

Cheltenham Borough Council

Council – 21 March 2022

Review of No Child Left Behind and plans for 2022

Report of the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities

Accountable member	Cabinet Member Safety and Communities, Cllr. Flo Clucas
Accountable officer	Safeguarding and Partnerships Manager, Tracy Brown Strategy and Engagement Manager, Richard Gibson
Accountable scrutiny committee	All
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>In December 2018, in response to a children and young people’s needs assessment, the council supported a motion to support the No Child Left Behind Year of Action on child poverty. In 2019, the council successfully coordinated the year of action and involved many partners in its delivery.</p> <p>Following a review in December 2019, when this council agreed to support a second year of the programme, No Child Left Behind has continued to make significant progress despite the interruptions of the pandemic.</p> <p>This report sets out the progress made by No Child Left Behind over the past two years and asks for Council support for plans for 2022.</p> <p>The reports also seeks Council support to support May as a month of celebrating childhood and to commit to supporting the events and activities listed in section 10.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Council notes the progress achieved by No Child Left Behind since the last report to this council on 16 Dec 2019.</p> <p>Commits to support a fourth year of No Child Left Behind to be delivered in 2022.</p> <p>To agree to support May as a month of celebrating childhood and to commit to supporting the events and activities listed in section 10.</p>

Financial implications	None as a direct result of this report. It is expected that the delivery of the fourth year of the No Child Left Behind programme can be managed within existing budgets, through support from the Cheltenham Lottery and through specific fundraising. Contact officer: Martin Yates Business Partner Accountant Martin.Yates@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264200
Legal implications	None as a direct result of this report. Contact officer: xx E-mail: xx@tewkesbury.gov.uk Tel no: 01684 272012
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	None as a direct result of this report. Capacity to support the delivery of the fourth year of the No Child Left Behind programme can be managed within existing capacity within the Strategy and Engagement Team. Contact officer: xx HR Business Partner xx
Key risks	If the council is not seen as supporting No Child Left Behind, there is a risk that other funders may not be as willing to contribute to the programme.
Corporate and community plan Implications	No Child Left Behind is one of the key projects emanating from the corporate plan that was agreed in March 2019 and its aspiration to work partners to develop community-based approaches that achieve inclusive growth and tackle inequality.
Environmental and climate change implications	One of the strands that NCLB would be interested in considering is how to get more young people engaged in the climate change debate.

1. Background

- 1.1 Given the concerns that the council and its partners had about the plight of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham, a children's needs assessment was commissioned from the Strategic Needs Assessment Team at Gloucestershire County Council
- 1.2 The [needs assessment](#) set out that there was in the region of 4,300 children and young people growing up in poverty. And that those children, when compared to their more affluent peers were then facing significant challenges such as poorer education attainment, higher rates of exclusion, at higher risk being victims of crime, at a higher risk of being drawn into criminal activity, higher risk of being obese, at a higher risk of being open to social care and a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health.
- 1.3 In response to the figures, partners felt strongly that they could not do nothing. Instead the council and its partners devised plans for a year of action on child poverty called No Child Left Behind.
- 1.4 Following a members' seminar on 7th November 2018, the cabinet member healthy lifestyles took a motion to full council on 11 December 2018 to support the No Child Left Behind year of action – this was passed with unanimous support.
- 1.5 The year of action was reviewed in the report to council in December 2019. This report sets out activities in 2020 and 2021.

2. Reminder of the aims of No Child Left Behind

2.1 The aims of the No Child Left Behind are to:

- Highlight the issue of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham and the inequality between them and their more affluent peers;
- Start to address the inequality gap with a programme of events and activities;
- Be a call to action for all sectors to work together to make transformational change over the longer-term.

3. Progress made in 2020 and 2021

3.1 As we entered into 2020, the NCLB team were looking forward to a year that would feature many public events and activities including plans for a children's festival and two innovative career events – one of which would have focused on cyber / digital careers for local school-children in conjunction with Golden Valley partners.

3.2 However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant these plans had to be shelved, but instead the focus switched to both building and sustaining the coalition of local partners interested in tackling child poverty and to directly addressing the impacts of the pandemic on local families through the following projects:

- Building the coalition - No Child Left Behind Community agreement;
- Covid response - Laptops for Learning;
- Covid response - NCLB – FeedCheltenham;
- Covid response - Summer of Play and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme;
- Celebrating success - No Child Left Behind awards.

4. Building the coalition – the No Child Left Behind Community Agreement

4.1 The Community Agreement arose from a collective understanding that the current offer for our children and young people – in terms of early years provision, education, family support, social care support and youth support does not work well for some of our children. Across a range of partners, led by our primary schools there was a collective ambition to do more, and to commit to an enhanced level of support so that all our children have the opportunity to thrive.

4.2 This ambition was developed into a collective commitment to all children and their families in Cheltenham, called the [community agreement](#).

4.3 Through signing the agreement, we are asking local partners to commit to working together in a way that is honest, open and shows an understanding that everybody's experiences in life are different including understanding the effects of trauma, particularly in childhood, and to value emotional wellbeing. We want organisations working with families to be inclusive, trustworthy and kind. We want this commitment to be reflected in their policies, their practice and their decision making (including financial).

