes. Members did query the use of the statistics, which Officers stated were used for a range of administrative purposes.

Members were also concerned that the figures, an example of which was

included in the papers as an appendix to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive, were a very simplistic representation of attendances without any explanation. Several Members, for example, had suffered serious illness over the past year and their attendance figures would simply seem to show that they attended very few meetings. Newly elected Members attendances would also seem low if they were elected mid-way through a year for example. There was also the quite high number of Council meetings that simply were not reflected in the statistics examples of which were quoted by Members. The Working Group considered that such attendances should be reflected on the database kept by Democratic Services.

8. Exploration of Procedures for the Recording and Publication of Member Attendances – *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

The Democratic Services Team Manager reported that in accordance with the recommendation at the previous meeting of the Working Group, a trial for Members to record their attendances at other meetings was held during December and January. Proformas were issued both in paper and electronically to all Members for them to record their attendances. Nine Councillors responded to the trial by submitting details of their attendances at outside bodies and other meetings. Details of how the attendances submitted would look on the 'published' statistics were set out in the appendix to the report. The table has been adjusted to reflect the Working Group's request that the table be 'banded' to show the Members of the Executive and others with SRA's.

There were some issues with the responses submitted as part of the trial. One member, while submitting the form, complained that this was the wrong time of the year to be recording these details, while another completed the form but didn't feel the exercise was worthwhile and indicated that they would not wish to complete any such forms again in the future. Several Members recorded attendances at 'formal' meetings of the Council and there were also some political meeting attendances recorded.

Members did feel that should a table to this be published, it would need some explanation attached to it to reflect what 'other' meetings meant and that some Councillors had chose not to record those attendances. Members discussed further the use of the database held by Democratic Services and considered that access to that should be made wider so that departments could record Members attendance at many of the 'other' meetings, such as Building Schools for the Future, Business Transformation and briefing meetings. Officers did feel that such an expansion may require the input of Northgate.

The Working Group considered that the position that needed to be reached was that an annual publication of attendances would meet all eventualities.

The Working Group also questioned the administration of the database and

the Central Services Manager indicated that one of her key roles during the administration centralisation process was the assessment and review of the work that was transferring into the new arrangement. The Central Services Manager indicated that together with the Democratic Services Team manager, she would look at this particular task and assess how it may be amended and linked to other administrative functions.

The Chair considered that another meeting of the working group was therefore required to review that information. The Working Group supported the Scrutiny Manager's suggestion that an interim report to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee may be worthwhile at this point in time.

Recommended

1. That the report on the trial be noted.
2. That the Central Services Manager / Democratic Services Team Manager consider the issues and concerns highlighted by the Working Group in respect of the attendances database and submit a further report to the next meeting of the Working Group.
3. That an interim report on the progress of the Working Group's consideration of these issues be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

9. A Day in the Life of a Councillor – Exploring the Working Group's Suggestion – *(Scrutiny Manager / Public Relations Manager)*

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the Working Group, at its meeting on the 27 November 2009, discussed further the identification of additional / alternative ways of recording members' attendances. During the course of discussions, attention was drawn to the potential benefits of utilising Hartbeat to raise the profile of work undertaken by Members on a day to day basis. Members suggested that the introduction of a series of regular articles entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' should be explored.

Preliminary work has been undertaken by the Scrutiny Manager and Public Relations Manager to explore a possible process to facilitate the introduction of these articles. As part of this work consideration has been given to a number of issues, including:-

- (i) How expressions of interest could be sought from Members;
- (ii) How many articles there should be each year;
- (iii) How the selection process could work, i.e.:
 - how members could be selected;
 - how the split of articles between political groups could be dealt with; and
 - how the articles themselves should be structured in discussion with the Public Relations Unit.

Details of how this may be achieved and how Councillors could be selected were set out within the report. The Working Group indicated its concern at how election periods would be addressed. The Chair suggested that, in her opinion, there were four clear groups of Members; Executive Members, Chairs, Backbenchers and newly elected Councillors. Highlighting the different roles of these Councillors to the public would be worthwhile. All Members should be involved in the process of selection unless they opted out. Consideration would need to be given to not publishing articles for those councillors coming up for election within a particular year and also allowing newly elected councillors to have served at least a year before they had an article published. There could then be a rolling year on year programme. It was also emphasised that councillors should liaise with the Public Relations team several times in the run up to their article being published.

