



## Leicester Child Poverty Commission

### Update on the Commission's recommendations

March 2015

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The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of actions taken since the Leicester Child Poverty Commission published its initial recommendations in January 2013. The paper outlines work taking place to deliver those recommendations and also considers the current child poverty challenge in Leicester.

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#### Introduction

The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities and partner organisations to put in place arrangements to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty; to publish a child poverty needs assessment and to prepare a joint child poverty strategy. The formal duty to co-operate set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 identifies those partners formally expected to co-operate, namely the police, probation service, transport authorities, National Health Service bodies and Job Centre Plus.

There is no formal requirement in the Child Poverty Act 2010 for the third sector, housing organisation, schools and colleges and businesses and employers to co-operate. However, in Leicester it is recognised that partners from each of these sectors have contributed to efforts to tackle poverty and continue to have an active engagement. This underlines one of the fundamental aims of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission to secure active partnerships and broader engagement around the need to tackle and reduce poverty in the city.

One of the reasons the Child Poverty Commission was set up was to initiate a broader conversation and debate about the issues underpinning poverty in Leicester and to support collaborative efforts in response to the poverty challenge. One of the key aims of setting up the commission was to underline the fact that efforts to reduce poverty and protect children from the worst impacts of poverty could not be the sole responsibility of any one organisation or sector. Effective efforts would require the active engagement of organisations from all sectors; the public sector, private sector and voluntary and community sector.

Since the Leicester Child Poverty Commission was established in 2011 the landscape around poverty and deprivation has changed significantly. Difficult economic conditions have led to a challenging employment situation and whilst employment is now falling this is mirrored with growing casualization and uncertainty in the labour market, for example the use of zero hours contracts and temporary contracts, and growing levels of under-employment.

Living costs have continued to increase such as housing costs and food, energy and transport costs. People with low incomes have been effected disproportionality by these rising costs of living.

At the same time the impacts of the government's changes to welfare benefits and tax credits are now being felt across Leicester. The government is seeking to save an estimated £18 billion from the social security budget by the end of this parliament. Welfare changes coupled with rising costs of living, and a challenging economic situation, are creating a squeeze on living standards in Leicester.

In the last four years the city's housing benefit caseload has increased by 2,500 households and this growth is entirely accounted for via an increase in claims from households that are in employment. Almost 3,000 households in Leicester have been affected by the Bedroom Tax and 27,440 households now have to pay a proportion of their Council Tax following changes to Council Tax Benefit. Council Tax Discretionary Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payments and Crisis Support Grants have been introduced to mitigate against some of these changes and provide support to households facing acute hardship.

These changes have led to households in Leicester seeing a reduction in their income and it should be noted that this includes households with at least one person in employment. It has been calculated that households in Leicester have seen a reduction in their income of between £150 and £1,500 a year<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, annual uplifts in benefits are now pegged at one percent which means they are not keeping up with inflation and the actual costs of housing, energy, food, transport and other essential living costs. This illustrates the compounding factors driving the cost of living challenge facing many of the poorest households in Leicester.

In 2013/14 the benefit cap affected 154 households in Leicester. These households saw an average income reduction of £750 per year<sup>2</sup>. In the same year 2976 Leicester households were affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy or the Bedroom Tax as it has become known. Households deemed to have one bedroom more than is needed have experienced an average annual income drop of £600. The reduction for households judged to have more than one spare bedroom is on average £1040 per year<sup>3</sup>. Many of these households have also been effected by changes to Council Tax Benefit, with an average income reduction of £170 per year because of this<sup>4</sup>.

As in other cities and towns, Leicester has seen an alarming and growing demand for emergency food assistance in recent years. Since 2012 the number of food banks operating in the city has more than doubled. Thirty-one food banks are currently operating in Leicester. In 2012, the number of food banks operating was 12.

Reports from food bank operators suggest that those needing emergency food assistance has now broadened and includes families who might previously have not required such assistance. A survey of those using food banks in Leicester carried out

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<sup>1</sup> Research carried out by Leicester City Council Research & Intelligence team.

<sup>2</sup> Research carried out by Leicester City Council Research & Intelligence team.

<sup>3</sup> Research carried out by Leicester City Council Research & Intelligence team.

<sup>4</sup> Research carried out by Leicester City Council Research & Intelligence team.

in summer 2014 shows that the most common reasons for needing emergency assistance from a food bank was low income, budgeting problems and delays in benefit decisions.

The recently published Feeding Britain report shows that the situation relating to food poverty and food bank usage in Leicester is typical of the national pattern<sup>5</sup>.

There can be no doubt that welfare reforms have, and are continuing, to create significant financial challenges and impacting detrimentally the living standards of a large number of households in Leicester. These changes have led to a loss of income for approximately 25% of the city's working-age households including many that are known to be at risk of hardship due to Leicester's existing patterns of low income and deprivation.

In considering child poverty it is important to recognise and understand the impacts of these changes. The majority of these changes have been introduced following the publication of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission's recommendations. Because of this, and due to the ongoing challenging economic situation and rising costs of living, immediate efforts need to be focussed on protecting children and young people from the worst impacts of poverty.

Figures published by End Child Poverty in October 2014 show that the child poverty rate in Leicester now stands at 37% (data is for 2013)<sup>6</sup>. In 2011 the rate was 32%. Appendix 1 details the methodology used by End Child Poverty in calculating this rate, but it should be noted that this measure is after housing costs. Appendix 1 also provides ward level information for Leicester.

Given the impact of the recent economic situation, rising costs of living and the way households in Leicester are being affected by welfare changes an increase in child poverty, whilst very alarming, should not be a surprise. In January 2014 the Institute for Fiscal Studies forecast that child poverty (based on an after housing costs measure) would increase nationally from 3.5m (2011/12) to 4.6m by 2020<sup>7</sup>.

This situation demands a sustained approach to tackling the immediate impacts of poverty on children and families in Leicester and ongoing and collaborative efforts to address the underlying and structural reasons for poverty and deprivation in the city. These efforts have to reach beyond the initial recommendations made by the Leicester Child Poverty Commission and require a continued determination to increase and strengthen the understanding of poverty and patterns of deprivation in Leicester and efforts to address this poverty. Research commissioned by the city council reinforces our understanding that patterns of poverty and deprivation in Leicester are complex and will continue to change<sup>8</sup>.

The main section of this paper provides an update on work undertaken to implement the recommendations of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission. Taking forward

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<sup>5</sup> Feeding Britain; report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> End Child Poverty; Child Poverty Map of the UK, October 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies; Child and Working-age Poverty in Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020 (2013). This report includes forecast data for the UK as a whole.

<sup>8</sup> Making ends meet in Leicester; Donald Hirsch, Matt Padley & Laura Valadez, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University.

some of the recommendations has been incorporated into wider approaches and policy development across the local authority. Beyond this work we have supported the work of the Bishop of Leicester's Commission on Poverty which published a report in February 2015, 'How do you get by?'

A project manager has also been recruited to support ongoing work across the local authority and with partners on a range of initiatives to tackle poverty. The creation of this post will strengthen the City Council's role in helping to co-ordinate cross-organisational and partnership projects aimed at tackling poverty and its underlying causes. This post will also support ongoing work on the important monitoring activity of what is happening in relation to poverty and living standards in our communities.

Rory Palmer  
Deputy City Mayor

## Update on the Leicester Child Poverty Commission Recommendations

1. Recognising the challenge of significant and sustained government funding cuts Leicester City Council should continue to do all it can to maintain a network of Children's Centres.

Following a reduction in the City Council's Early Intervention Grant of £4.4 million a full review of Children's Centres was carried out through 2012, 2013 and 2014. This review aimed to reconfigure the service in response to funding cuts with the objective of protecting services for the most vulnerable and maintaining a universal safety net.

Proposals were subject to public consultation with 1900 responses received. The remodelled service means that all 23 Children's Centres in Leicester remain open as access points for services but are now clustered into six areas with services organised across each cluster.

The key objectives for the remodelling were:

- Securing a greater emphasis on deploying staff to more targeted service activity to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.
- Services delivered within each cluster responding to local needs.
- The provision of a cohesive Early Help Offer managed throughout the clusters.

