

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Economy Scrutiny Committee - 6 March 2019

**Subject:** Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 implementation update with a particular focus on work undertaken to build resilience of families living in poverty and the role of anchor institutions in tackling poverty.

**Report of:** Head of Work and Skills

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**Summary**

This report sets out the progress that has been made since the Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 was adopted by the Council's Executive in September 2017. It provides a summary of the governance structure that has been put in place, the priorities for each of the workstreams and some of their achievements and added value.

**Recommendations**

Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the progress that has been made in delivering the Family Poverty Strategy.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable):**

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Family Poverty Strategy seeks to reduce the number of children living in poverty in the city. It also aims to support young people to be more resilient and to ensure they are supported to take advantage of the economic opportunities in the city.
A liveable and low carbon city: a	

destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022. Economy Scrutiny Committee June 2017, Executive September 2017

Draft Family Poverty Strategy, Economy Scrutiny Committee 7 December 2016

## 1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The Manchester Family Poverty Strategy 2017-2022 was approved by Manchester City Council's Executive in September 2017 and was officially launched on 4 October 2017 at the Manchester Financial Inclusion Conference. The Strategy was developed for a number of reasons, one of the key factors being that Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country by local authority area with over one in three children under 16 living in poverty.
- 1.2 A mixed methods approach was used to develop Strategy. This included a working group comprising of Council officers and partners, an analysis of national and local data as well as an analysis of strength based conversations with children and families in low income areas of the city, making the strategy one of the first to fully adopt the principles of the Our Manchester approach.
- 1.3 The Strategy set out to add value by identifying a small number of key priorities which would have the biggest impact on children and their families. It sets out three clear themes with 10 priorities which are listed below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of the themes and priorities of the Strategy**

<b>Sustainable work as a route out of poverty</b>
1. Affordable childcare for parents
2. The role of anchor institutions
<b>Focus on the basics - raising and protecting family incomes</b>
3. Mitigating the impact of welfare reform on families with children
4. Tackling the poverty premium
5. Food and fuel
6. Improving children's health
<b>Boosting resilience and building on strengths</b>
7. Strength based approach in communities (Belonging)
8. Improving the identification and signposting of families in poverty (Coping)
9. Poverty proofing services (Coping)
10. Embedding careers advice and aspiration in schools (Learning)

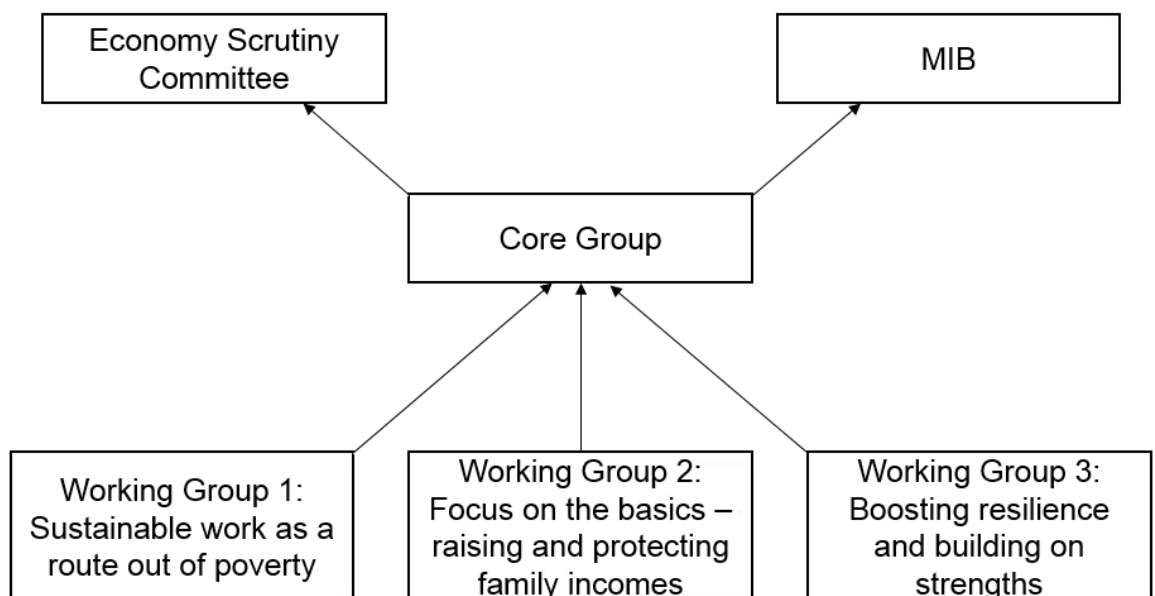
- 1.4 A significant amount of progress has been made since the Strategy's adoption. As well as establishing a governance structure to implement and oversee the strategy, work has started to deliver on some of the major