Recommended

That the proposal for the introduction of a series of regular articles entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' should be supported and a report submitted to the next Scrutiny Coordinating Committee including the suggested categories of Councillors and the selection process.

The meeting concluded at 2.45 p.m.

MARJORIE JAMES

CHAIR

MEMBERS ATTENDANCES WORKING GROUP

26 February 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager / Public Relations Manager

Subject: 'A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COUNCILLOR' –
EXPLORING THE WORKING GROUP'S
SUGGESTION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To explore the working group's suggestion for the introduction of regular 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' articles in Hartbeat.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Members Attendance Working Group, at its meeting on the 27 November 2009, discussed further the identification of additional / alternative ways of recording members' attendances. During the course of discussions, attention was drawn to the potential benefits of utilising Hartbeat to raise the profile of work undertaken by Members on a day to day basis.
- 2.2 Members suggested that the introduction of a series of regular articles entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' should be explored.
- 2.3 Preliminary work has been undertaken by the Scrutiny Manager and Public Relations Manager to explore a possible process to facilitate the introduction of these articles. As part of this work consideration has been given to a number of issues, including:-
- (i) How expressions of interest could be sought from Members;
 - (ii) How many articles there should be each year;
 - (iii) How the selection process could work, i.e.:
 - how members could be selected;
 - how the split of articles between political groups could be dealt with; and
 - how the articles themselves should be structured in discussion with the Public Relations Unit.

2.4 Taking into consideration all of these issues, as a starting point for discussions, a possible process for Members consideration could be as follows:-

1) Write out to all 48 Members seeking expressions of interest.

(Letter from the Public Relations Unit to include details of the process and selection process)

2) Select **eight Members** on a random basis, with:-

(i) **One Member** to appear in each of the **8 Hartbeat publications** (spanning a 24 month period);

(ii) The number of Members from each political group (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Administrative Group and Independent Members) to be selected on a proportional basis.

This would currently equate to:- 1 Conservative, 4 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Administrative Group and 1 Independent Member.

(iii) Selection process from a hat (drawn by the Chair of the Council as a suggestion):-

(a) Running order for the political groups.

(Names of each of the political groups in a hat – First group drawn appears in the July 2010 edition, etc); and

(b) Selection from interested Members.

(Names split into the political groups and a further draw undertaken to determine successful Councillors from each group).

(iv) Members who are up for election should be excluded from appearing in March Hartbeat publication.

(v) First 'Day in the Life' article to appear in the Summer Hartbeat edition (June / July) then in the publications in September, December and March.

3) Write out to Members confirming who will feature in the articles and those who have been unsuccessful

4) Public Relations Unit to start preparation work with successful Members as soon as possible on the production of their articles. The content and structure of the articles to be dealt with by the Public Relations Unit in conjunction with individual Councillors.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The proposals outlined in this report form a suggested starting point for Member discussions on this matter. Members are asked to consider the process suggested and identify a way forward for inclusion in the Working Group's report to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the Working Group:
- (i) Confirms if it wishes include a recommendation in its final report for the introduction of regular 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor' articles in Hartbeat;
 - (ii) Considers the suggestion put forward for a process to facilitate the introduction of these articles, as outlined in Section 2 of this report; and
 - (iii) Formalise a suggested process for inclusion in its report to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
- (i) Minutes of the meeting of the Members Attendances Working Group held on 11 September 2009.
 - (ii) Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30 July 2009.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy Division
Hartlepool Borough Council
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SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

19 March 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SIX MONTHLY MONITORING OF AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of the agreed scrutiny recommendations of this Committee and the five standing Scrutiny Forums.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 21 November 2007 approved the introduction of an electronic database to monitor the delivery of agreed scrutiny recommendations since the 2005/06 Municipal Year. Approval was also given for the introduction of a standardised six monthly cycle for the submission of progress reports to each Scrutiny Forum.
- 2.2 The newly created electronic database, to be known as the Scrutiny Monitoring Database, will run along the same principles as the Authority's former Corporate Performance Management Database and in addition to provision of standardised six monthly monitoring reports, as detailed above, will provide the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with a breakdown of progress against all Scrutiny Forums' recommendations on an Annual basis. The introduction of the new database will also provide the ability to produce 'real time' information of the progression of recommendations upon request.
- 2.3 In accordance with the agreed procedure, this report provides for Members information details of progress made against each of the investigations undertaken by the Forum. Attached as **Appendix A** is a Summary Report that breaks down progress made by investigations undertaken by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, **Appendix B** provides a detailed explanation of progress made against each recommendation made by Scrutiny

Co-ordinating Committee and **Appendix C**, provides an overall summary of recommendations across the five standing forums.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That progress against the agreed scrutiny recommendations made by all of Hartlepool's Overview and Scrutiny Committees, since the 2005/06 Municipal Year, be noted and explored further where appropriate.

