

	Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee 11th March 2020
Title	Life Chances Strategy 2020-24
Report of	Chairman of the Committee- Councillor David Longstaff
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	Appendix A: Draft Life Chances Strategy
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Summary	
<p>The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed sections of the Child Poverty Act 2010 which required local authorities to produce a child poverty strategy and re-named the legislation as the Life Chances Act 2010. The 2010 and 2016 Acts stress the importance of focusing on life chances to reduce child poverty. New measures include tackling worklessness, improving educational attainment and supporting 'troubled' families.</p> <p>Barnet's previous approach to improving life chances formed part of the child poverty strategy. This was set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-20 and supported Barnet's family friendly vision which is focused on making Barnet the most family friendly borough in London and an even better place for all families to live. Barnet has made progress since then and the appendix to the draft strategy sets out some of the progress that has been made against of the priorities in the last strategy.</p> <p>This draft new Life Chances Strategy (2020-24) restates Barnet's pledge to help young people succeed as part of the family friendly vision, through priorities and actions to build families and children's resilience and ensure better outcomes.</p> <p>This paper seeks approval from the Committee to public consultation on the draft strategy and following consultation, to delegate authority to the Executive Director- Children and Young People in consultation with the Committee chairman to give final approval of the Life Chances Strategy 2020-2024.</p>	

Recommendations

- 1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee consider and comment on the draft Life Chances Strategy 2020-24 set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee give approval for public consultation on the draft Life Chances Strategy 20-24**
- 3. That following public consultation delegated authority is given to the Executive Director – Children and Young People in consultation with the committee chairman to give final approval of the Life Chances Strategy 2020-2024**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In 2016, the Welfare Reform and Work Act repealed sections of the Child Poverty Act 2010 that placed a requirement on local authorities to assess the needs of children living in poverty in their area and produce a child poverty strategy. The 2010 Act was also renamed the Life Chances Act 2010. The intention of the 2016 and 2010 Acts are that focus should be made on new life chances to mitigate against child poverty, in particular in relation to supporting people back into work and supporting low income working families. Barnet's previous approach to improving life chance was part of its child poverty strategy and set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-20. This supported Barnet's family friendly vision which is focused on making Barnet the most family friendly borough in London and an even better place for all families to live.
- 1.2 Barnet has made progress since then and the appendix to this draft strategy sets out some of the improvements against each of the priorities in the last strategy. Recent data revealed Barnet having fewer children living in poverty with 14.0% of children under the age of 16 living in low income families in 2016 compared to 24.9% in 2006. However, this remains an issue as child poverty is a growing problem nationally affecting over 4 million children leading to damaging health as well as reducing life chances.
- 1.3 This draft strategy has been developed in consultation with services across the Council as well as external partners. A draft has been twice to the Children's Partnership Board and input has been received from key stakeholders including Voluntary & Community Sector, Clinical Commissioning Group, Family Services, Barnet Public Health, Corporate Communications, Housing, Cambridge Education and Growth & Development services. In the early stages of development, input was also received from a young people's focus group. This report seeks agreement from the Committee to the draft strategy and delegation of authority to the Executive Director, Children and Young People to consider consultation responses and agree the final policy.

1.4 Progress since the Child Poverty Strategy 2016-20

Since the last agreed strategy, there has been significant progress against partners' priorities to combat child poverty in Barnet and therefore improvements in life chances. The plan focused on the key priorities and a series of supporting actions to achieve these. (See appendix to the attached draft child poverty strategy)

Recently released information on Barnet revealed fewer children living in deprivation with 14.0% of children under the age of 16 living in low income families in 2016 compared to 24.9% in 2006.

1.6 Summary of new strategy

Barnet remains committed to reducing child poverty and our life chances strategy outlines actions to improve lives and increase opportunities. The latest research shows Barnet has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2015) score of 17.8, making it one of the least deprived boroughs in London. However, there remain pockets of deprivation in the borough, many of which are concentrated in the west and south.

