

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Mark Sutton
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

By Syed Hussain

Question

Why has the Anglesey area in East Staffordshire got the highest number of children living in poverty in Staffordshire; what are the causes of this poverty; and will the Cabinet Member consider developing an action plan or pilot programme to alleviate children poverty in this deprived area that I represent?

Reply

The report developed by End Child Poverty <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/> suggests that levels of poverty are higher in some wards such as Anglesey. This report has been developed using overall household income using tax credit data as the main source. This is not the way we traditionally would have looked at child poverty. Previous estimates of child poverty have focused on out of work benefits only.

The changes in recording of child poverty presented in this report does affect the number of children identified in Anglesey who are living in poverty. This is because data relating to household income are included and not just those out of work, therefore people who are unemployed and in low paid jobs for example would appear in this new data.

There are multiple causes of poverty e.g. poor education attainment, low level of skills, levels of aspiration, actual cost of living in an area (e.g. housing, access to basic amenities, etc) versus income/benefits.

Across the county we are implementing a Place Based Approach (PBA). This is “A collaborative approach using the right resources (multi-skilled teams, universal services, voluntary sector, communities etc.) at the right time to improve outcomes for children, young people, families, vulnerable people and communities in an identified area”.

The approach focusses on addressing shared demand and need which is intelligence led and aims to tackle at the earliest stage the root causes of the issues which families and children were dealing with. It was recognised that this would improve outcomes and reduce the requirement for intervention by statutory services. There was a stated partnership ambition to extend the PBA to vulnerable adults once progress was being evidenced with children and families.

Research has shown that children failing to meet their Good Level of Development before they start school never catch up, leading to poor educational attainment and higher than average unemployment. Workless families struggle to provide the basic components to raise a child leading to children living in poverty.

The Place Based Approach work is being led locally by the East Staffordshire Local Strategic Partnership seeks to improve the uptake of funded childcare for 2-year olds and reduce the number of workless households. An innovative approach has been developed for a consortia of local organisations based in Burton to provide the community intelligence to drive these initiatives. The Anglesey ward will benefit from this work. The objective of this work will include a range of partnership and engagement but there will be a focus on improving aspirations of children and families for example:

- a. empowering families and raising aspiration
- b. support with developing skills
- c. encouraging healthy lifestyles and community safety
- d. link individuals into training, education and employment
- e. community involvement, responsibility and a sense of ownership
- f. reducing and managing the levels of debt that families are faced with

We are also continuing with our efforts to create the right conditions for economic growth across the whole of Staffordshire to produce more, better paid jobs for residents whilst improving education and skills provision in our schools, colleges and universities so that more people gain the training and qualifications they need to succeed. Since 2010, 43,000 additional jobs have been created in Staffordshire including 5,000 within East Staffordshire. Our resident's wages have also increased by around £57 per week, with the average £551 earned by a resident of Staffordshire working full-time exceeding the West Midlands Region average of £537.

Skills levels also continue to improve with over 16,000 more Staffordshire residents now holding a degree or above level qualification compared with 2010. Our Economic Growth Programme continues to deliver homes and jobs across the county, including supporting the delivery of the Branston Locks development in Burton upon Trent which will see 400 acres of land immediately west of the A38 developed with 2,500 new homes, a range of community facilities and a 50-acre employment site.