

**To:** Ambition Board 2  
**Date:** 7 September 2011  
**Subject:** Tackling Family Poverty  
**Classification:** Unrestricted

## Recommendations

### The Ambition Board is asked to:-

- (a) Consider adopting the long term goal of Tackling Family Poverty across Kent.
- (b) Support the development of an implementation plan to tackle Family Poverty by providing District level evidence of effective practice and exemplars of positive action in each locality.
- (c) Receive bi-annual progress reports relating to Tackling Family Poverty, which with consent from partners will draw together the effective work carried out in each of the locality arrangements.

## 1. Introduction

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Ambition Board 2 have asked other members to consider taking ownership of the long term goal to Tackle Family Poverty.

Kent Forum has set out the structure for the development and delivery of the three ambitions for the County. The Vision for Tackling Disadvantage, Ambition 2, establishes the parameters under which the board will operate.

*Everyone in Kent has the potential to lead a happy and fulfilled life. All people in Kent, regardless of where they live or their own personal circumstances, will have the confidence and opportunities they need to create a positive life for themselves, their families and their communities. We will work to understand and break down the barriers that can stop this from happening for some people - like unemployment, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, poor housing, poor health and more. People in Kent will feel secure, positive and optimistic about their futures, and work towards achieving their goals, with minimal dependence on support from services.*

This clarity and focus will form the cornerstone of Kent's Strategy to Tackle Family Poverty.

## 2. National drivers

Two recent Government Strategies, “A New Approach to Child Poverty” and “A Strategy for Social Mobility” set out an approach to tackling both these issues, with a clear emphasis on the root causes of intergenerational poverty and the resourcefulness of families as the starting point for change. The life course approach, set out in both documents, explores the key transition points for children and young people from the foundation years through to adulthood.

Kent County Council is required through legislation to publish a needs analysis and strategy detailing how Child Poverty will be tackled. In Kent the focus will be on Tackling Family Poverty as it is our belief that a child cannot be seen in isolation from their family.

## 3. Kent performance

There are **52,870 Kent Children living in poverty, which is the equivalent of 17% of all children.**<sup>1</sup> Almost 90% of these children were under the age of 16. Whilst this is lower than the national percentage of children living in Poverty which currently stands at 21%, figures for Kent are significantly higher than the South East region as a whole where 14.5% of children were living in poverty.

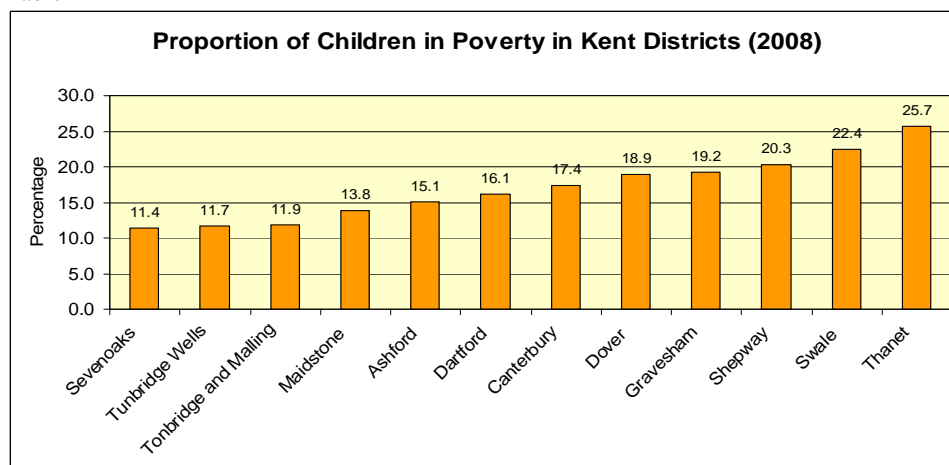
There is significant variation across Districts and the pockets of deprivation within areas of apparent affluence mean that a coordinated approach to sharing practice and promoting change is essential.

The diagram (table 1) shows the variation across Kent Districts. Within this context it is important to note that the outcomes for children living in poverty are much worse than their peers.

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<sup>1</sup> National Indicator 116 (children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income), 2008, HMRC

Table 1



Source: HM Revenue & Customs

#### 4. Tackling Disadvantage and Family Poverty

Family poverty is inexorably linked to disadvantage. Poverty is understood to be a key determinant of outcomes for health and most, if not all of the causes and symptoms of disadvantage discussed under Ambition 2 of the Vision for Kent are linked to family poverty.