priorities identified in the Strategy. This report provides a progress update together with a particular focus on how this work is contributing to building the resilience of families living in poverty. The report will also look at the role anchor institutions are playing in tackling poverty.

## 2.0 Governance Structure

- 2.1 The governance comprises of a Core Group which oversees the delivery of the Strategy and is currently chaired by the Council's Head of Work and Skills. Other members include the Deputy Leader of the Council Councillor Sue Murphy, Greater Manchester Poverty Action, the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit, Northwards Housing, Save the Children, Oxfam and Manchester Health and Care Commissioning. As well as accountability to the Committee, the group also reports to the Our Manchester Investment Board on a biannual basis. The Core Group is underpinned by three working groups which are aligned to three themes of the Strategy as set out in Figure 1 below. The chairs of each of the working groups report into the Core Group which has overall responsibility for monitoring progress and addressing any blockages.

**Figure 1: Family Poverty Strategy governance structure**



- 2.2 The Core Group identified the following priorities for the first 12-18 months:

- To work with the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit and Greater Manchester Poverty Action to develop a better measure of poverty which accurately reflects the cost of living in Manchester/Greater Manchester. This could be a version of the Minimum Income Standard or Households Below Average Income measure and should include a projection for poverty levels in the future;
- To drive forward the work with Anchor Institutions in partnership with the Our Manchester Forum;

- To take on the role of influencer in the city, ensuring that the Strategy is fully embedded across Manchester;
  - To take forward proposals from the Working Groups by sourcing funding opportunities and addressing issues and blockages.
- 2.3 To support the successful delivery of the Strategy, a 12 month work programme for each the working groups together with milestones was developed. This work helped to provide structure and clarity and has subsequently been used to develop Logic Models for the Strategy and the three working groups. An example Logic Model for the whole of the Strategy is attached as an example in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 A summary of the priorities for each of the working groups, progress against the respective work programmes (with a particular focus on how the priorities have supported building resilience in families living poverty) together with key challenges is set out below.

### **Working Group 1: Sustainable work as a route out of poverty**

- 2.5 The priorities for the first 12-18 months are:
- Assessing the childcare offer in the city in terms of its quality and affordability, but also its fit with modern flexible employment patterns;
  - Involving people with experience of using childcare providers whilst working or trying to find work;
  - Engaging providers of childcare to better understand their barriers and challenges;
  - Using the learning to inform changes to future tenders for childcare.
- 2.6 The group is chaired by the Council's Access and Sufficiency Manager and includes broad representation from schools, childcare providers, residents with lived experience of poverty, as well as a number of statutory organisations including Job Centre Plus. The group has focussed on understanding and analysing some of the challenges for working parents.
- 2.7 Early analysis has indicated that childcare providers in Manchester haven't fully responded to the shift towards more flexible working patterns. A survey of employers on flexible working practices has been drafted and the group are piloting this with employers in Wythenshawe.
- 2.8 The group has undertaken a consultation with parents, carers and employers as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018 which has generated 450 responses. A full analysis of the survey responses is currently underway. It is anticipated that these research pieces will provide the group with a better understanding of the flexibility required by families to secure sustainable work and the volume of suitable provision in order to better support families to access employment opportunities.
- 2.9 Childcare providers themselves are facing a number of challenges which inevitably impact on their business and ultimately their childcare offer.

Providers have highlighted the cost of business rates as an issue and the group have responded by undertaking research to look at how business rates impact on the childcare offer nationally and what work, if any, is happening to mitigate this. The Chair of the working group recently met with the Head of Revenues and Benefits to look at potential options to support childcare providers.