Each cluster has an allocated staff team, led by a cluster manager, who works with multi-agency partners, to ensure knowledge of, and provide evidence based activities for, children, young people and families who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Each cluster provides support for early learning and early help for families with a focus on providing the right support, with the right expertise, at the right time.

Children's early learning support is delivered by staff dedicated to improving learning outcomes for children and families in the cluster area. These staff deliver targeted support with some universal service delivery. Activities are planned and delivered according to the learning needs within the cluster, are evidence based and monitored to ensure the outcomes of targeted children are improved.

Family support is based in each cluster area to provide support to enable families to deal with problems early in order to prevent difficulties becoming acute. These staff form the Early Help Family Support team in the cluster and deliver targeted support to children, young people and their families with other professionals.

The cluster teams work to ensure effective identification of vulnerable families who need support to improve children and young people's outcomes.

2. Children's Centres will ensure they have effective systems in place to identify and target 2, 3 and 4 year olds vulnerable to poor outcomes in order to promote and support the take up of Nursery Education; this will include targeted activity to promote the benefits of nursery education in areas of low take-up.

Children's Centres have developed and continue to implement systems to identify children that could be vulnerable to poor outcomes. This includes working with, and securing further integration, with health visitors and schools.

Children's Centres target support to enable vulnerable children to take up nursery places at age two and to benefit from additional learning support for three and four year olds. Children's Centres have developed systems to identify children that could be vulnerable to poor outcomes. This includes the following:

The city council receives regular lists from the DWP that informs us of families that may be eligible for a funded place and the Children's Centres target these families as a priority to inform them of the offer through letter drops, follow up phone calls and home visits, supporting parents to complete an application to check their eligibility.

There are 2510 places available across the city specifically for 2 year olds that meet the criteria for a funded early education place. These places are available in a range of settings across the city including sessional care, full day care and childminders offering choice to families.

Children's Centre staff also co-deliver the 2 year check with Health Visitors and use this opportunity to promote Children's Centre provision as well as NEG placements.

3. Schools should be encouraged to provide Breakfast Clubs to support healthy eating, school punctuality and social and emotional development. The local authority should work to secure the necessary funding and resources, including from private sponsors and benefactors, to enable a network of Breakfast Clubs to be maintained.

Leicester City Council encourages schools to run breakfast clubs. It is recognised that breakfast clubs, together with after-school and school holiday provision, can make valuable contributions to attendance, attainment and childhood development.

Breakfast clubs at Leicester's schools are funded using Pupil Premium monies, parental contributions and some benefit from commercial support. Based on data from a telephone survey of 103 local schools, 74% or 76 schools provide what they describe as a breakfast club. A further two schools provide some form of pre-school day activity. It should be noted that three schools that responded to the survey do not provide food as part of their pre-school day activity.

Where charges to parents are made for breakfast clubs at schools these charges varied. At least one school, Parks Primary in New Parks, provides free breakfast to parents as well as children. The breakfast club at Beaumont Lodge Primary School is run by Greggs.

It is suggested that further and more detailed work is commissioned to understand the breakfast club and after-school offer across Leicester's schools with a view to developing recommendations and proposals for a more universal and consistent offer. The current offer including what is provided, the nature of arrangements and costs to parents, is highly variable across the city. A common and universal offer would appear to be fairer and would also help in monitoring the impact and outcomes of this important provision.

4. Leicester City Council should provide annual guidance to school governing bodies and head teachers on the use of Pupil Premium funding with the aim of ensuring this money is used to benefit the most vulnerable children and young people. In addition to annual guidance, Leicester City Council should develop a voluntary concordat with schools on the use of Pupil Premium Funding, with the specific objective of reducing child and family poverty.

Annual Guidance and further updates on innovative uses of Pupil Premium funding has been provided to schools. In 2013 Willow Brook school were the regional champions for innovative use of Pupil Premium and Babington Community College were regional runners-up.

At Marriott Primary School Pupil Premium funding has been used to employ a Family Support Worker, an innovative model that has now been adopted by 15 schools across the city (see update on recommendation 13).

A course will be run this autumn for school governors on the use and monitoring of Pupil Premium funding. It is suggested that the local authority continues to produce and disseminate annual guidance on the use of Pupil Premium funding in Leicester to share innovative approaches, best practice and examples of where this funding is demonstrably securing better outcomes for children.

A voluntary concordat has not yet been developed and agreed with schools on the use of Pupil Premium funding and reducing child and family poverty. It is proposed that this is now developed and is based on the four years' experience of Pupil Premium funding and the models of innovative practice that have been implemented in Leicester. A number of local schools have won national awards and recognition for their use of Premium Pupil funding to secure improved outcomes for children. Parks Primary and Taylor Road Primary have won awards this year.

5. The city council and those other organisations working with families newly arrived in Leicester should place a particular emphasis on child poverty and ensure the needs of children newly arrived in the city are properly met.

A number of organisations in Leicester including the Red Cross and City of Sanctuary provide important assistance to refugees and asylum seekers including support for refugees and asylum seekers with children and families. In 2013 the Red

Cross Leicester Refugee Service provided over 1600 support interventions for 325 destitute asylum seekers in a six month period.

In March 2014 Leicester City Council formally endorsed the Still Human, Still Here campaign calling on the Government to reconsider policies that see asylum seekers fall into destitution and which also expresses concern for the low level of support available for asylum seekers. One of the key planks of concern expressed in supporting this campaign is the impact of these policies on children.

The City Council is also a member of the New Arrivals Strategy Group which monitors and considers the needs of people newly arrived in Leicester.

**6. Leicester City Council should explore the feasibility of introducing automatic city library membership for children starting nursery education in the city.**

Every child at foundation stage in city schools is now given a City Libraries Welcome Pack which includes a library membership card, free books and information for parents about reading with their children.

This initiative was launched in October 2013 and since then over 2900 children have joined the library.

**7. Leicester City Council's Core Offer of services for 0-19 year olds and associated commissioning plans should prioritise resource at the most vulnerable children and should demonstrate a clear commitment to tackling child poverty.**

Since the reorganisation of Children Centres and Family Support in July 2014, the majority of commissioned services have been brought in house with staffing roles reconfigured to deliver a holistic package of support to children, young people and families who are most in need.

All 23 Children Centre buildings across the 6 cluster areas are in the process of being renamed to Children, Young People and Family Centres with a focus to integrate with partners and increase the adolescent focus. Within each cluster the 0 – 19 early help offer consists of:

- Parent and Community Engagement
- Central Teachers
- Childcare & Learning
- Family Support
- Specialist Services inc Targeted Youth Support, Education Welfare and Youth Offending Service.

Using datasets, children identified as vulnerable are targeted by the Children, Young People and Family Centres. The focus of the coming year will be targeted work with: children who have not been seen by the centres within the last 12 months; children who are not 'school ready' and children who are living in poverty



Voluntary youth service activities commissioned by the City Council are targeted in areas of greatest need including through street based youth work. Specialist Services for children and young people including Youth Offending Service, Youth Service and Connexions all prioritise Early Help to better identify young people and families at risk of poor outcomes arising from the negative impact of family poverty. This includes commissioned work to reduce youth and young adult unemployment by and providing training and employment skills and opportunities.

8. To promote and deliver the benefits of school meals and maximise Pupil Premium income to schools, an annual campaign should take place encouraging the take up of free school meals, including a week where every child in the city can try a school meal for free.

Leicester City Council has run a campaign in each of the last three years to promote National School Meals Week. This campaign involved offering every child in the city the chance to try a hot school meal for free.

This year the campaign did not run, following the introduction of the new Universal Infant Free School Meals. However, work will be continuing to promote the uptake of free school meals to eligible children. This includes the engagement of the City Council's Revenues & Benefits section that are now making eligible families aware of free hot school meals.

Over 7000 more school meals are being served each week this autumn in city schools as compared to last year. All school meals, including universal free school meals provided by City Catering are hot meals.

9. Leicester Child Poverty Commission and Leicester City Council should campaign jointly to have school meal nutritional standards apply equally in academies as they do in local authority schools.

Representations were made in 2013 to Government Ministers in the Department of Health and Department for Education arguing that nutritional standards should apply equally to academies and local authority schools.

From January 2015 all new academies have to comply with the newly published School Food Standards however academies that opened between 2010 and 2013 are not formally required to meet the school food standards. Lobbying will continue with the Government and all the main political parties to have the School Food Standards apply to all types of school on an equal basis.