4.4 Originally thinking that the agreement would be signed by a handful of local partners directly working with children and their families, we have been bowled over by the response. To date 24 schools have signed up alongside 45 local organisations including 12 local businesses.

4.5 The community agreement has the potential to deliver our third aim that of being a call to action for all sectors to work together to make transformational change over the longer-term.

4.6 Despite the pandemic restrictions on meeting face to face, we have held two virtual leadership summits (in March 2021 and November 2021) for the CEOs and directors of community

agreement signatories. Total attendances were 94

- 4.7 The summits gave local leaders the opportunity to hear from national experts and in workshops reflect how to make their organisations compassionate and strengths-based whilst supporting each other to make transformational change over the longer-term.
- 4.8 Alongside the leadership summits, front-line staff have been invited to attend one of three virtual training sessions held in 2021. Total attendances were 69.

5. Covid response - Laptops for Learning 2021

- 5.1 During lockdown 3, in February 2021, NCLB launched our [#LaptopsforLearning](#) scheme which was set up to help ensure local children have access to the right IT equipment to support their learning – both at home during that lockdown, and also when they return to school.
- 5.2 #LaptopsforLearning was set up with the support of range of partners, including Cheltenham Education Partnership, Cheltenham Learning Partnership and IT Schools Africa, supported by volunteers from GCHQ that all shared a vision that no child should be left behind due to being digitally disadvantaged.
- 5.3 Alongside donations of unused / surplus laptops from both homes and businesses, that were then be refurbished by IT Schools Africa we also sought financial donations which would be used to purchase new laptop equipment.
- 5.4 The campaign, which ran to July 2021 was a great success which saw approximately £35,000 raised and 129 devices donated. From the financial donation, 25 ipads were purchased for Bournside school, 25 new laptops for Pittville School and 30 new laptops for All Saints Academy.

6. Covid response - Holiday Hunger scheme 2020

- 6.1 Throughout the pandemic, the issue of access to affordable food and essential items was seen as one of the highest risks faced by our community.
- 6.2 We know that at the height of the pandemic, in excess of 1500 food parcels were being provided every week to Cheltenham residents. In response, local partners Family Space, came up with the idea of #FeedCheltenham, a means of raising much needed funds to support community food providers.
- 6.3 Ahead of the summer holidays in 2020, using £5k funding made available from GCC and the 10 elected county councillors, No Child Left Behind, working with our community food providers under the #FeedCheltenham banner, devised a holiday hunger scheme to provide food to families with children on free school meals. At the time, there were 3,111 eligible children in Cheltenham district and the scheme was devised to plug the gap whilst the children were not in school. In total over 700 family meals were delivered to local families via the six local community food providers.
- 6.4 Although modest in numbers, the holiday hunger scheme set the foundations for how NCLB would work on more ambitious plans to address the issue of holiday hunger.
- 6.5 In addition to the #FeedCheltenham scheme NCLB also relaunched the Holiday Hunger allotment project over Summer 2021. NCLB worked with six local allotment sites and one independent bakery to collect fresh, home-grown produce and baked goods to distribute to food providers around Cheltenham. Over the course of 11 weeks over 100 carrier bags of food were collected and redistributed to meet community need.

7. Covid response - Holiday Activity and Food Programmes Summer and Winter 2021

- 7.1** The holiday activities and food (HAF) provision is funding from the Department for Education for upper tier local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. Via No Child Left Behind, we have coordinated two HAF programmes, one in Summer 2021 and one in Winter 2021.
- 7.2** Over the four weeks of the summer holidays, NCLB worked with 14 local partners to put on face to face activities for children on free school meals that was then supported with food provision via Feed Cheltenham. In total 479 children attended 1440 sessions and 690 meals were provided.
- 7.3** In total £145k of funding was secured from GCC that has enabled community-based partners to deliver the four week summer programme.
- 7.4** In the run up to Christmas, NCLB partners developed a 4-day scheme that would build on the summer programme, but work more closely with local schools in recognition that they have the closest relationship with eligible families. Our winter programme had three elements:
- A choice of a food hamper or the option of a token to choose their own food at one of Cheltenham's community food pantries;
 - An age-specific festive activity pack;
 - Access to a range of face to face activities provided by our partner organisations.
 - Access to tickets to Christmas family activities
- 7.5** In total, we delivered 700 food hampers to local schools, 760 food pantry tokens and 700 activity packs. Ten volunteers helped pack the activity packs. In addition, we partnered with Marketing Cheltenham to offer local families the opportunity to enjoy the Ice Rink. In the run up to Christmas, we offered all families on free school meals the opportunity to book ice skating tickets at a 50% discount. And during the 4 days of the HAF scheme, eligible families could book a free family ticket – which was taken up by 159 local families.
- 7.6** In total £85k of funding was secured from GCC that has enabled community-based partners to deliver the winter programme.