- 2.10 To promote much needed flexibility around childcare, the group have identified local childcare providers who are able to provide flexible childcare. They are examining how these models work with a view to promoting and sharing good practice with other providers in Manchester. Again, it is hoped that this will help boost access to job opportunities to those families who are unable to access work due to the lack of flexibility in childcare.

### **Working Group 2: Focus on the basics - raising and protecting family incomes**

- 2.11 The priorities for the first 12-18 months are:

- Developing an evidence base to demonstrate the positive impact on health and income of fuel poverty/energy efficiency programmes. This will also include other resilience factors such as the positive impact of a warm home on children's ability to learn;
- Focusing on financial inclusion to maximise household incomes;
- Promoting sustainable food help solutions including food cooperatives;
- Improving children's health.

- 2.12 The group is currently chaired by the Council's Head of Housing and includes a diverse range of partners who have practical experience in the areas of food and fuel poverty including FareShare/Emerge, One Manchester Housing and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). More recently, The Bread and Butter Thing, a community led charity who provide quality food supplies for low income families, have joined the group with Gateway M40, a charity who provide free debt and welfare advice. It is anticipated that this will enhance the focus on food poverty and financial inclusion which will help to build the resilience of families living in poverty.

- 2.13 The group commissioned National Energy Action (the national governing body for fuel poverty) to provide free training and advice to front line workers and schools to raise awareness of fuel poverty, its impact and the support available to residents. National Energy Action delivered the City and Guilds Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness to frontline workers including representatives from the CAB and Registered Housing Providers over three days in mid October 2018. In addition, as part of their offer, they have provided training to Early Help Hub Managers focusing on the 'Home Life' section of the assessment which includes housing, money, and health and well-being. Both training courses were positively received. They are currently liaising with the Yes Project to raise awareness of fuel poverty and its impact.

- 2.14 There is a growing recognition that the poverty premium (the extra cost that people on lower incomes pay for goods and services as they are less able to bulk buy and access the best deals) impacts disproportionately on families living in poverty. To help counter this, the group have been in discussions with a large online white goods retailer who have made a proposal to offer washing machines at £2 per week. The deal (if implemented) will help with the heavy financial penalty people on low incomes often have to pay for the purchase of large white goods via rent-to-own models.
- 2.15 The group has also begun to focus on financial inclusion and work is underway with Barclays and Lloyds to promote their offer of bank accounts to homelessness people and to expand this over to other residents on low incomes.
- 2.16 Food poverty is increasingly recognised as a major issue for people living in poverty having gained a much greater local and national profile in the last 12 months. The group has undertaken a small scale mapping exercise which helped to identify a number of models of food help such as food pantries and food co-operatives. In addition, the group has supported the expansion of The Bread and Butter Thing into two new locations in north Manchester to further support families struggling with basics in key areas of deprivation in the city. A case study on this model of food help is provided later in this report.
- 2.17 Holiday hunger has also been identified as a particularly issue for children living in poverty during school holidays when, in the absence of free school meals, children are not getting at least once good quality healthy meal per day. Young Manchester in partnership with Manchester City Council and Northwards Housing have jointly submitted a funding application to the Department of Education to fund the provision of healthy meals and enriching activities for children in some of the more deprived areas of the city. The result of this application should be known in mid March 2019.

### **Working Group 3: Boosting resilience and building on strengths**

- 2.18 The key priorities for this Working Group for the next 12 months are:
- Improved communications of existing schemes to residents and front line staff;
  - exploring ways to expand schemes and support available for residents;
  - workforce development to improve understanding and impact of poverty;
  - Developing a poverty proofing toolkit which services and organisations across the city can implement to improve the way in which they support service users who are in poverty;
  - Developing a better understanding of who to target with this work.
- 2.19 The group is chaired by the Council's Head of Reform and Innovation and includes a range of partner organisations from across Manchester including Cedar Mount Academy, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and The Place at Platt Lane. Since January 2018, the group have met regularly in a

variety of community settings to encourage participation from residents and have focused on communications and poverty proofing. Progress has been made across a number of areas.