10. Where academies open in the city, Leicester Child Poverty Commission and Leicester City Council should aim to reach a voluntary agreement with the academy sponsor on the application of school meal nutritional standards.

There is no formal agreement in place. However it is understood that those schools in the city that have become academies continue to provide similar types and standards of school meals.

Discussions will begin in early 2015 with the governing bodies of academies and free schools in the city with a view to securing a local agreement on nutritional standards of school food. We would expect academies and free schools to meet the School Food Standards and will continue to lobby for this to be adopted nationally.

11. Recognising the importance of play in childhood development, Leicester City Council should make sure every child has good access to a safe play space or play equipment in their local community.

Providers of supervised play in Leicester have recently had their contracts extended following a review process. In 2013/14 approximately 167,000 children aged 5-12 visited the ten supervised play sites across the city.

Leicester City Council has continued to maintain and develop play equipment in communities across the city. The City Council is currently recruiting a new Play Development Officer to take work forward on shaping a strategic approach to play for children, recognising the importance of play for childhood development. The role is to develop and support the quality and capacity of play provision across Leicester, including supporting a new Play Commission. The role is also designed to provide specialist advice and contract manage commissioned supervised play providers.

12. Schools should be encouraged to continue to provide free milk (discounted milk) to 5-7 year olds, particularly those schools in the areas of highest deprivation.

Following consultation and discussion with schools, the City Council is continuing its provision of free milk to schools for 5-7 year olds.

Over 314,000 pints of milk per are provided to 84 city schools for the provision of free milk to 5-11 year olds at an annual cost of just under £170,000 for the schools using the City Council as their supply agent for milk. The City Council sources this milk from local supplier Kirby & West

13. Leicester City Council should consider ways to improve home – school liaison including the development of the Family Support Officer role.

Marriott Primary School piloted this model using Pupil Premium funding and it has

now been rolled out to 15 schools across the city.

The impact of this new post at Marriott School has been positive with increased school attendance, attainment and stronger engagement between parents and the school.

The Family Support Worker role has been strengthened through training to ensure staff are competent and skilled in working with families who have complex needs that do not require social care intervention.

A significant development has been the trading of local authority Family Support officers to schools at a cost which has proved to be successful. Schools are using their Pupil Premium funding to purchase either half or a full weeks of support. There are 19 staff (equivalent to 10.9 FTE) located within 19 primary schools.

The 19 schools are; Marriott Primary School; Montrose Primary School; Rolleston Primary School; Knighton Fields Primary School; Avenue Primary School; Caldecote Primary School; Shenton Primary School; Braunstone Frith Primary School; Barley Croft Primary School; Beaumont Lodge Primary School; Inglehurst Infant School; Humberstone Infant School; King Richard III Infant School; St Mary's Fields Infant School; Shaftesbury Junior School; Woodstock Primary School; St Barnabas Primary School; Hazel Primary School; and Fosse Primary School.

Further schools will be securing Family Support Worker provision from January 2015: Spinney Hill Primary School; Wolsey Primary School; Whitehall Primary School; Braunstone Community Primary School; Overdale Infants and Juniors.

Schools are provided with termly reports on the impact and outcomes achieved through the Family Support work within schools. Feedback to date has been positive and received well by head teachers, school staff and parents.

To date, 313 families have benefitted from this service since it started in September 2013.

It is suggested that further evaluative work is carried out on the impact of Family Support Officers including their impact on improving parental engagement, school attendance and attainment and the importance of their links with wider public services and agencies.

#### 14. Leicester City Council should advance its work to develop a Gold Standard Youth Service across the city, meeting the needs and aspirations of young people.

Developing the city's youth service has been the subject of significant and ongoing dialogue including three conferences that brought together all key partners and stakeholders.

Youth Support Workers are now aligned to local cluster areas and are contracted to deliver more direct delivery time with young people alongside voluntary sector youth service providers in the city. A new process for monitoring the number of children

and young people who access targeted youth support is being developed in partnership with the Connexions Service.

Youth work support continues to be targeted at young people who are most vulnerable including young people experiencing child and family poverty. The city council youth service subsidises activities for young people to support their personal and social development and most centre based youth work is delivered free of charge at the point of need.

15. Leicester City Council should introduce a Living Wage of £7.45 for its lowest paid staff and encourage other employers in the public and private sectors to do this as well.

In April 2013 the City Council adopted the Living Wage of £7.45 an hour. This benefited 1100 of the lowest paid council staff. Since then the national Living Wage rate has been recalculated twice in response to rising costs of living. The most recent increase was announced in November 2014 with the Living Wage outside London now calculated at £7.85 per hour. The City Council has committed to again adopt the increased Living Wage rate.

Work is also ongoing to explore how adoption of the Living Wage can be encouraged via the council's commissioning and contracting. The City Council has recently agreed an approach to this and secured accreditation as a Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation.

16. Leicester City Council will continue to work with trade unions and other agencies to tackle exploitative pay and ensure the enforcement of the minimum wage.

Nationally it is estimated by the TUC that 350,000 workers are paid less than the Minimum Wage (2012). Regulation of the Minimum Wage is undertaken by the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The HMRC's regulatory strategy is to recoup wages through the use of civil penalty powers. In 2013-14 the HMRC conducted 1,455 investigations, issued 652 financial penalties and recouped £4m for 26,000 workers. In the last few years there have been two prosecutions of employers for not paying the Minimum Wage. None of these were in Leicester.

The City Council encourages people to actively report suspected non-payment of the National Minimum Wage. Leicester City Council will be working with partners responding to the findings of a recent report by ETI looking at the textile and garment sector in the city.

17. Leicester City Council should work with a social enterprise or other provider to pilot the provision of packed lunches to replace free school meals during school holidays in a target area of the city.

Some providers introduced school holiday provision for the 2014 summer holidays. It is not clear what the uptake of this provision was or how effectively it was advertised.

'Holiday hunger' is an alarming and growing trend with increasing numbers of households becoming unable to afford to buy enough food and relying on foodbanks. The City Council's Community Support Grants are available to support families with children meet additional food costs during school holidays in lieu of free school meals.

It is proposed that developing a model available in each part of the city to provide a free meal to children that need it during the school holidays is made a priority and that this is in place at least for the summer holidays in 2015 if not sooner. Data from local foodbanks and schools should be used to assess the likely need for this in different areas and work should be done to ensure the availability of such provision is effectively communicated. Specific funding should be identified to support this initiative and to secure consistent provision across different areas.

18. In response to the growing demand for emergency food aid, Leicester City Council should work with partners, including FareShare, to provide citywide co-ordination of food banks with an agreed local referral framework.

There are currently 31 foodbanks operating in Leicester. In 2012 there were 12. Foodbanks operate with different supply chain models; some rely on FareShare supplies exclusively, some operate with a combination of FareShare supplies and other donated supplies and some operate with donations and supplies from supermarkets.

It is calculated that around 3,400 food parcels are distributed from the city's foodbanks each week. The most common reasons for foodbank referrals in Leicester are benefit changes, benefit delays and low income and budgeting problems.

Work is ongoing to monitor foodbank usage across the city and to support foodbanks. Leicester Charity Link coordinates a network of food aid providers in the city where discussions are able to take place around referrals, supply chain issues and where data can be collected and analysed.

We are repeating the arrangements from last year for the Christmas holiday period the Community Support grant has distributed special arrangements to schools and it's about to go out to children's centre services.

