



## Minutes of the Torbay Child Poverty Commission

14 November 2012

-: Present :-

Councillor Neil Bent, Councillor Jenny Faulkner, Councillor Alison Hernandez, Councillor Chris Lewis and Councillor Julien Parrott, Michelle Kennedy (Chair),

(Also in attendance: Torbay Council: Richard Williams, Director of Children's Services, Julie Sharland, Strategic Housing Manager, Lesley Gibbings, Policy, Performance and Review Officer, Save the Children: Anna Kettley, Head of Programmes, South of England, Nikki Henderson, Community & Voluntary sector representative (Eat That Frog))

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### 1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Chris Lewis, Executive Lead for Children, Schools and Families, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Child Poverty Commissioning Commission. The new Chair, Michelle Kennedy, and guest speaker Anna Kettley, Save the Children, were thanked for bringing their own knowledge and expertise to support the meeting.

All invited Members were present.

### 2. Terms of Reference

The Commission considered the Child Poverty Commission Terms of Reference.

The Commission discussed, questioned and agreed that the :-

*Aim of group –*

to oversee and require all those involved to be accountable and to demonstrate what difference has been made in tackling child poverty and the impact within communities.

*Principles –*

- the group will include families and communities in the commission process;
- stakeholders/experts will be invited to present evidence/be cross-examined
- a partnership approach is fundamental to engaging communities and agencies in the specific hot spot areas ( identified in the needs assessment )
- a change in the thinking and behaviour needs to happen to improve the future aspirations of our families by 2010

*Accountability –*

The Commission as an independent group will use its influence, work and findings to ensure that it has the maximum effect on outcomes for families in poverty. This will include making recommendations to the Council (as the accountable body for Torbay's child poverty strategy )

Membership – core membership will include representatives from

- Members x 5 (3 conservatives, 1 lib-dems- and 1 non-col- as advised by democratic services )
- Independent Chair – appointed by Council (Michelle Kennedy)
- Local Businesses
- Voluntary sector stakeholder organisations, families and young people from the most deprived communities (max 5)
- Roles and responsibilities: to be determined by the Commission
  
- Technical/professional expertise will be provided as required and agreed by Chair from a range of services including Children's Services, Health, Police, Schools and Job Centre Plus
  
- Frequency of meetings – to be determined by the Commission at a future meeting
  
- Conflict of interest: adopt Torbay Council's code of conduct and procedure for registering outside interests.
  
- Freedom of Information – agreed

The Commission noted the importance of ensuring that the Terms of Reference reflected what they wished to achieve in the long term and that the Commission would be doing things differently.

The Commission discussed the way forward and agreed:-

- the importance of a good PR/marketing strategy to get across the key messages
- Use of the Council press office resources may compromise the commission being seen to be independent and should not be used as the default position. There is a need to identify how messages,, statements , consultation is carried out
- testing/challenging recommendations to be processed through a task and finish group within Overview and Scrutiny structure of the Council in the future
- Quorum – to be decided and not to include Member substitutes
- joining up different initiatives/projects both inside the Council and outside agencies

**Actions**

- i) **Chair to prepare a draft Press statement recognising child poverty in Torbay (Michelle Kennedy)**
- ii) **Quorum to be agreed at future meeting of Commission**

**3. Pen Portraits**

Each Member gave a short, personal introduction about themselves including life experiences of living in poverty, expectations of the new Commission and wanting to make a difference in tackling child poverty.

**4. Guest Speaker Child Poverty and the wider context**

Anna Kettley, Save the Children, introduced a presentation which showed what child poverty means in Torbay and where Torbay fits in.

The Commission noted that there are currently 1 in 4 children in the UK living in poverty (annual income in family is less than £16,000 per annum) and 1 in 8 children who live in severe poverty (annual income in family less than £12,500 per annum). An example of how child poverty affects the expectations of young people was illustrated through the story of Becky who when asked what she would like to be when you grow up? Answered "I would like to be a vet, but I know I shouldn't bother – whoever heard of anyone becoming a vet from around here?!"

The Commission considered the impact of child poverty on preventing children from reaching their full potential both in terms of poor educational attainment, limited prospects, unemployment, poor health and shorter life expectancy.

The Commission recognised that Torbay has significant pockets of deprivation and has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the South West (Torbay 24%, Bristol 25% and Plymouth 20%)

The Commission noted that Save the Children are currently launching a new campaign to highlight the extent and impact of child poverty across the UK together with breaking the cycle of child poverty through innovative projects supporting parents (Families and Schools Together), Eat, Sleep, Learn and Play (toddler under 26 months) and exploring future new campaigns early intervention, Making Work Pay and affordable child care.

The Director of Children's Services asked the Commission to consider Save the Children sitting on the Child Poverty Commission. The Commission agreed to this and Anna was happy to be a full member.

**Action:**

- i) **Exploration of more localised data relating to young carers and single parents in Torbay to be identified and incorporated within the Strategy for Torbay (Michelle Kennedy/Lesley Gibbings)**

## **5. Community Representation**

Nikki Henderson Eat that Frog joined the Commission meeting to outline and give information on the community representative options. Nikki is currently the main representative for the voluntary sector involved in the Children's Partnership Improvement Plan (CPIP).

The Commission considered the options available and agreed that until Torbay's voluntary sector resolve their issues considering their future, that CVA appointment will be deferred and an interim representative for the voluntary sector on CPIP should be nominated to sit on the Commission.

The Commission supported the decision that Nikki Henderson should be a member of the Commission.

## **6. Child Poverty Strategy Discussion**

The Commission agreed to deferred this item for discussion at another meet in early December 2012 when a work programme will be planned, statement for Press confirmed and Needs Assessment published.

Future meeting: February to be based in community at Paignton Library