

ITEM REF NUMBER:	2a/ 2009	MEETING DATE:	19 February 2009
ITEM TITLE:	Supplementary Information to Discussion Paper: Initiating a Strategic Approach to Improving Life Chances		
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1. Summary

1.1. This paper is supplementary background briefing to the Child Poverty Innovation Pilot proposal that the Council has submitted to the Government. We are currently awaiting the Government's decision whether to accept the proposal.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Board is asked to note the content of the short briefing below containing an outline of the proposed pilot.

Introduction

1. Southwark Council has submitted a proposal for a Child Poverty Innovation Pilot to the Government's Cross Departmental Child Poverty Unit.
2. A number of councils are competing for a limited number of pilots. The Child Poverty Unit is due to make decisions on proposed pilots by the end of December.
3. If successful the pilot would operate in Southwark between January 2009 and April 2011 and would potentially focus an extra £1.4m on tackling poverty in the borough.
4. If the proposed bid is not successful we will seek to develop the research and development workstrands of the pilot through existing capacity in the Council. Other sources of funding will need to be identified for the operational elements of the bid, such as the recruitment of employment advisors.

The Proposed Southwark Child Poverty Pilot

5. The proposed Southwark pilot will tackle Child Poverty through:
 - Focussing on income maximisation and getting parents into work
 - Joining up services around the family so that parents and families get the support they need to overcome the barriers to economic independence
 - Involving families in the shaping of the services they need
 - Building on the successes and good practice that already exist in the borough such as Southwark Works, Rightfully Yours and Community Bank
6. The outcome of the pilot will be the creation of a system of holistic support to families. Through evaluation, testing and re-design of services the pilot will join up support

around families engaging with the Council and its partners. Ultimately this will improve the number of parents progressing on the pathway to work, maximising family income, increasing family learning and reducing the number of children in poverty in the borough.

7. If selected Southwark's proposal will:
 - Support parents and families in Southwark overcome poverty and get on the path to achieving economic independence
 - Build on the Council and its partners existing successful initiatives that focus on tackling poverty in the borough
 - Provide the Government with practical evidence and good practice of how local partners can work together in areas of high need to tackle child poverty by 2020.

Outline of Timeline and Activity of the Proposed Southwark Child Poverty Pilot

Year 1 Activity (January 2009 – March 2009)

- Set up overall project management team and systems within the council
- Appoint specialist service design and co-creation support
- Recruitment of specialist data analyst in Children' Services
- Recruitment of advisors for Parenting Programmes, Children's Centres and Extended Schools and a co-ordinator
- Develop a baseline and evaluation framework for pilot

Year 2 Activity (April 2009 – April 2010)

There are two strands of parallel activity to develop and test models of service delivery: a) identify the gaps and the as yet unknown potential in the current system and b) live testing of models. NB elements of the live testing are already known based on current work, however our proposal also has the flexibility and capacity to build on these and test other opportunities identified through strand (a).

a) Development of data and intelligence focussed on tackling poverty to underpin pilot activity

Activities:

- Undertake a council wide needs assessment using poverty as a key variable
- Use needs assessment to identify areas that could benefit from better joint working and can incorporate pathways to work, income maximisation, family learning and targeting for local priorities, particularly across non traditional boundaries. This should include identifying where contact with families could be better used and referral pathways between services streamlined
- Review existing processes across a range of services in contact with families in poverty (income maximisation and work, parenting, housing, etc) to identify how the collection of data and information and assessment could be improved and support more holistic service delivery
- Ensure the voice of the family, service user experience and frontline staff are shaping developments, including where appropriate action research and stakeholder events

- Develop baseline and evaluation framework for measuring the impact of our work

b) Development and action testing of new multidisciplinary models of service delivery to address life chances and families living in poverty

Activities

- Using the findings from strand (a), model and test ways of working and new opportunities to further develop operational model below
- Initial operational model will be:

a) Adding value to services delivering support to parents

- **Specialist family advisors that are part of the Southwark Works network** and located in existing targeted adult services used by parents.
- **Developing a “one stop” model** of provision in Extended Schools and Children’s Centres to model “think family” approach that includes the additionality of employability and family learning opportunities within an extended universal children’s services setting

b) Improved information, guidance and signposting

- **An extended customer relationship management system and benefit advice service** to improve advice and support to improve the pathway from benefits into employment and skills support programmes; and make links to the Family Information Service.
- **Borough wide information points-** Extending existing information points such as the councils customer call centre, one stop shops and housing offices to incorporate signposting and where appropriate access to employment, income maximisation, and take up of family learning opportunities
- **Workforce development of those staff in contact with parents** that would streamline information gathering and associated processes. Critically it will also enable contact with families in poverty to be maximised in relation to local priorities and employability, income maximisation and take up of family learning opportunities This would also include the training and development of appropriate staff around “think family” principles and “no wrong door”.

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Year 3 Activity (April 2010- April 2011)

Mainstreaming of successful parts of year 2 activities that have had most impact driving anti poverty, through localised services and customer services agendas across council wide services

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Post Pilot Activity: Final evaluation of pilot for Southwark and the Child Poverty Unit

- Activities to be determined with Child Poverty Unit