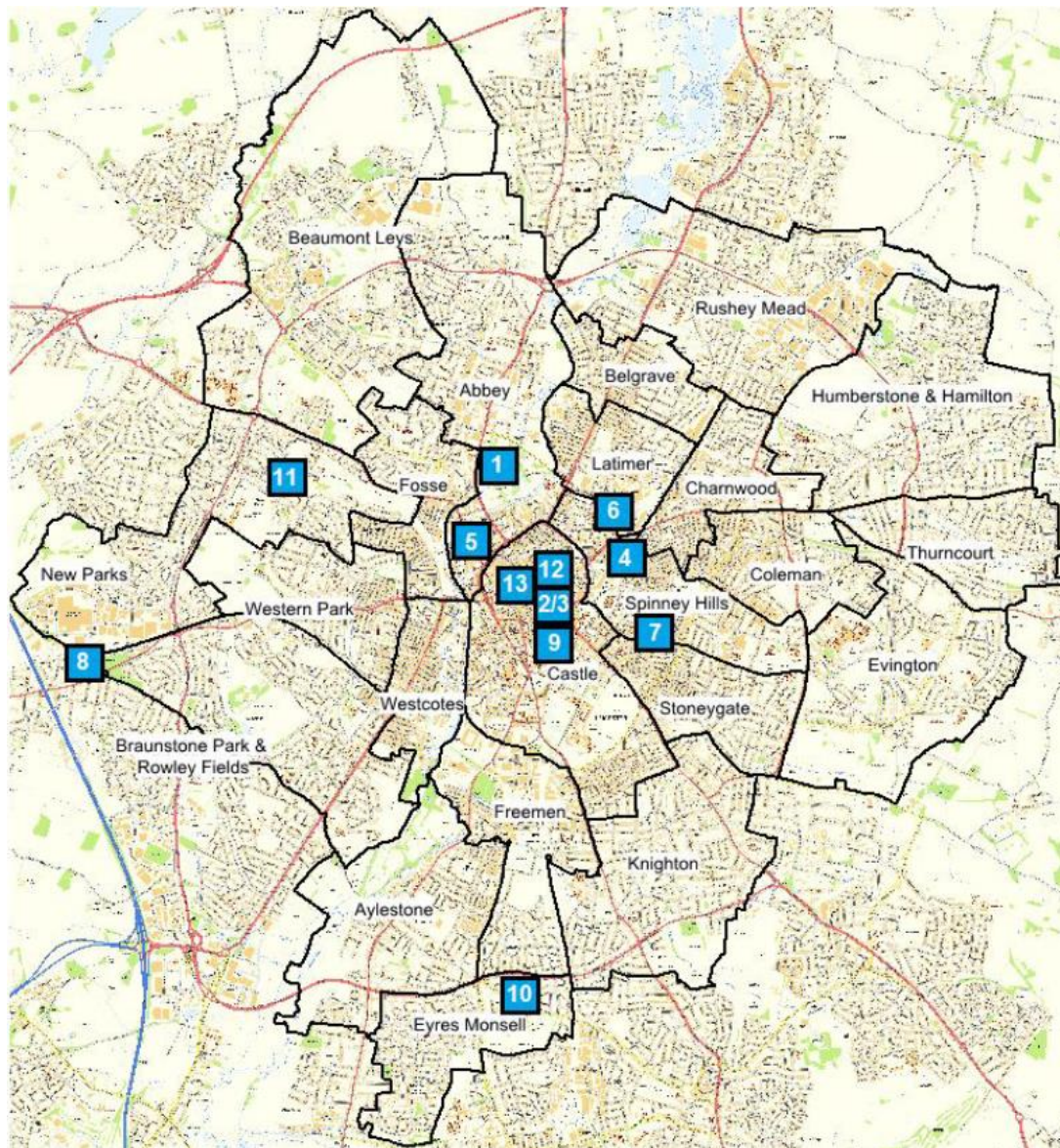
In addition we are in the process of arranging repeating the arrangements with the police service last year with the distribution of emergency cover in the form of pre enveloped co-op food vouchers should a family (single) present to the police over the holiday period



19. Household budget planning and financial literacy support should be available at least once a year in every part of the city. Leicester City Council should work with partner organisations to ensure this is delivered.

In early 2014 the City Council undertook an exercise to identify advice services across the city which offered budgeting and financial literacy support. Providers and their locations are shown in the map below.

The city council is working with partners through the Social Welfare Advice Partnership group (SWAP) to encourage providers to explore delivery in outreach locations across the city.



- 1) Christians Against Poverty**  
10 Frog Island, LE3 5AG
- 2) The Money Advice Service**  
York House, 91 Granby Street LE1 6FB
- 3) MoneyWise**  
York House, 91 Granby Street LE1 6FB
- 4) The Highfields Centre**  
96 Melbourne Road, LE2 0DS
- 5) Y Support Project**  
Dawn Centre, LE2 0JN
- 6) Leicester Service**  
19 Brunswick Street LE1 2LP
- 7) Somali Development Services**  
39 Abingdon Road, LE2 1HA

- 8) Mosaic Disability Services**  
2 Oak Spinney Park, LE3 3AW
- 9) Trinity Money Advice**  
Crescent House, Turner Street LE1 6WY
- 10) The Saffron Resource Centre**  
432 Saffron Lane LE2 6SB
- 11) Community Money Solutions**  
65 Bateman Road, LE3 9HF
- 12) Citizens Advice Bureau**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor 60 Charles Street LE1 1FB
- 13) First Contact**  
Conway Building, 1 Grey Friars LE1 5PH

In addition there are ten outreach sites supported by Citizens Advice Bureaux which are not shown on the map. These are located in the following wards: Braunstone & Rowley Fields; Spinney Hills; New Parks; Beaumont Leys; Abbey; Stoneygate; Humberstone & Hamilton; Charnwood; Coleman; Evers Monsell; and Rushey Mead.

Housing Associations provide tenancy support and financial inclusion officers, currently there are 28 Housing Association offering accommodation in the city all of which have at least one officer. These are: Advance UK, Adullam Homes, Anchor Housing, Creative Support, De Montfort Housing, East Midlands Housing Association, EMH Enable, ECHA, Foundation Housing, Longhurst Group, Hanover Housing, Hits Homes Trust, Home Group, Leicester Quaker Housing Association, ASRA, Helping Hands, Midland Heart, Network For Change, Nottingham Community Housing Association, Places for People, Progress Group, Raglan, Riverside, Metropolitan, Tuntum, Affinity Sutton, Leicester YMCA and Waterloo

The City Council's Community Support and emergency food partner Leicester Charity Link are developing a budgeting advice provision linked with applications for emergency support which will provide an additional two locations in the city.

One specific problem remains in that people often wait until the point of crisis to seek budget and financial literacy support. Therefore the City Council and partners should continue to promote messaging via all possible channels encouraging people to seek help and advice as early as possible.

**20. Money advice courses should be provided on a targeted basis to families and communities through Leicester City Council Children's Centres.**

Advice sessions have been held ten 10 Children's Centres from April 2013 to March 2014. There have been 599 benefit enquiries and 449 benefit claim forms completed (securing an estimated £1million for families). From April 2014 to November 2014 918 appointments had been booked for advice sessions at Children's Centres.

21. Leicester City Council should monitor closely the number of payday loan providers operating in the city and support efforts to limit the number of high street loan providers in the city.

Regulation of payday loan providers is undertaken by the Financial Conduct Authority (from 1 April 2014). There are no statutory provisions to control the number of providers operating in the market or place geographical restrictions on their operations.

Following consultation, the FCA has imposed new requirements on lenders. From 2 January 2015, no borrower will ever pay back more than twice what they borrowed, and someone taking out a loan for 30 days and repaying on time will not pay more than £24 in fees and charges per £100 borrowed.

The independent Money Advice Service (MAS) provides advice on alternatives to payday loans. MAS is promoted by the City Council and the Council also promotes other specific initiatives which help local people better manage their money such as Credit Unions.

There remains significant concern about payday loan companies and it is proposed that further work is carried out to assess the how many people in Leicester are securing payday loans and what impact this is having. The City Council and partners should also continue to work closely with and actively promote credit unions and to develop a fair finance agenda for the city.

The City Council should prohibit payday loan companies from advertising on City Council property including via computers in libraries and community centres.

22. A satellite base should be offered in every ward/community in a Leicester City Council building for use, when requested, by local credit unions to provide convenient access to responsible financial products.

There are a number of credit unions operating across the city and the offer to use City Council buildings has been made. There are examples of very good work such as New Parks Moneywise and the Zinithiya Trust. The Saffron Resource Centre also operates a service for the local area. The City Council's local Community Engagement Officers are continuing to make contact with the credit unions and providing a signposting service to local residents.

23. Leicester City Council should change its policy for council tax to be payable over twelve months instead of ten months.

This was implemented from April 2013.



24. Leicester City Council should include information about financial advice and family budget planning in council tax notices and bills which are sent out.

Enclosures with council tax bills and notices includes contact information for people concerned about their bill and ability to pay. It is suggested that other channels are used for information about family budget planning and advice including Leicester Link and the city council's website.