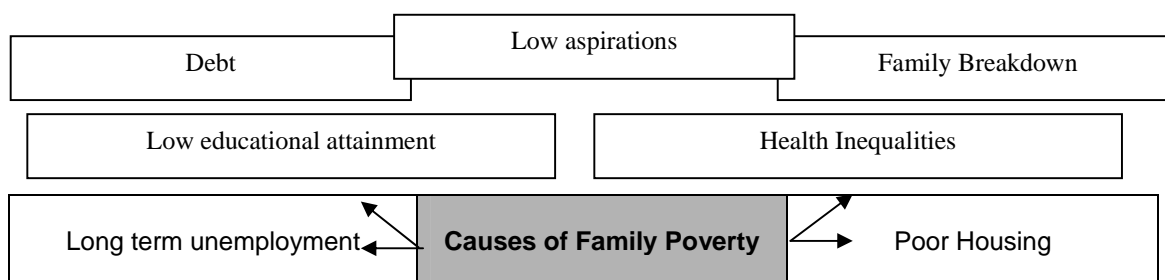
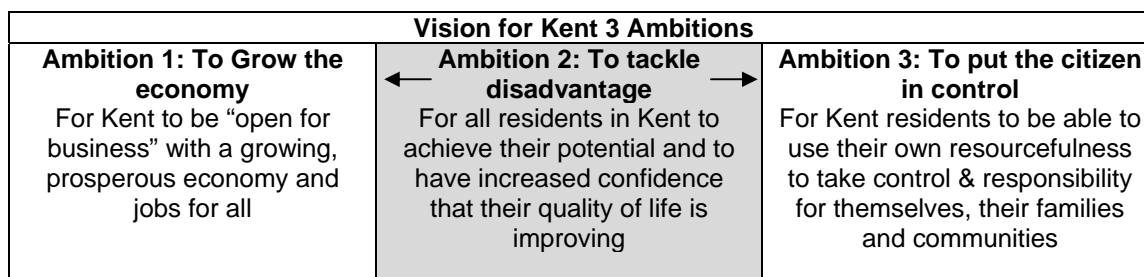
To create the conditions where children and young people can thrive and become economically active citizens we have to examine issues of worklessness, health inequality, debt, housing, education and aspiration. By developing a strong and cohesive strategic approach to family poverty we can tackle these issues. Family poverty should be seen as the golden thread that links them together.

#### 5. The necessity to change our approach

In Kent we have had a large number of separate strategies and priorities around children, young people, families, worklessness, economic development and regeneration. The Vision for Kent, development of the three Ambition Boards and strong locality arrangements provides the opportunity for a new holistic, needs based approach to tackling family poverty.

Ultimately the strategy to tackle child and family poverty must ensure families have the tools to take action for themselves. As partners we must create the conditions and pathways that ensure that individuals and families can take direct action to improve their circumstances. This means ensuring access to information, advice and guidance, and supporting the protective factors in families, such as good parenting that will build resilience for children and families. The diagram overleaf maps out key elements of delivery.

**Tackling Family Poverty  
Ambition Board 2 taking primary role**



**Ambition into action**

Streamlined access points for advice and guidance and support to	Early intervention		Communities leading services
	For early years	For stage not age	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get back to work</li> <li>• Ensure front line workers can access high quality timely information</li> <li>• Support children's learning</li> <li>• Make the right School choice</li> <li>• Access the right benefits</li> <li>• Develop the best possible skills</li> <li>• Developing social enterprise + other models to deliver services, building employment of young people and those long term unemployed into our contracting and procurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted support in the early years to stop “the gap” appearing</li> <li>• Defining the offer of support from Children's Centres</li> <li>• High quality early years education</li> <li>• Smooth transition to primary schools</li> <li>• Closing the gap strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine recording of hidden harm</li> <li>• Development of preventative strategy and local delivery plans</li> <li>• Targeted parent support</li> <li>• Adult services employability strategy</li> <li>• Preventative and early intervention Strategy</li> <li>• Later life strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the evidence base of national and local pilots and refine the lessons learnt</li> <li>• Use our understanding of customer journey to build a better picture of what is possible without service intervention</li> <li>• Harness community volunteers to report back on areas where people are working together to achieve great outcomes.</li> <li>• Community Champions</li> <li>• Models of using customer/client to them support other Customers/Clients</li> </ul>

## **6. Next Steps**

The needs assessment produced by the Business Intelligence Team at Kent County Council, will be published in the next few weeks. Following publication officers will seek to work with District Partners to develop a clear picture of effective action to tackle family poverty in each locality. Working with partners Kent will then agree an implementation plan and performance framework to include milestones and critical success factors. It is hoped that Ambition Board 2 will agree to support the development and review progress on the delivery of the implementation plan and performance framework, as part of its long term goal.

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