The new strategy outlines a renewed commitment by all services across Barnet to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. All agencies recognize the need to work even harder together on a whole family basis in order to improve the wellbeing for children. Partners have agreed to retain the four existing priorities which are working well but to enhance the associated actions to further increase the chances of helping young people succeed and developing even better outcomes.

Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education

Priority 3: Delivering equal access to opportunities

Priority 4: Targeting support

The detailed actions sitting under each of these priorities are set out in the draft child life chances strategy.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 In 2016, the Welfare Reform and Work Act repealed sections of the Child Poverty Act which placed a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a child poverty strategy. It instead places emphasis on life chances measures. The new strategy demonstrates Barnet's commitment to improving life chances of young residents. It improves upon the previous child poverty strategy which was set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-20 and ends March 2020. This draft strategy has been developed in consultation with services across the Council as well as external partners.

- 2.2 The proposals in this report are recommended for further consultation, after which the Council will make a decision to approve the Life Chances Strategy

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The alternative option is to not have a new strategy to help improve the life chances of young residents. However, this could have a profound impact on inequality and successful outcomes.

4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The draft life chances strategy will go to public consultation, following which it will be finalised for publication and then published on the Council website.
- 4.2 The implementation of the strategy will be monitored by the Children's Partnership Board.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Ensuring that residents live happy, healthy, independent lives with the most vulnerable protected is one of the Council's three strategic outcomes set out in its Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity to make sure Barnet is a place:

- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
- where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- where responsibility is shared, fairly where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer.

- 5.1.2 The draft life chances strategy supports delivery of this outcome through a range of action against the priorities to:

- strengthen families and early years.
- develop resilience and improve education.
- deliver equal access to opportunities
- target support

The strategy also contributes to the delivery of the priority to ensure that Barnet is a family friendly borough.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

The work to drive the delivery of the lifestrategy will be delivered from within existing resources of the Council and its partners.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed sections of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and re-named the Act the Life Chances Act 2010. There is therefore no longer a duty for local authorities to assess needs and produce a child poverty strategy. The 2016 Act focuses on supporting people into work and supporting low income working families, with the Government being required to publish data on the number of children living in workless households in England and long-term workless households in England, as well as the educational attainment of children and disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4.
- 5.5.2 As outlined in Article 7 of the Council's Constitution's Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, the Committee's responsibilities includes all matters relating to children, schools, and education.

5.6 Risk Management

None.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.7.1 The Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

- 5.7.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.
- 5.7.3 One of the priorities in the draft life chances strategy is to deliver equal access to opportunities. This will be an area of future focus. As part of our monitoring of this policy, we will seek to collect and analyse data to see whether particular groups are affected more than others. The outcome should enable agencies to take steps to

address inequality.

5.8 Corporate Parenting Principles

In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. The draft child poverty strategy sets out a range of actions to support this duty including:

- Improving attainment and progress of children in care.
- Supporting care leavers with a training programme to live independently.
- Ensuring care leavers are upskilled in budget cooking and have access to food education.
- Continuing to provide council tax exemption to enable care leavers to live independently.

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1 The information to be presented has been informed by a programme of engagement work that includes;

- Public Health analysis of the latest available information including data from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) which produces annual statistics on the percentage of children in low income families
- Consultations with key delivery areas within Family Services - Early Years, 0-25, Children in Care, Social Services
- Consultations with Voluntary & Community Sector, Public Health, Clinical Community Group, Cambridge Education, Housing, Growth & Development and Corporate Communications, Young People's focus group
- Review and feedback by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board

5.9.2 If the draft Strategy is approved formal public consultation will commence following CES Committee on the 11 March 2020

5.9.3 The consultation will run for eight weeks and will consist of an online consultation - published on Engage Barnet which will include a link to the full strategy and a consultation document which summarise the strategy and key questions. Residents will be able to give their views via an online questionnaire. Alternative formats will also be made available on request.

6. BACKGROUND PAPER

None