

## **CHILD POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP – INTERIM REPORT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Task and Finish Group met in July to review the recommendations of the last Panel. Having done so, it is proposed that the next meeting is after the Panel meets in September, in order to progress the work. The Task and Finish Group also propose that there is a role for the Group to continue through to the end of the financial year, so as to see through the items that are being developed.

### **2. ITEMS FOR REVIEW**

- 2.1 Appendix 1 is the schedule of actions as recommended at the last Panel. Added to the schedule is a final column which sets out the suggested way forward with these items.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
- a) The Task and Finish Group continue through to at least the March Panel meeting, so as to pursue the items for action; and
  - b) The schedule of actions, together with any amendments made at the meeting, is agreed.

**For further information please contact:**

Alan O'Sullivan,  
Chairman, Child Poverty Task and Finish Group.

PREVIOUS SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL				TASK AND FINISH GROUP SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION
ITEM	REASON	HOW	PORTFOLIO	
1. Improvements to information availability and distribution across all the subjects covered in the workshop	Information is a core resource and whilst there is material out there, it is not well co-ordinated or presented.	Build on the work of the New Forest Advisory Service; Local Children’s Partnership and others and connect to NFDC sources. Better use of mobile technology/ social media.	Finance and Efficiency; Health and Leisure; Housing and Communities	<p>Information produced for the Local Children’s Partnership is a good starting point and this should be kept up to date. (MD)</p> <p>Monitor if HCC work with the Early Help Hub to provide local information on services (MD/AR)</p> <p>The Council should ensure that the relevant officers are aware of key sources of information (GM)</p> <p>Arrangements should be made to bring an LCP representative to the T&amp;FG to discuss how the information is made available across the workforce. (MD)</p> <p>The topic of “providing information about services”, should be suggested for inclusion in the current liaison between the Early Help Hub; Local Childrens’ Partnership and Supporting Troubled Families Programme (AR/MD)</p>

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2. Enable front line staff to identify those in need and signpost.	Service staff meet with those in need and can be in a position to know where assistance can be found.	There will be a need to develop awareness / skills and ready access to information. Will apply to all relevant services and is likely to tie into safeguarding and "Prevent" training. Adapt the older persons 'trigger tool' as an additional guide to staff in assessing those in need. Test staff knowledge through a 'mystery' shopper.	All with front line services	<p>Safeguarding training is undertaken across the Council and is a subject in its own right. The T&amp;FG supports the need for the updating of policy and training and notes the work is underway.</p> <p>A report back in January on achievements is requested. (AR)</p>
3. NFDC employee and Members to be more aware of the cultures of the GRT community and how services might best be made accessible so as to ensure the best life chances for all children	Difficulty in matching needs and services effectively. Changing arrangements amongst service providers (statutory and voluntary)	<p>Start with training – perhaps related to the induction programme in the coming year.</p> <p>Could then lead to consideration of addressing service delivery and awareness in the wider community.</p> <p>Ensure that there is an officer within the Council with specialist knowledge of this Group and filter this knowledge to other officers. Ensure one point of contact.</p>	All Portfolios	<p>It was noted that an information session ahead of Council is being planned which was welcomed. (AR)</p> <p>At a future session, it would be good to include reference to the Early Help Hub (AR)</p> <p>HCC work in this field needs to be better understood. A representative should be invited to talk to the Group about Hampshire's role in links with the GRT in the District. This would help understanding of needs and who might do what. (AR/MD)</p>

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4. NFDC employees to be more approachable and more knowledgeable	Perceptions of the Council can be a barrier to people using services and getting what they need. Employee understanding of the mental health impacts of lack of access to finance and/or housing	Consider training of front line staff in customer skills and also specifics such as budget advice. More use of social media. Provide our customers with service feedback forms. Provide staff and members with training on mental health.	All Portfolios	A future Heads of Service discussion was noted.  T&FG to receive a report back after that, with any intended programme and intentions. At the same time, more information on the work of the New Forest C&YP Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Group would be useful. (MD)
5. Develop a sustainable programme of 'Community Food Initiatives' to teach hard to reach groups that are living in poverty, socially isolated or have longer term health issues how to cook healthy food on a budget'	Making the most of existing groups / knowledge and workings. Avoiding duplication.	Enable awareness – officers linking up; supporting the operation of groups, possible higher profile for partnership section of NFDC web site.  Provide a directory of voluntary organisations/key providers working within this subject on website.  Host a yearly networking seminar similar to the workshop held on the 6 Feb.	All Portfolios	Provision seems to be effective but for this issue it was important to be clear about the target group.  The next step is a review of what is happening now. To this can be added what is needed. This would prompt a conversation on whether there is a need for action and by whom. (AR)  Directory is part of LCP work above (No1).  This should happen. Need to review precise details on content and invites (eg more from Education) but a February date is the target. (MD)