- 2.20 The group is supporting a large scale communications programme centred on Family Poverty, the Homelessness Reduction Act and Universal Credit which is currently being developed for roll-out in March of this year. This is being led by the Council's Communications Team with input from all working group members. The group also supported a Social Media campaign at Christmas, including sign-posting to support agencies via Facebook messages and Tweets.
- 2.21 The group has mapped the different communications tools available to residents and frontline workers where and how they can access different types of support such as libraries, early help hubs, job centres and community venues. They have also engaged with Manchester Public Information Group (MPIG), which is looking at resources and service mapping across the city and includes representation from Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, Manchester Local Care Organisation, Buzz, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector. The ambition of this group is to create a single shared resource which would be managed by individual agencies to ensure that current, up-to-date information is shared by all services and residents, and that this resource is available both online and via print. In addition, Communications and Help and Support Manchester (HSM) have come together via this group to discuss short-term solutions to ensure that the HSM resource is being used more effectively by services and residents.
- 2.22 The group have reviewed a number of poverty proofing toolkits which have been produced by national agencies or other local authorities. Following this exercise, Children North East (CNE) were engaged as they are well regarded nationally for undertaking audits which mitigate the effects of poverty on young people. The CNE model is currently being completed at Cedar Mount Academy and their report will be discussed at the next meeting of the group. The process is resource intensive but is extremely thorough and it is hoped that the learning from this audit can be shared across the city's schools.
- 2.23 As well as the stigma of poverty in schools, the group has also recognised that people experience the same stigma when accessing other services. In response to this, the poverty proofing work will now be expanded to include the workforce of the Council and partner organisations to ensure that workforces are equipped to recognise the signs of poverty and how to signpost to appropriate support.
- 2.24 The group has also tested the application of the Logic Models mentioned earlier in this report. This involves tracking the 'activities' of each workstream through to outputs, outcomes and milestones, demonstrating how these specific pieces of work could ultimately start to impact on different dimensions of poverty across the city.



- 2.25 Despite the progress over the past year, the group have also identified a number of challenges. The first challenge is identifying which cohorts in the city to target and the most effective method of doing so. The second challenge is being able to consistently connect the work to the real lived experience of people experiencing poverty. This is currently achieved via individual organisations who are members of the group and specific engagement exercises, however, there is a collective recognition that much broader engagement with residents is required.

### **3.0 Added value**

- 3.1 As well as the work being delivered via the individual working groups, there are a number of other activities and events which have supported the resilience of families and children living in poverty. These are highlighted below.

#### **Anchors - Breakfast Event 4 October 2018 and 5 March 2019**

- 3.2 As set out in the Strategy, anchor institutions have a key role to play in supporting families out of poverty. As well as being key stakeholders in the economy, they create and sustain a significant number of jobs; procure billions of pounds worth of contracts through their procurement processes and are rooted in the city.
- 3.4 In order to harness the role of anchor institutions in tackling poverty, Councillor Sue Murphy hosted a breakfast round table for key anchor institutions in Manchester. The event was well attended with 17 representatives from a broad range of sectors including; construction, finance, legal, culture, transport, health and higher education. Some of the key headlines from the discussion were as follows:

- **Change the narrative around poverty** - there needs to be a recognition that poverty isn't the fault of the poor and people living in poverty have a huge amount to offer. The current narrative which is primarily concerned with seeing poverty as an issue means that quite often the contribution the city's residents can make to Manchester is missed.
- **More focussed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** - it is important that CSR is meaningful and long lasting so it has a tangible impact long term. A number of organisations at the roundtable are engaged in CSR. Going forward, this needs to be co-ordinated centrally so that there is clarity in terms of what the city has available in relation to CSR.
- **Development of a toolkit around poverty** - the toolkit should set out what support is available for residents living in poverty based on what support different organisations in the city can offer. This can be used to rewrite the narrative in relation to poverty and in doing so, tackle some of the stigma associated with it.
- **Focus on young people and promote social mobility** - The University of Manchester is undertaking work with primary schools to support

children living in poverty. Save the Children are also working with families through their Families Programme to help build resilience in children and support families to foster an environment at home which is conducive to learning and boosts self esteem. These initiatives should be better connected so that organisations can share learning and good practice.