25. In responding to changes to council tax benefit and the introduction of localised Council Tax Discount, Leicester City Council should ensure full Equalities Impact Assessments are completed. The City Council and other agencies should continually monitor the impact of the changes and make representations to Government on negative impacts of these changes on households in the city.

Full Equalities Impact Assessments were prepared and considered in determining the City Council's approach to the council tax benefit changes introduced as part of the Government's welfare reform programme. The full EIA was reviewed in April 2014, one year into the new arrangements, as part of a wider review of the impacts of the new scheme.

26. The Government should re-consider planned changes to housing benefit and the localisation of council tax discount, and Ministers should report to Parliament specifically on the child poverty impact of these changes.

Concerns have been raised by members of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission and partners in the city about the likely impacts of welfare changes. Foodbank operators in the city cite benefit changes as a key reason for people needing to access food parcels and acute support. The Bishop of Leicester has raised these concerns in contributions in the House of Lords and the Child Poverty Action Group has run a number of campaigns raising awareness of the likely adverse impacts on families and children of these changes.

27. Leicester City Council should ensure a good range of accessible community advice services are delivered and commissioned across the city, to ensure access for people to financial, debt, welfare and legal advice.

The City Council is currently carrying out a review of welfare advice services with the aim of ensuring that relevant services are provided and that people can access a service that best meets their needs.

28. Leicester's Children's Centres should ensure that they are working in a fully integrated way with Welfare Rights to support family access to advice and support. Children's Centre staff should make family income and access to relevant benefits a core consideration in their work with families.

Weekly half-day advice sessions are provided at ten Children's Centres covering all the clusters by City Council Welfare Rights Service as part of a service level agreement to provide 1200 benefits advice appointment for help with claims, appeals and better off calculations. Appointments are booked through the Children's Centres usually by staff when they identify a benefit issue.

Children's Centres work closely with welfare rights running regular drop-in sessions across sites. Since July 2014, 326 people have accessed this service through 217 drop ins and 139 individual appointments.

Within the Think Family Service there are two full time dedicated employees seconded from the Department of Work and Pensions to support families who meet the Think Family criteria to ensure they are receiving the appropriate level of benefits whilst supporting them to seek further education, employment and training opportunities. The Welfare Advice review will also bring forward proposals on securing further join-up between advice services.

29. Leicester City Council should continue and develop its work to improve the quality of housing in the private rented sector. This should include continued work with landlords to ensure safe and quality accommodation across the sector. This should include work to improve insulation and ventilation, and tackling damp and pest problems in homes.

Leicester City Council continues to advise landlords on their responsibilities concerning living conditions within the private rented sector and on inspection of accommodation providing landlords with a report on remedial works required. In all cases the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is applied to assess accommodation and this includes assessment of insulation, damp, ventilation and potential access and egress points for pests and harbourage.

A large proportion of the private rented stock is circa 1900 and as such has poor thermal efficiency. Steps are taken to improve the energy efficiency of accommodation where it sits below the Government proposed minimum threshold to be achieved to rent out accommodation. Fuel poverty remains a threat to those on low income and poorly insulated properties with inefficient heating systems.

Where it is appropriate, landlords are directed to schemes including the Landlord Energy Efficiency Fund administered by Leicester City Council.

In 2014 the City Council piloted a Healthy Homes project. Healthy Homes is an area approach, designed to enable access to public health agencies and benefit agencies through a referral process and for assessment of accommodation under the HHSRS. The HHP was active in four wards. A total of 1279 properties were visited of which

603 (47%) engaged with the Healthy Homes advocates.

102 (17%) assessments were completed by advocates following engagement (including a structured interview) with the householder in their accommodation. Of these 41 (40%) of properties were identified as having hazards identifiable as actionable under the HHSRS. From the 102 assessments a total of 110 individual referrals to partner organisations and landlords (41 HHSRS) were made.

30. Leicester City Council should work with landlords and other agencies to develop longer term tenancies in the private rented sector to provide greater security and help families make stable homes.

The City Council works with landlords in a number of ways to improve the condition of properties (see section on recommendation 29) as well as working with landlords to help secure tenancies for people who have experienced homelessness.

It is recognised that there needs to be a shift in perception nationally of the important role the private rented sector can play in the housing market and that there needs to be a change in how renting is perceived. Working to secure longer term tenancies and a fairer settlement for tenants needs to be part of this work.

31. Working with partners, Leicester City Council should ensure a good range of school holiday activities for children across the city which are affordable and where possible free of charge.

The city council youth service commissioned 50k of summer holiday youth activities which were provided free of charge across the city including areas of high deprivation. Following evaluation of the scheme involving young people further subsidised summer holiday activities will be provided in 2015.

32. Leicester City Council should continue to find ways to offer subsidised or free of charge leisure activities for children and young people to ease financial pressure on families during school holidays, building on the success of free swimming for under-16s.

The past 12 months has seen Sports Services deliver play schemes across leisure centres during holiday periods including Easter, Summer and October Half Term. Play schemes ran in four areas of the city at Aylestone Leisure Centre, Braunstone Leisure Centre, New Parks Leisure Centre and Evington Leisure Centre.

The play schemes ran between 9am and 3pm with a cost averaging of £10 per day which is a subsidised rate. Evington Leisure Centre also offered a scheme during all school holidays working in partnership with Karl Brown from the Warrior Basketball Club.

2015 will see the roll-out of play schemes at a further 3 facilities; Leicester Leys Leisure Centre, Spence Street Sports Centre and Cossington Street Sports Centre.

This will mean at most of our sports facilities there will be an opportunity and options for parents to drop off their children for day long activities

33. The Home Energy Team at Leicester City Council should explore the development of a free service available in communities to ensure people are accessing the cheapest available domestic energy tariff.

The Home Energy Team provides free energy efficiency advice and information to all households in the city. The main purpose of the team is to enable improvement to the fabric and heating of domestic properties (across all housing tenures) to make them more sustainable for current and future occupants.

Advice about energy supply tariffs was previously provided by the Leicester Energy Efficiency Advice service, however, funding for this team was withdrawn in 2008/09 and tariff issues were then largely dealt with as part of money advice services.

The Leicester 'Ready to Switch' Collective Switching scheme is a recent addition to the Home Energy services that offers households assistance with moving to a cheaper energy tariff. The scheme was launched in November 2013 and has been actively promoted to low income households in the city through a series of direct mail campaigns and community events. The scheme empowers consumers by banding together to obtain a better tariff offer from gas and electricity suppliers. Almost 700 households have switched supplier via this scheme with an average annual saving of £200. An audit should be carried out to ascertain how many of these households are households with children to inform future and more targeted promotional activity of the collective switch scheme.

There are Government proposals to make utility companies automatically switch people to the cheapest tariffs for their needs, in a planned simplification of the energy market. All energy companies will be required to revise the confusing range of competing tariffs and reduce them to only four, and they will be obligated to put consumers on the lowest one available to them.

34. As part of efforts to reduce fuel poverty, Leicester City Council should use all influence it has to encourage energy companies to provide fairer tariffs, including the removal of penalisation in tariffs for those who use paper billing.

Energy Services are in regular discussions with energy suppliers over new Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes for the benefit of households in the city and, currently, are negotiating to get smart meters rolled out as added value to new solid wall insulation initiatives. Smart meters will increase awareness of energy consumption and provide real-time feedback to consumers. A wider roll-out of smart meters could help companies to create new off-peak tariff options.

Leicester City Council is a member of the National Energy Action Fuel Poverty Forum and uses its influence, as part of a wider fuel poverty debate, to encourage fairer tariff structures for vulnerable low income households.

35. Leicester Child Poverty Commission and the City Council should give their full backing to calls to remove unfair energy billing for those using pre-payment meters.

There continue to be examples of people using pre-payment meters being overbilled for energy and it remains unfair that people using pre-payment meters often pay more for each unit of energy.

Leicester Child Poverty Commission believes that energy industry reform should include stronger regulation of tariffs for pre-payment meters and that customers using pre-payment meters should not be disadvantaged.

36. Leicester Child Poverty Commission and Leicester City Council should lead a campaign for the Government to make available capital monies to support the building of new social housing.