8. Celebrating success – the No Child Left Behind Awards

- 8.1** One of the highlights of our work pre-pandemic, was our No Child Left Behind Awards held in January 2020 at the Town Hall when over 200 people recognised the work of local projects, with 12 projects going home with their Iggy awards.
- 8.2** Despite not being able to hold the event in 2021, we have just held this year's event on 9 March 2022. The event celebrated the many great projects that supported families throughout the pandemic and over 200 people attended. This year's event was held in association with Punchline who helped us raise over £6,000 from local business to enable us to put on the awards.
- 8.3** The event was a great success and gave a real demonstration that NCLB is leading the way in building links between grass-roots community organisations, local schools and local businesses around our shared vision to do more to support local children.

9. Summary of achievements and our plans for year 4

- 9.1** As we start 2022, the No Child Left Behind Partnership is incredibly strong. We have a built a

town-wide coalition of like-minded partners who are determined to take action so that all our children have the opportunity to thrive.

- 9.2** The roots of the coalition are our community-based partners in both VCS and public sectors who are working day in day out to support local children and their families. It is so important that NCLB nurtures and celebrates their work. For instance, the £230k funding we have been able to secure to deliver the HAF programme has made an incredible difference to the capacity to support local children who otherwise might have gone hungry during the school holidays.
- 9.3** We are delighted that this coalition includes private businesses. The 14 businesses that have signed up to the community agreement and taken time to attend our events deserve special mention. But we also recognise the support of businesses such as Creed Catering who have provided food hampers for our holiday and food programmes, Punchline who have raised £6,000 from 12 local businesses for our NCLB awards and Infrastar who have helped us so much with our laptops for learning project
- 9.4** We are also delighted to be working far more closely with local schools, both with our primary schools through the Cheltenham Learning Partnership and secondary schools through Cheltenham Education Partnership. Both our laptops for learning programme and our HAF schemes have reached out to every school in Cheltenham.
- 9.5** In terms of statistics, despite the challenges of the pandemic, NCLB is having a significant impact across a range of success measures:
- No of partners engaged estimated to be in the region of 120 (public sector / VCS / business);
 - Attendees at virtual training events – 163;
 - Profile of NCLB – no of social media engagements 1500 followers and 23k impressions monthly (mean average across twitter and facebook);
 - Amount of funding raised and sources = £292k which includes
 - £230k for the HAF projects
 - £35k for laptops for learning
 - c.£6k from the Cheltenham Lottery
 - £15k from the OPCC
 - £6k event sponsorship
- 9.6** Some of the positives from our work include:
- Whole town approach; NCLB is designed so as to have broad appeal to all Cheltenham's children and young people – it has not sought to limit itself to just benefitting children living in poverty. By doing so we have been able to galvanise a broad base of support for NCLB;
 - Demonstration of the council's place leadership role; coordinating NCLB goes beyond the traditional role of a district council. But using the place vision as a basis, this council has shown that it is willing to lead the debate and coordinate action on matters that impact on its residents;
 - Commitment shown by local partners including public, VCS, businesses and local schools.
- 9.7** Some opportunities that we want to develop in year 4:
- Developing a more defined link with businesses especially through the Golden Valley Development and through our participation in the Large Enterprise Action Group (LEAG);
 - Developing more robust engagement mechanisms with young people;
 - Continue to develop our way of working, shaping it by learning from others and ensuring that it is co-created and owned by our partners.
- 9.8** Therefore, in terms of our plans for year 4 include:
- Scoping out the potential for two careers events with a focus on cyber and sports
 - Plan to deliver more holiday activity programmes including bidding to become the districts

lead for future HAF programmes.

- A commitment to a Summer of Play, the national campaign to give children the space, time, and freedom to play
- Launching the NCLB community grant scheme to provide funding to local community projects
- Participation in the Large Enterprise Action Group (LEAG) which was launched in March 2022 and builds on from NCLB. It will work with local companies, education providers, Chamber of Commerce, BID and CBC to provide mentoring, learning opportunities and employment prospects for Cheltenham's young people, with some of Cheltenham's largest companies.
- And a desire to celebrate children in the month of May to coincide with our Children Festival taking place on Saturday 28 May 2022

10. Celebrating Children Month – May 2022

- 10.1** To support our plans for our Children's Festival taking place on Saturday 28 May 2022, we would like to support May as a month when we will celebrate childhood. We plan to do this in the following ways:
- 10.2** We would like as many organisations in the town to show their support for NCLB and celebrate childhood by flying NCLB flags. To support this, we have launched a flag design competition for children and young people at the NCLB awards in March. With council support, we are proposing that the winning design is displayed at the Municipal Offices.
- 10.3** We will be working with schools to encourage them to run events that celebrate and promote the achievements of their children and young people.
- 10.4** The month will end with our annual Children's festival that will take place on Saturday 28th May. This completely free festival, which will take over the Town Hall, has the theme this year of Our Future.
- 10.5** We will be encouraging other organisations to come forward with their own plans for how they might want to join in the month. And if the month is successful, we will look to do this again on an annual basis.

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Appendices	1. Risk assessment	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk			
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer
-	If the council is not seen as supporting NCLB, there is a risk that other funders may not be as willing to contribute to the programme	Richard Gibson	30.1.19	3	3	9	Reduce	Take a decision to support year 4 of NCLB	February 2022	Richard Gibson