- **Leadership role for the Council** - the Council has a leadership and convening role and should act as a conduit between partners. A possible suggestion is for the Council to identify the top 100 employers in the city and the activities that are most effective in tackling poverty.
- **Employment as a key route out of poverty** - employers should consider providing more consistency in terms of the pay and terms of employment including paying the Real Living Wage. This would help residents to support themselves and their families through meaningful employment. This practice should also be embedded throughout employers supply chains.
- **Travel as an enabler** – Transport for Greater Manchester have launched a scheme in partnership with Jobcentre Plus which subsidises travel for people who have started new jobs for the first four to five months of their new employment. This represents an improvement on the previous offer but more promotion of this offer is required.
- **Support for business start-ups** - some Registered Housing Providers are supporting people with business start-ups including mentoring. There is an opportunity to create a more coherent network which promotes the available support.

- 3.5 A second breakfast roundtable event with anchor institutions who attended the first event is being planned for 5 March 2019. Specific proposals are being developed for anchors to discuss and consider.

### **Single point of Access**

- 3.6 As discussed above, anchor institutions were passionate about the need for a single point of contact to support businesses to engage with the agenda in the most efficient way. In their feedback, businesses reported that there were a number of tools aimed at residents, however, they were difficult to navigate and therefore it was difficult for businesses to identify where help was most needed. Anchors suggested that there was a need for a single point of access or website which would identify where support was needed and would enable them to design their offer based on the needs of people living in poverty. In response to this feedback, a mapping exercise and an analysis of the different tools has been undertaken and a paper is currently being prepared and will be reviewed by the Our Manchester Investment Board.

### **Manchester Poverty Truth Commission**

- 3.7 A Manchester Poverty Truth Commission is expected to be launched during spring 2019. The Poverty Truth Commission was originally developed in Glasgow six years ago and more recently, was successfully launched in Salford. It engages people with lived experience of poverty directly with key

civic and business leaders to influence and inform policy change. A start up group comprising of representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector in Manchester including Council officers, CAB and Manchester Alliance for Community Care has been established to support the development of the Commission.

- 3.8 The start up group have identified a facilitator and civic and business leaders as well as high profile individuals from the entertainment industry who may be able to raise the profile of the commission and better engage young people in the poverty agenda. The group are now in the process of identifying suitable grass roots commissioners and have secured at least half of the £65k funding needed to establish the commission.
- 3.9 It is intended that the work of the Manchester Poverty Truth Commission will complement the implementation of the Family Poverty Strategy and will support, inform and influence the work of the Core Group and the three working groups, as well as the Council, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Manchester Local Care Organisation.

### **Case Study - 'The Bread and Butter Thing'**

- 3.10 One of the added benefits of the work around poverty is that this has resulted in an increased awareness of community projects and best practice models enhancing Manchester's offer around family poverty and subsequently boosting the resilience of families. The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) is one such example and is a community led charity that provides quality food supplies to low income families at a heavily discounted rate with food and goods coming from retailers and manufacturers who have surplus stock.
- 3.11 The project which is administered via a membership scheme, started out in south Manchester in 2016. Food and goods are delivered to community hubs which include independent foods banks, housing associations and community centres. A team of volunteers from the local community packs the food into food bags which are then distributed to members attending the hubs. Last year, TBBT were successful in receiving grant funding from the Council to purchase a van to expand their offer and deliver in the north of the City. With the help and support of the Our Manchester Team and Northwards Housing, TBBT have identified and launched their first hub in October 2018 in the north of the city and are looking to feed approximately 600 families by summer 2019.
- 3.12 To date, TBBT have delivered to 13 hubs, having provided over 500,000 meals to over 5,000 people. Some key statistics include:
- 87% of members stated that because of TBBT they can now feed their families;
  - 8 out of 10 families are cooking healthier meals;
  - 1/3 of members savings have been spent directly on children;
  - families are making an average annual saving of £1,440;

- 97% of members have indicated that TBBT has been good for the community.
- 3.13 TBBT are looking to extend their food offer to include financial advice as well as other household goods such as sanitary products to provide a more holistic offer for their members.