The need for more affordable and social housing in Leicester is clear, and the provision of more units will allow more families to create a stable, home environment.

Since 2011/12 over 500 affordable homes have been built in Leicester including with the support of public investment. This remains a priority for the City Council. More public investment and Government funding is required to meet the housing need in Leicester, as in other towns and cities across the country. The City Council will continue to work with partners to create new homes and opportunities for development that can support the provision of more social housing.

37. With partner organisations, Leicester City Council should work to ensure a citywide low cost loan/lease service for important domestic goods including white goods, cookers and beds as an alternative to current high interest market place provision.

Leicester City Councils Community Support funding is supporting low income, protected groups and vulnerable households in the city to access white goods, household furniture and other household goods through our 'pass it on' scheme. The goods and provisions are such items as beds, wardrobes, sofas, tables, chairs, curtains, crockery and cutlery are donated through our waste management services, checked and cleaned and recycled to homes in the city. The service supports a targeted group of individuals and families however we are seeking to expand the model to a wider audience. On occasion white goods such as cookers, fridges and washing machines are provided through the Community Support Grant (CSG) fund as new. Mattresses are not recycled these are provided new on every occasion.

For those families and households who do not meet the CSG policy criteria the city council is working towards bringing fairer financial options to the city. LCC is a member of the fairer finance city task group. The aim of the task group is to enable people to access financial products that are fair, purchase affordable credit and receive reputable financial advice.

**38. Leicester City Council should work to secure all possible funding to improve energy efficiency of homes in the private and social sectors.**

The City Council's Home Energy Team continues to secure project funding to help improve energy efficiency and provide affordable warmth for vulnerable low income households in the city. The team works closely with Housing Services to develop projects for social housing.

Work in the last year includes:

- Replacement of central heating boilers and control upgrades to 2,486 properties
- Installation of Solar PV panels to 630 properties
- Loft and cavity wall insulation upgrades to 757 properties
- Solid wall insulation installed to 155 properties
- Replacement of central heating boilers and control upgrades to 361 private sector homes
- Loft and cavity wall insulation upgrades to 51 privately owned homes

**39. Child poverty should be a strategic priority for each individual commissioning organisation represented on Leicester's Health and Wellbeing Board.**

Improving health outcomes for children and young people is one of five strategic priorities in Leicester's joint health and wellbeing strategy, Closing the Gap.

The Marmot Review Fair Society, Healthy Lives made clear the importance of securing better health outcomes for children: "Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood."

It is recognised by all health partners that there needs to be greater investment in early prevention. The joint health and wellbeing strategy is focussed on driving improvement across four key indicators for children and young people:

Reducing infant mortality

Reducing teenage pregnancy

Improving readiness for school at age 5

Promoting healthy weight and lifestyles in children and young people

It is acknowledged that in making progress on each of these indicators, as well as a



wider health issues and priorities, an important contribution will be made to improving the life chances of children and young people in Leicester. Regular monitoring reports on these areas of work are reported to the Health & Wellbeing Board and where progress is not been made at a sufficient rate recovery and improvement plans are discussed and agreed.

40. Leicester City Council, Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group and the NHS Commissioning Board Local Area Team should be asked to publish an annual poverty impact statement.

Poverty impact statements in relation to health and health inequalities affecting children and young people have not been published. The Child Poverty Commission recommendations and the need to tackle child poverty was discussed at a development session of the Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group board. The CCG board, including practicing GPs and clinicians, were all agreed on the importance of addressing health inequalities affecting children and the important role that the health community can play in helping to reduce the impacts of child poverty and deprivation.

It is proposed that in early 2015 the Health & Wellbeing Board commissions a report exploring the health impacts on children in Leicester in relation to the impact of increasing levels of poverty.

41. Recognising the health and financial impacts of smoking, all relevant agencies should continue to implement targeted tobacco control and smoking cessation initiatives in the city, including the continued promotion of smoke-free households.

The Stop Smoking service continues to deliver targeted interventions to support people to quit smoking and to promote smoke-free households. An example of this work includes a recently launched short film to encourage pregnant women from smoking. In 2013/14 the smoking cessation service supported 2,551 people to quit.

From April 2015 the smoking cessation service will be directly provided by the City Council following a decision not to secure an external provider at the end of the current provider's contract. This will help to secure stronger linkages with wider council services.

42. Leicester City Health and Wellbeing Board and the NHS Commissioning Board should aim to ensure every child is registered at a GP practice; an annual campaign should be considered involving Children's Centres and schools.

Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group is launching a major campaign, "Me and my GP Practice" in 2015 to help patients and the public to get the best help they can from NHS services.

A key strand of this campaign is to encourage people who are not registered with a

GP to sign-up with a practice. In addition to media promotion the campaign will include a facility for any attendees at the Urgent Care Centre who are not registered to sign up for a GP practice there and then. It is suggested that Children's Centres, early years settings and schools are actively engaged in this campaign.

The Leicester Health and Wellbeing Survey which will be conducted in January 2015 will provide further insight in to the level and distribution of those not registered with a GP, providing further evidence on which to base future campaigns.

43. The Health & Wellbeing Board, the NHS Commissioning Board and other partners should work actively to promote oral health ensuring access and take up of preventative dental care for all children across the city.

The Oral Health Promotion Partnership Board was established in September 2013 by Leicester City Council. Membership includes Leicester City Council, Healthwatch, NHS England, NHS Leicester City CCG, Public Health England, Local Dental Network and Health Education East Midlands. The Board has a partnership budget of £531,000 (ring-fenced for 3 years). The aim of the Board is to support coordinated activity to improve oral health, reduce oral health inequalities and lay solid foundations for good oral health throughout life. The strategies key ambition is a 10% increase in the proportion of 5 year olds in Leicester with no signs of dental disease by 2019. Since its creation the board has:

- Developed Leicester City's *Healthy Teeth, Happy Smiles!* brand and a range of age specific leaflets advising on good oral health. These accompanied 11,000 toothpaste and toothbrush packs provided by the NHS which were distributed to children across the city by schools and the health visiting service.
- 5,000 bottles of water were distributed to children attending Leisure Centres across the City.
- Provided 2500 free flowing cup to Children's Centre's for them to swap for baby bottles.
- 25 City Nurseries and a small number of city schools were trained to provide daily supervised tooth brushing to approximately 1,800 children. All associated oral health resources are being provided by the council and its partners.
- 2,000 toothbrush and toothpaste packs were given to City food banks.
- Toothbrush amnesty whereby 2,500 toothbrush and toothpaste packs were exchanged with old toothbrushes at city based dental practices who had agreed to participate. These practices also agreed to promote their surgeries as Breastfeeding Friendly practices.
- Secured funding for 3 Oral Health Promoters to focus on oral health activities and interventions across the life course.



44. Leicester City Council should pilot the provision of free fruit for children in local schools, libraries and leisure centres.

From January 2015 a pilot project will commence providing free fruit at a minimum of 3 leisure centres and other community locations to encourage the eating of healthier snacks. A full evaluation will then be delivered to assess the impacts of providing the free fruit. Public Health has agreed to fund the pilot project in January 2015.

45. Leicester City Council should continue to support 'grow and eat' schemes to encourage local food growing and healthy eating.

In 2014 the Leicester Food Plan was published ([www.leicester.gov.uk/foodplan](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/foodplan)). This sets out the City Council's aim to see more local food growing projects developed across the city.

A project manager has been appointed to support the delivery of the Food Plan and to facilitate the development of local food growing projects. A grants scheme has also been launched making available £1000 in each council ward to support local food growing projects. A partner organisation will be appointed in early 2015 to support the development of growing schemes by providing training and development support.

46. The City Mayor, Leicester City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership should continue to develop and deliver clear and ambitious plans for local economic growth and job creation.

Since the launch of the Economic Action Plan in 2012 the council and its partners have supported more than 1300 businesses across the city. This includes direct financial assistance by way of grants to more than 200 businesses. More than 3,500 jobs are being created through these initiatives.

The council has focused on the expansion of apprenticeships and to date nearly 500 new positions have been supported across the local economy including more than 100 within the council itself.

47. Leicester's Children's Centres should work closely with key partners such as Job Centre Plus to promote an understanding of how families can maximise their income, promote access to adult learning, support parents move into employment and support access to affordable childcare.