Contact Officer:- Joan Nominton – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
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Email: joan.Nominton@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**HMS Trincomalee Trust**

G Target achieved 6

Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development

G Target achieved 4

Closure of Hartlepool College of Further Education's On Site Nursery

G Target achieved 3

Closure of Rossmere Swimming Pool

G Target achieved 9

Withdrawal of European Structural Funding to the Voluntary Sector

G Target achieved 2

Review of the Authority's Postal Service

G Target achieved 4

Kerbside Recycling Scheme Referral

G Target achieved 5

A Expect to achieve target 9

Use of Agency Workers Within the Council

G Target achieved 5

A Expect to achieve target 3

Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Department: *
Division: *

Scrutiny: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Scrutiny Enquiry: *

A	Expect to achieve target	12	24.0%
	Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	12	
G	Target achieved	38	76.0%
	Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	38	
Total No. of Actions		50	

Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)i That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-

(i) The creation of a reuse facility for the items collected by the Bulky Household Waste Collection Service and the Household Waste Recycling Centre, in Burn Road.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)i	Designs are current being drafted and costed to expand the existing HWRC to incorporate a re-use facility. The final designs will be costed and tendered following council procurement guidelines	September 2010	Utilising the support available from the Waste Action Resource Programme (WRAP) we have engaged in a desk study with the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) to identify ways to work with voluntary and community sector for the disposal of bulky waste, the options report will be considered as part of the Service Delivery Option review and will include use of the facility in Burn Road. (original deadline Sept 09)	Fiona Srogi
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)ii That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-
The development of an environmental sustainability facility encompassing the provision of the sale of green items such as compost bins and electrical items be supported, along with the identification of the necessary resources to achieve it.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)ii	Designs are current being drafted and costed to expand the existing HWRC to incorporate a 'green' shop for the sale of sustainable living items. The final designs will be costed and tendered following council procurement guidelines	September 2010	Utilising the support available from the Waste Action Resource Programme (WRAP) we have engaged in a desk study with the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) to identify ways to work with voluntary and community sector for the disposal of bulky waste, the options report will be considered as part of the Service Delivery Option review This report will also link the feasibility of developing a Green Shop for the sale of environmentally friendly items.(original deadline Sept 09)	Fiona Srogi
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)iii That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-

(iii) Preparation of an outline business case examining service delivery options for the collection of the Authority's Bulky Household Waste Collection Services.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)iii	A business case will be prepared advising on possible options, linking into guidance coming out of the Business Transformation programme.	September 2010	Utilising the support available from the Waste Action Resource Programme (WRAP) we have engaged in a desk study with the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) to identify ways to work with voluntary and community sector for the disposal of bulky waste, the options report will be considered as part of the Service Delivery Option review (original deadline Sept 2009)	Fiona Srogi
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Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)iv That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-

(vi) Exploration of the possible ways to work with the voluntary and community sector for the disposal of bulky waste.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)iv	Since delivery options will be explored using the framework to be determined from the Business Transformation programme.	May 2010	Utilising the support available from the Waste Action Resource Programme (WRAP) we have engaged in a desk study with the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) to identify ways to work with voluntary and community sector for the disposal of bulky waste, the options report will be considered as part of the Service Delivery Option review	Fiona Srogi
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)vi That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-
(vi) Close working with the Authority's Private Sector Housing Team to identify the most appropriate method of collection for bedsits and ensure landlords are aware of their responsibilities with respect to providing containers for tenants.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)vi	Set of meetings to be scheduled exploring the most appropriate collection method to enable residents to recycle and participate in the Kerbside Collection Service. Information will be incorporated in the welcome packs.	May 2010	The welcome pack has been designed and issued out to private sector housing's selective licencing scheme members. The welcome pack includes information on landlord responsibilities with respect to waste management. Collection methods for bedsits will be identified during the pilot scheme. (original deadline May 2009)	Colin Ogden
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Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)vii That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-
vii) The implementation of a pilot scheme to ascertain if the provision of smaller containers for single occupancy bedsits / flats is feasible.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)vii	Agree a pilot area with the Private Sector Housing Team. Implement and monitor over minimum of six months.	May 2010	Pilot area to be identified utilising the results of the participation survey and the knowledge of the private sector housing team to best identify areas and residents who are struggling with the current container types. Discussions with the management company of the facility in one identified area are ongoing (original deadline May 2009)	Colin Ogden
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(a)viii That as part of work to further improve waste disposal and recycling services in Hartlepool, the implementation of the following activities be explored:-

(viii) Offer the same facilities to all flats, complexes and apartments and keep the methods in place in respect of multiple occupancy buildings and sheltered accommodation.