#### **4.0 Poverty Measurement**

- 4.1 As well as having developing a Logic Model to track the local impact of activities from each workstream, the Council also continues to monitor national measures of poverty. However, release dates are lagged - sometimes by a considerable amount of time - therefore changes can only be seen on a longer timescale. There are several measures which the Council tracks which give a citywide percentage estimate of poverty, but each have limitations and there are no single nationally agreed measure at local authority level.
- 4.2 The HMRC Children in Low-Income Families statistics are one official measure of relative poverty at a local authority level, showing the number of children living in families in receipt of out-of-work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% of UK median income for that year as a proportion of the total number of children in the area. This has been used for a number of years by Manchester and was a baseline statistic for the Family Poverty Strategy. However, the robustness of different measures can change over time due to external factors. Two such factors which meant that it was prudent to re-evaluate what measure to use in the future were;
- The HMRC statistic does not account for Universal Credit, which affects the figure more substantially as roll out continues;
  - It is known to under-estimate in-work poverty, and the trend has been for this type of poverty to become more prevalent both in Manchester and nationally.
- 4.3 The Council's Performance, Research and Intelligence team undertook a desktop review of a range of poverty measures and recommended that the End Child Poverty statistic is now used as the corporate measure at this time. It is defined as "an estimate of the true level of child poverty (defined as below 60% of median income)". The full methodology used to calculate the statistic is available on the End Child Poverty website. The statistic is used by key partners such as GMPA (Greater Manchester Poverty Action). The main advantages of the measure are as follows;
- The estimate uses more recent regional Labour Market Survey data on trends in the number of children in out of work households to adjust figures for both in-work and out-of-work child poverty;
  - It adjusts for housing costs.
- 4.4 The latest available End Child Poverty estimate for Manchester (2017) is that there is a 43.6% level of child poverty in the city. This is the highest of the

eight Core Cities, and only Tower Hamlets has a higher percentage nationally across local authorities (53.4%).

### ***Additional Measures***

- 4.5 The conclusion of the desktop review was that to get a rounded picture of the local and regional picture - along with projections - that it is sensible to continue to monitor four main measures. These are summarised in the table below. The three additional measures are therefore supplemental to the End Child Poverty being used as the primary measure.

**Table 2: Four measures of child poverty**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Lowest Geography</b>	<b>Manchester LA Data</b>	<b>Latest Year</b>	<b>Latest Result (Manchester unless stated otherwise)</b>
1	Number and % of children living in low income families	HMRC	LSOA	Yes	2016	27.1%
2	End Child Poverty Estimates	Loughborough University, Centre for Research in Social Policy	Ward	Yes	2017	43.6%
3	IFS 2020 projections for Child poverty, After Housing Costs	Institute for Fiscal Studies(IFS)	Regional	No	Projection to 2019-21	NW Region, Absolute rate: 33.1% / Most deprived decile of LA, Absolute rate: 42.3%
4	HBAI - Children in Households Below Average Income	DWP / Family Resources Survey	Regional	No	Three year average 2013/14 - 2015/16	NW Region: 21% before housing costs, 30% after housing costs

## **5.0 Welfare Reform**

- 5.1 Welfare Reform changes are a factor influencing family poverty, with widespread evidence of negative impacts. For example, high levels of rent arrears are accumulating for some tenants receiving Universal Credit. A separate report “The Impact of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit on the Manchester Economy” to this Committee explains these impacts in detail, and also what actions the Council is taking with partners to help affected residents mitigate negative impacts where possible.

## **6.0 Next Steps**

- 6.1 **Strengthen the membership of the Core and working groups**

It has been a challenge for both the Core and working groups to fully represent the diversity of Manchester and to ensure that the voices of residents is integral to decision making. Both the Core and working groups are continually striving to achieve these objectives and are reviewing the composition of their working groups. In addition, where feasible, the Core and working groups are meeting in community venues to make their meeting more accessible to the city's diverse residents.

## **7.0 Conclusion and recommendations**

- 7.1 The Committee are asked to note the content of the report and the progress that has been made in implementing the Family Poverty Strategy.