Prior to August 2014, Job Centre Plus ran regular workshops within Children Centres and supported parents individually. However this stopped due to DWP budget cuts. All of the centres actively promote education, employment and training opportunity through visual displays that are updated weekly.

Plans are being explored to expand the role of the DWP staff seconded to Think Family to extend their remit so they can work with any family accessing targeted provision through the Children, Young People and Family Centres.

48. To support access to employment and effective referral pathways for training and skills development, Leicester City Council should ensure a full and active partnership between Job Centre Plus, the Leicester Adult Skills & Learning Service (LASALS), the Leicester to Work Programme and Work Programme providers.

The Leicester Adult Skills & Learning Service has developed a programme of traineeships linked to the 6-9 month paid work placement opportunities as part of the City Council's Step-Up youth unemployment initiative. This programme is available for young people with little work experience or low levels of qualification. Referrals are made from Job Centre Plus, Connexions, the Looked After Children's team and Work Programme providers.

A weekly programme of ten work clubs operates across the city to support people looking for employment with advice, support and skills training.

49. Work should continue through city libraries, community centres and schools to promote access to computers and the internet to tackle digital exclusion.

Following the replacement of all library public access computers in early 2013 Leicester Libraries have recorded 235,000 hours of computer and Internet use each year. Free and safe public WiFi access is available in 17 libraries as well as Leicester Town Hall Square.

All library staff are trained to provide basic access to online information resources through the public computers. Public Library Universal Information Offer training will be undertaken by all staff during 2014/15 to assist with the increasing public demand for digital assistance.

Study support workers help children and young people to find and evaluate information and resources online to complete homework tasks, as well as using a wide range of reading and reference books. There are in excess of 80000 visits to study support sessions each year.

50. Children's Centres should continue to develop effective volunteer programmes that offer opportunities for parents to develop skills and confidence that will help support them into training and employment.

The role of the Parent and Community Engagement Officer has been crucial in engaging the community in volunteering opportunities. Since July 2014, 137 volunteers have been recruited with 20% moving on to further education,

employment and training which has included volunteering within the centres and securing employment with us.

Volunteers undertake training programmes across 6 weeks where they learn about subjects such as safeguarding and health and safety. Once volunteers complete this training, they are matched with a suitable placement and are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

There have been 24 Adult Learning courses completed within Children Centres since July 2014 with 224 adults completing 100% of the courses. Topics covered included, literacy, numeracy, first aid and health and safety.

51. A programme should be developed to provide practical business advice and assistance to child care providers, who are often self-employed or sole traders. The Chamber of Commerce should be asked to assist with this.

The City Council's Childcare Strategy team provide practical advice and assistance to childcare providers, including business support in terms of developing a business model that enables them to be financially sustainable. The City Council has two Childcare Sufficiency and Sustainability Officers (CSSOs) in the team who provide this support as and when providers request it, or when we identify providers as having difficulties with sustainability. there are 97 Ofsted registered private providers and 183 registered childminders in Leicester.

In 2015 the CSSOs are undertaking an accredited training course (Level 5 award) to improve their knowledge and skills so that the childcare businesses they support will receive the best possible service. Childcare providers can also access business advice and guidance through the Government's Business Support helpline, although there is no local presence since the closure of Business Link in 2011.

52. Leicester Child Poverty Commission should convene a summit with the 25 leading employers in the area to discuss the role of employers and businesses in reducing child and family poverty.

Leicester Chamber of Commerce convened a seminar of employers including large and small businesses. This seminar discussed the recommendations and work of the Child Poverty Commission and the contribution employers could make to tackling poverty in Leicester. This included discussions on the Living Wage and low pay; improving skills in the local economy; transport costs; the provision of apprenticeships and good job opportunities for young people and childcare costs.

It is acknowledged that the private sector actively contributes to a wide range of initiatives and organisations which work to reduce poverty and support people in finding employment and improving their skills. This includes programmes run by Leicestershire Cares and businesses supporting local foodbanks. It is proposed that in future discussions on citywide efforts to reduce poverty engagement continues to

be secured from the private sector and employers, including both large and small businesses.

**53. Public sector procurement strategies in the area should be geared towards supporting local businesses and creating jobs in the area.**

Procurement Services has enhanced SMEs accessibility to Council contracts by advertising contracts worth over £1,000 on the Source Leicestershire portal. About 350 opportunities valued at £9.86m were won by SMEs from April 2013 to September 2014 via Source Leicestershire.

The Council is working with a range of partners, including the FSB, Chamber of Commerce, VAL and is looking to strengthen relationships with procurement counterparts in the local universities, health organisations, other councils to influence their procurement strategies and approach.

Procurement Services considers Social Value opportunities, including high level priorities such as creating apprenticeships/work experience opportunities, in procurement processes wherever appropriate and is looking to expand this as much as possible. We have worked with the Leicester to Work scheme and Constructing Leicester project to support 23 business start-ups and create 347 jobs and 232 apprenticeships. We are working with main contractors to open up their supply chains to local SMEs and some of our main contractors hold Meet the Buyer days to facilitate this.

In the New Year, we will commence a programme to engage with local businesses including interactive workshops and supplier events to help local suppliers win contracts and build their business with the Council.

**54. Public transport operators should be actively encouraged to provide fares which are affordable. Leicester City Council should use all powers available and seek new powers to ensure public transport is affordable and effective in the city.**

The city council actively encourages the local public transport operators to provide efficient, effective and affordable services through regular Bus User Panel Meetings and “Board Meetings” with the operators’ managers. The Bus User Panel Meetings, chaired by the City Mayor, are an opportunity for the City Mayor, residents’ representatives, business stakeholders and bus users to hold the public transport operators to account.

The city council is currently investigating options to improve the management of bus services in the city centre, including extending current powers through a Statutory Partnership Scheme, as part of the Haymarket Bus Station Redevelopment Scheme. The new bus station is programmed to come into operation at the end of 2015.

Leicester is developing multi-operator smartcard applications with all the local bus

operators which will expand the range of multi-operator ticketing options, which could reduce fares for users making multiple journeys.

The City Mayor has and will continue to take every opportunity to persuade central government of the need to, and benefits of, devolving new powers such that the City Mayor can have more control of how, when, where and the cost of bus services in Leicester are provided.

55. The Leicester Child Poverty Commission should be tasked with producing a child poverty analysis of Leicester City Council's annual budget, and this should be reported to the City Mayor.

The Child Poverty Commission has been consulted on the City Council's draft budgets and meetings of the Commission have discussed budget proposals and the Council's financial position. Recommendations of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission have been considered in the decision-making processes around specific spending decisions taken by the City Mayor and the Council's Executive.

56. The Leicester Child Poverty Commission should report annually on progress against these recommendations, and should publish revised recommendations and actions each year

This paper provides an update on progress in delivering the recommendations published in January 2013 and includes a number of revised and additional recommendations and suggestions.

57. Every school should have a member of teaching staff and a member of the governing body nominated as Child Poverty and Life Chances Co-ordinator. Leicester City Council should pilot this approach in four city schools over the next year.

An audit is currently taking place as to how many school governing bodies have adopted this and appointed a governor with the specific remit of championing work to address child poverty and improve life chances. This will also be discussed at the next Leicester Governors conference. Support and training needs for governors taking on this role will also be considered.

58. All relevant Leicester City Council frontline staff should complete an annual awareness and empowerment session on child poverty and family poverty to encourage, educate staff and embed an authority-wide 'think poverty' approach across the delivery of all services.

A training module is being developed for staff focussing on poverty and family

support. Until this module is fully developed and rolled out, poverty and deprivation will be included in induction sessions for new council staff with a view to securing a wider understanding of these issues and the work of the local authority in seeking to reduce poverty and protect children and families from the worst impacts of poverty.

59. The Leicester Child Poverty Commission should organise in partnership an annual event for local voluntary and community sector organisations working to reduce child poverty.

Work to tackle child poverty is discussed regularly in a number of forums and via a number of organisations including the Children's Trust and Voluntary Action Leicestershire's Children, Young People and Families Forum. These discussions allow for the dissemination of information and best practice and support collaborative working.

Discussions have taken place with voluntary and community sector organisations about the Leicester Child Poverty Commission recommendations and the Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Leicestershire was invited to join the Commission.