A	SCC/08-9/7(a)viii	Existing services will continue to be provided as they are. Any changes will be dependent upon the outcome of the pilot.	May 2010	Utilising the information provided through the participation survey conducted May - June 2009 we have identified an area to conduct the pilot. Options that are being considered are smaller containers and mini bring centres. Discussion with management company for complex are ongoing (original deadline May 2009)	Fiona Srogi
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(b)(i) - That as part of the process for the reconfiguration of in-house services, a feasibility study be undertaken incorporating the following areas of provision:

- (i) The reconfiguration of contracts in line with the service standard;**
- (ii) Partnership – Household waste recycling centre and Bring Centre provision;**
- (iii) Voluntary sector – re use of bulky waste items; and**
- (vi) Externalise services – Household waste recycling centre and bring centre servicing.**

A	<p>SCC/08-9/7(b)(i) - Reconfiguration of current services will be carried out as detailed in the recommendation, taking account of business transformation frameworks which are currently being developed.</p>	<p>December 2010 Work has begun with the furniture reuse network to look at working with the voluntary sector for the reuse of bulky items. The Household waste recycling centre contract has been awarded to J&B Recycling for a two year period with an option to extend for a further year. HBC are working in partnership with J&B to maximise the amount of materials collected for recycling from the site. The Bring centre contract is still currently on hold until the markets for the materials are stable. (original deadline December 2009)</p>	Fiona Srogi
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/7 KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME REFERRAL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/7(f) That ways of increasing the levels of recycling with small businesses across the town be explored further.

A	SCC/08-9/7(f)	Options to explore how best to increase business recycling without adding additional financial pressures to the waste revenue budgets.	September 2010	Discussions have been held to look at the options to increase business recycling with small businesses without additional financial pressures to waste revenue budgets. Concerns have been raised that an recycling collection would have to be cheaper than standard trade waste collection to make it an attractive service to businesses, and this will have an adverse affect on waste revenue budgets. We have also had preliminary discussion with a Recycling Company regarding this subject (original deadline Sept 09)	Colin Ogden
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/8 USE OF AGENCY WORKERS WITHIN THE COUNCIL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/8d That the Authority be encouraged to share innovative approaches to minimise the future demand of agency workers / specialists where appropriate.

A	SCC/08-9/8d	Options to be pursued including a regional portal for staff recruitment, a Hartlepool recruitment pool were appropriate, succession planning and staff development / secondment opportunities. An exercise to exchange good practice between departments e.g. the use of casual lists, maintaining contact with leavers etc.	April 2010	The arrangements for monitoring the use of agency workers has been included in: - the HR Service Delivery Options review due for completion in January 2010 - the review of management arrangements and functional areas in the new Customer & Workforce Services Division. Both reviews also provide an opportunity to standardise best practice across departments in the use of casual lists, maintaining contact with leavers, etc. with an implementation date for first phase changes by April 2010 (Original Deadline August 2009)	Joanne Machers
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Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/8e That a feasibility study be undertaken to determine the appropriateness of establishing either a council-run agency or a joint procurement arrangement with neighbouring local authorities across the Tees Valley.

A	SCC/08-9/8e(ii)	Future consideration of in-house provision required.	March 2010	Feasibility into Tees Valley arrangement complete and collaborative contract saving around 10% commissioned. Council-run and agency can be considered in the future as the Business Transformation Programme develops.	Graham Frankland
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Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2009

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
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SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

SCC/08-9/8 USE OF AGENCY WORKERS WITHIN THE COUNCIL

Recommendation:

SCC/08-9/8g	That twelve months after the implementation of the new HR/payroll system and the introduction of centralised control measures for the recruitment of agency workers / specialists across the Authority, a detailed monitoring report on the level of expenditure and usage be submitted to this Committee and the appropriate Portfolio Holder thereafter.
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SCC/08-9/8g

Provide monitoring report.

September 2010 Hr/Payroll system implementation on schedule.

Joanne Machers