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6. Mapping and understanding of mental health commissioning and service delivery for children and adults, particularly those with physical disabilities and special needs.	There was a lack of such mapping with may be hindering identification of need/take up and leading to the danger of duplication	Take this matter to the New Forest Health and Well Being Partnership Board	Health and Leisure	<p>The scale of a comprehensive exercise was noted. Some work had been done by the LCP and Police and Crime Commissioner.</p> <p>The suggestion is to use what is currently available and the question asked about whether best use is made of it.</p> <p>A report back to the T&amp;FG as part of No 4 and the work of the New Forest C&amp;YP Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Group . (AR)</p>
7. Provide more welfare surgeries	There is a need for more access to what can be complex information	Informal (tea and biscuits) approach Make more use of community premises such as children centres.	Finance and Efficiency	<p>In hand as part of work on Universal Credit. A temporary resource has been employed to help set up surgeries / support.</p> <p>There were other factors (including discussions about a Credit Union) that will be reported back to Panel on how affected families are being supported and this would be part of that. In addition, there may be value in an email bulletin to Members (GM)</p>
8. Enable a relationship between HCC GRT team and New Forest GRT with permanent residence	This link was not made currently	Enable a link	Housing and Communities	As discussed above (No 3)

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9. Direct referral to food banks.	As a direct result of networking at the workshop on 6 February, Housing Officers now have contact details of those running food banks in the district and can now refer people to these.	Ensure that Housing Officers continue to be aware of contacts details of those running food banks in the District.	Housing and Communities	<p>It was noted that in-house training is underway with provision of information to key officers and more services are making referrals</p> <p>More might be made of a two way relationship between NFDC and food banks.</p> <p>The subject prompted discussion about the best means for Members to share information or questions on topics. A discussion with the Communications Team and also within the Group may assist (Members).</p>
10. Free use of room hire in NFDC offices	Venues can cost third parties for interviews. This is likely to be at low or no cost to NFDC	Room hire function.	Finance and Efficiency	Happening at the moment in response to needs when they are expressed and there is the opportunity to do so.

**POSSIBLE LINES FURTHER LINES OF ENQUIRY**

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11. Receive a report on Public Health Hampshire work with GRT community.	Health needs of this group are still apparent and there may be particular actions to consider. Current work is being completed and will be up to date.	Presentation to Panel	Covered under No 3
12. Community transport – what is commissioned and how / /what is out there – joining up of need and provision.	Public transport is understood to be largely a matter of central government and County Council action. Local action / commissioning of community transport services may offer more scope. There is some uncertainty as to how well community users and needs are connected to transport provision and commissioning.	Possible joint Task and Finish Group between Panels	It was noted that this is really challenging. To assist future discussion the T&FG suggests a proposal is devised for further work (probably a joint session with representatives from Planning and Transportation). (MD/CE). Some questions:  What services are there? Is there capacity to carry more people in the current provision? What is the demography of users? Are there pre-conceptions about who the transport is for? What role for Town and Parish Councils? Is there best practice to learn from?
13. Should NFDC funding of third parties make more overt requirements to demonstrate recognition of child poverty?	Demands are rising, resources are falling, so there is a need to make best use of what is available.	Panel considers if Portfolios should be asked to consider at all; generally or more specifically	The Council does not have a clear history of allocating funding to wider “societal or social” functions such as child poverty / parenting skills and support / loneliness in old age / domestic violence and so forth. It was not known where HCC was heading with its funding. The new Corporate Plan was an opportunity to set out priorities, against which action can be taken. These were much wider questions (Members)