60. City of Leicester Governors Association (COLGA) should be encouraged to organise an annual event for school governors, in partnership with Leicester Child Poverty Commission, to discuss the role of governors in reducing child poverty.

COLGA has taken an active interest in the work of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission and has been represented at both conference events and involved in subsequent discussions around specific pieces of work, including discussion on the use of Pupil Premium funding.

It is proposed that instead of an annual event, a governor training module is developed with COLGA focussing on child poverty and the impact of welfare reforms in Leicester and that this is offered to every governing body in the city during the next academic year.

61. Leicester Child Poverty Commission should develop relationships with the local faith communities and specifically faith organisations working to reduce child poverty in the city.

The Child Poverty Commission has sought input from faith communities in the city. Representatives of faith communities and organisations have attended both conferences organised by the Leicester Child Poverty Commission and the second conference was addressed by the Bishop of Leicester.

In recent months the Child Poverty Commission and City Council have supported the work of the Bishop's Commission on Poverty.



62. Leicester City Council should actively consider child poverty as an important consideration in the preparation of Equality Impact Assessments and the publication of an annual Poverty Impact Statement should be explored.

Leicester City Council has reviewed the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) it is producing and has streamlined its template to better focus on the impacts on those likely to be affected by our proposals and decisions.

This focus has broadened to include consideration of vulnerable groups, such as children experiencing poverty, in addition to the protected characteristics covered by our Public Sector Equality Duty. The City Council on occasion undertakes a cumulative assessment of the equality impacts of our decisions based on aggregating the impacts and mitigating actions of individual proposals to determine whether any particular protected characteristic is experiencing more detrimental impact relative to other protected characteristics. Using this same approach, the City Council will undertake a cumulative assessment of how we address poverty related considerations for vulnerable groups that have been identified within the completed EIA. This will enable the City Council to determine whether its proposals collectively address the causes of poverty or individually compound detrimental impacts arising from actions being taken in other areas.

63. The overall and social impact of public spending cuts in Leicester should be continually analysed and Leicester Child Poverty Commission and Leicester City Council should make representations to Government on a regular basis setting out the local impact of these cuts. Specifically the Leicester Child Poverty Commission should monitor the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit from October 2013 and the introduction of the localised council tax discount scheme.

The impact of several years' cuts and welfare changes has been analysed and summarised in the City Council's General Fund Budget report for 2015/16. Those finding it hardest to make ends meet are households with children (where women are often lone parents) and households without work, including those who cannot work due to sickness/disability. The government's approach to public spending reductions in local government disproportionately affects deprived authorities, a point the City Council has made many times to the Government. The City Council also helped instigate a National Audit Office review which has made precisely this point.

Since the announcement of Universal Credit and the enactment of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 Leicester City Council has undertaken to monitor and evaluate the impact upon the citizens of the city. This monitoring activity has been undertaken from the outset and is continuing. Where impacts have been identified particular attention has been applied to protected groups and children.

Policies have been reviewed and refreshed to support households where changes to welfare benefits have been felt most severely. Recovery methods for unpaid council tax have been tracked with particular regard to households on benefit and additional

contact and funds have been made available to support these households. Within the rented sector evictions and tenure security are becoming a concern. The City Council services advice agencies in the city have coordinated their monitoring activity and this has directly resulted in discretionary funded policy changes. This activity is in its early stages and the council will continue with this activity.

64. Child poverty initiatives should always be based on a thorough understanding of data at a relevant geographic level. Relevant data should be shared across organisations to support policy development, resource allocation and impact monitoring.

A range of activity is undertaken to share relevant data and this includes the local dissemination and discussion of the Census 2011 data which includes area- and ward-level statistics on population dynamics, the labour market, education and skills, health, care and support, housing, and social relationships. These statistics have been prepared and packaged by the Council's Research and Intelligence Team, and the resulting compendium made freely available via the council's website as well as feeding into a range of discussions, research and policy activity. Planning is underway for work to support the local dissemination of the English Indices of Deprivation 2015 which will complement the Census data as it includes information about income deprivation and crime.

Other activity includes the work undertaken jointly between partners on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which aims to identify current and future health and wellbeing needs of the Leicester population, inform local strategic priorities, and also to support the commissioning of services to improve outcomes for local people and reduce health inequalities.

There is also an ongoing project underway to collate and analyse a range of data on the impacts of welfare reform which looks at impacts from a whole city, ward and local level and is combining quantitative data with more qualitative data on the perspectives and experiences of individuals and families. Data on welfare reform impacts have been shared and discussed for example via the Council's scrutiny process

65. The Local Government Association (LGA) should organise an annual event to bring together councillors and local authority officers to share best practice and experience in developing child poverty reduction measures.

The LGA holds a number of events focussed on policy developments and services for children and young people. We are not aware of a specific event having been organised to consider best practice and experience in local government around child poverty reduction measures



66. The independent Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission, chaired by Alan Milburn, should seek evidence from local authorities about the impact of public spending cuts and the impact on local efforts to reduce child poverty.

The Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission has published a series of reports including an annual State of the Nation Report; a report on Meeting the 2010 child poverty targets and recently an important report on social mobility, Elitist Britain in August 2014.

The independent Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission has sought evidence as part of its work from a range of people including parents and young people, employers, think tanks and charities, schools, universities, local government and frontline service providers.

The Leicester Child Poverty Commission recommendations were submitted to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission.

It is suggested that further representations are made to encourage the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission to undertake a specific inquiry looking at the current efforts of local government to reduce child poverty given the scale of local government funding cuts.

## Top 20 local authorities with highest levels of child poverty across the UK

Figures from End Child Poverty, 2014

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>% of children in poverty 2013 (after housing costs)</b>
1. Tower Hamlets	49%
2. Hackney	41%
3. Newham	41%
4. Manchester	39%
5. Westminster	39%
6. Islington	38%
7. Enfield	37%
8. Birmingham	37%
9. Leicester	37%
10. Barking and Dagenham	37%
11. Haringey	36%
12. Camden	36%
13. Nottingham	36%
14. Brent	35%
15. Waltham Forest	35%
16. Middlesbrough	35%
17. Lambeth	34%
18. Lewisham	34%
19. Southwark	34%
20. Oldham	34%

## East Midlands

Percentage of children in poverty (after housing costs)

Figures from End Child Poverty, 2014

### By Local Authority

Amber Valley	21%
Ashfield	27%
Bassetlaw	23%
Blaby	15%
Bolsover	28%
Boston	23%
Broxtowe	19%
Charnwood	19%
Chesterfield	25%
Corby	25%
Daventry	16%
Derby	29%
Derbyshire Dales	18%
East Lindsey	28%
East Northamptonshire	17%
Erewash	22%
Gedling	20%
Harborough	13%
High Peak	19%
Hinckley and Bosworth	17%
Kettering	21%
Leicester	37%
Lincoln	27%
Mansfield	27%
Melton	16%
Newark and Sherwood	22%
North East Derbyshire	20%
North Kesteven	18%
North West Leicestershire	19%
Northampton	24%
Nottingham	36%
Oadby and Wigston	18%
Rushcliffe	13%
Rutland	14%
South Derbyshire	18%
South Holland	22%
South Kesteven	20%
South Northamptonshire	12%
Wellingborough	24%

## Leicester City: child poverty by ward

Percentage of children in poverty, Oct-Dec 2013	BEFORE HOUSING COSTS	AFTER HOUSING COSTS
Abbey	22.18%	34.90%
Aylestone	15.27%	24.28%
Beaumont Leys	21.99%	34.57%
Belgrave	26.35%	39.32%
Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields	23.45%	36.65%
Castle	23.61%	36.03%
Charnwood	29.80%	43.98%
Coleman	29.36%	42.97%
Evington	20.37%	31.00%
Eyres Monsell	23.62%	36.89%
Fosse	18.52%	29.33%
Freemen	24.37%	38.34%
Humberstone and Hamilton	18.59%	29.24%
Knighton	8.68%	13.95%
Latimer	26.00%	38.84%
New Parks	25.92%	40.29%
Rushey Mead	18.61%	28.57%
Spinney Hills	33.23%	47.54%
Stoneygate	29.62%	43.07%
Thurncourt	20.13%	31.46%
Westcotes	29.07%	43.17%
Western Park	9.54%	15.49%

Figures from End Child Poverty, 2014

