Reducing Child Poverty Strategy
Summary of Consultation Responses

1.   Introduction

4 separate reports have been produced on different aspects of the consultation which took place on the draft reducing child poverty strategy. Reports are available on:

- Feedback on young people's focus group
- Feedback from discussions with parents
- Notes from the stakeholder workshop
- Summary of written consultation responses

This paper summarises the key messages highlighted in the 4 reports on factors which impact on child poverty and strategic objectives and actions for reducing or alleviating the impact of child poverty. It does not cover all the issues raised but focuses on key issues and themes.

Responses to the consultation were generally supportive and positive, recognising the need to address child poverty in Wiltshire and its effects on children's lives, and agreeing with the direction of the draft strategy.

2.   Factors which impact on child poverty

Key issues raised on factors which impact on child poverty were:

- Does the draft reducing child poverty strategy sufficiently address the impact of the following:
    - Poor housing and housing issues.
    - Poor health and disability of both parents and children
    - Mental health problems
    - Misuse of drugs and alcohol
    - Fuel poverty
    - Family breakdown
- Does the strategy reflect the key local employment issues eg. Over-reliance on service industries and agriculture mean a culture of low pay in the county. The loss of jobs in major local employers.
- Are transport issues highlighted sufficiently?
- Is there sufficient analysis of impact of changes to Government policy for example impact of changes to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), housing benefit changes.

- Although it is mentioned, more information could be provided on the military presence and its impact on child poverty in Wiltshire. In particular – is there a relationship ie. does a high military presence increase child poverty?

## 3.	Strategic Objectives and Key Actions

### 3.1	Strategic Objective 1 Keep child poverty in the spotlight

Some queries and ideas for keeping child poverty in the spotlight
- It is not so much keeping child poverty in the spotlight but rather ensuring the strategy, its aims and delivering the objectives is fully embedded at *every* level of *every* agency.
- How would a charter actually help? Will agencies follow it? We are not convinced that a "charter" or "champions" will ensure the proper embedding of the aims and objectives.
- Any new work should be built on existing groups rather that create new ones
- Build partnership with private sector. Ask what they can contribute? Eg: opportunities, time, resources, location of offices, businessmen "telling their stories" to young people, working with schools
- Need to ensure the Involvement of GPs.

### 3.2	Strategic Objective 2 Provide support to the 0-5 year olds in the most disadvantaged families

Some queries and ideas on providing support to the 0-5 years olds in the most disadvantaged families
- Although no-one disagreed with the importance of support for 0 to 5 year olds there was also support for focusing on support for families and parents of children over 5.
- The importance of taking a multi agency approach and of the role of Children's centres was emphasised.
- Parents thought pre-schools could do more to assist with ensuring children are ready for school e.g. sitting down, listening etc. Schools could visit early years settings which would help with building confidence of parents.
- Parents valued advice from other parents and formal parenting courses.
- Parents valued access to family learning and to adult literacy and numeracy courses
- Action should include how the role of adult mental health, drug and alcohol service can support this objective.

### 3.3	Strategic Objective 3 Narrow the educational attainment gap

Some queries and ideas on narrowing the educational attainment gap
- Does this mean narrowing the gap at all ages?

- All young people taking part in the consultation recognised the need to do well at school, in order to get a good job. Some young people felt that schools failed in teaching practical skills that would better support them to get jobs. Apprenticeships were rated highly, particularly with some of the older males.
- It would be helpful to be more specific about what 'schools and settings" need to do/are doing to "continue to address the attainment gap…"
- There is a link between this objective and objective 2 as support and training for parents can assist with narrowing the attainment gap.
- Young people talked about the difficulties that some young people are faced with when getting support from parents with school work. If parents did not do very well at school themselves, they might find it difficult to help their child or give them the support they need.
- Young people felt that there needed to be better communication between their school and home life.
- Parents mentioned support in maths and English – "so much has changed and have to understand this to help them."
- Parents wanted school to keep parents updated on progress. If there are difficulties parents needed to know as soon as possible and parents needed advice on how to support their child.

3.4   Strategic Objective 4 An inclusive Wiltshire with an appropriate job for everyone and economic opportunity for all

Some queries and ideas on developing an inclusive Wiltshire with an appropriate job for everyone and economic opportunity for all

- Support is needed for creation of jobs in sustainable sections of the economy.
- Jobs growth is important – how will this priority be backed up by local planning policy?
- Parents thought more parents would take up paid work if there were more courses in IT and Business skills to re-educate where skills are out of date.
- Parents thought people who refuse to work need more education to understand why they need to work.
- Volunteering can be useful.
- More opportunities for flexible working eg Term time only jobs
- Need to address causes of inter generational worklessness and "belief" systems" held by workless families.

3.5 Strategic Objective 5 Consideration of a consolidated geographic approach to areas of concentrated child poverty.

Some queries and ideas on developing a consolidated geographic approach to areas of concentrated child poverty.

- Young people were positive about their communities. Can we build on this positive aspect? Focus on empowering, enabling and raising aspirations.
- Community area board engagement and ownership is crucial. Needs to embedded in neighbourhood plans.
- This objective fits well into the national agendas of localism and the Big Society.
- In order to do this every agency must understand the importance of this approach.

3.6 Other issues to address in strategic objectives and/or action plans:

- What are the plans for addressing housing issues which impact on child poverty?
- Multi-agency work – should there be a separate strategic objective or does this link to strategic objective 1?
  - Partnership is key and there needs to be a clear multi-agency approach
  - More reference to and links with plans for developing the Common Assessment Framework
  - Information sharing is important. Need effective data sharing protocols between main agencies such as housing, police, health, education and voluntary sector.
- Should there be a separate objective on work with young people or does this link to objective 3?
  - Need to create aspiration, to demonstrate to children and young people that their life can be different
  - Breaking the cycle. Working with young people 14+ years to raise expectations and offer alternatives