

Meeting:	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Sub-committee
Date:	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2007
Subject:	Every Child Matters – Achieving Economic Well Being
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Clark – Director of Children's Services
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

## **SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report sets out the current position with regard to the Every Child Matters outcome – Achieving Economic Well Being it is drawn from the self assessment prepared for the JAR and represents the work of Harrow council and its partners.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is requested to receive and note the information

**REASON:** To inform the committee as part of a regular cycle of updates on the work of the council and its partners in relation the five Every Child Matters outcomes

## **SECTION 2 - REPORT**

### **Achieving Economic Well Being**

This report outlines our activities and our evaluation of their effectiveness as of October 2006. This is part of our annual review cycle and was confirmed by the Jar to be a clear and honest evaluation of performance.

We judge our performance in this area to be good; the success of our young people, through high achieving schools and colleges, provides a good foundation to develop economic wellbeing. Harrow has comprehensive mechanisms for assessing individual pupils' learning needs and responds to these needs appropriately. We have developed a range of vocational courses and we maintain close links with FE colleges and other partners, so that young people have a wide range of education, training and employment opportunities. A large proportion of young people take up these opportunities, complete their course of study and the majority progress to further and higher education. Partnership working in this area is improving, with significant involvement of the voluntary and community sectors. There is a wide range of high quality and available childcare provision, linked to all parts of Harrow's diverse community, catering to parents' and carers' choices to return to work.

### **Action is taken by partners to support families in maximising their economic well-being**

Parents and carers are well informed of the range of childcare and facilities available to them. Extended schools and children's centres are a focus for the provision on information, as well as services, to meet the needs of parents and carers in the local community.

There has been an increase of 32% (compared with 10% nationally) in the number of registered childcare providers, and a 28% increase (compared with 11% nationally) in the number of full day care places.

Foster carers have designated and approved babysitters, allowing carers to access employment and/or education opportunities.

Harrow College provides a pre-school for its learners and, together with Stanmore College offers a range of training programmes for young people and adults which lead into work. Stanmore College is a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Early Years education, a common entry point into training for those with caring responsibilities.

Harrow College also offers a recruitment service on behalf of its students linked to local employers.

Connexions and the youth service have worked together to provide holiday play schemes which are specifically targeted to provide support to working parents. Other local agencies have also been involved, such as one housing organisation, which provides subsidized childcare for children living one of Harrow's more deprived areas.

A range of family support services are also provided by the voluntary sector and Job Centre Plus have run events aiming to give lone parents advice, information and support on issues relating to returning to the job market.

Schemes such as the children looked after libraries' initiative, subsidized leisure provision and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) are designed to alleviate the financial stress on families of childhood activities.

Connexions teenage parent Personal Advisers provide information on benefit entitlement for young parents.

### **Young people 11–19 are helped to prepare for working life**

Young people are supported in developing self-confidence in a variety of ways. A range of work-related learning activities and work experience programmes take place in schools and colleges. 2000 young people have work experience placements each year while the business studies, ICT, citizenship and PSHE curricula are also geared towards providing young people with appropriate skills and enterprise opportunities.

Nord Anglia Lifetime Development deliver the Connexions Information, Advice and Guidance service in all Harrow's maintained schools and its colleges via a team of Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs). , team working skills and enterprise. The work of the Connexions service through the Impartial Careers IAG programme is now embedded in schools and colleges; Connexions targets groups of young people prioritized for early intervention careers advice and guidance; Connexions PAs are involved in year 9 options programmes and raise awareness of options at key transition stages of age 14, 16 and 18.

Harrow College has accessed the(Learning and Skills Council) LSC's Increased Flexibility Programme funds on behalf of the Borough's schools and colleges for the past 5 years. These funds have supported the development of vocational GCSEs, ASDAN qualifications or lower level GNVQs in all the High Schools, other than the Special Schools, as well as the revenue requirements of the Harrow Skills Centre from 2005 – 2006.

All the Borough's High Schools have achieved Specialist Status in respect of at least one vocational area.

Young people in Harrow are more likely to choose to progress into vocational study aged 16 than in surrounding Boroughs. The intended destinations report for the young people in the year 11 cohort in 2005 -2006, showed that 887 students were opting for vocational pathways at levels 1,2 and 3, which was 44% of the cohort. This is a significantly higher proportion than in any other Borough in the London West LSC area.

The colleges in the Borough offer programmes of study in a total of 11 of the 15 sector skills areas. Programmes are available at levels from Entry to Level 4.

Harrow College is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for Retail and Stanmore College has a CoVE in Early Years.

In addition to the vocational provision in the colleges, young people have the opportunity to pursue vocational studies at the Harrow Skills Centre, a Borough-wide joint venture managed by Harrow College. All key stage 4 pupils have the opportunity to undertake this work-related learning and young people Not in Education, Employment with Training (NEET) have been a target group for the work at the Skills Centre, reflecting a priority in the authority's Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The LA, on behalf of the developing Harrow Collegiate, has submitted an expression of interest in the new specialised 14-19 diplomas for all the initial themes except engineering, based on the vocational work in the schools and colleges in Harrow.

Take-up of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in the FE colleges in Harrow is high, latest figures showing this to be 125% of the estimated demand.

The majority of young people continuing in education and training post-16 undertake Level 3 study. In 2004 – 2005, there were 1794 Harrow resident 16-18 year olds undertaking Level 3 in the Harrow colleges, which represented 66% of the total. Accordingly, the majority progress to Higher Education (HE) at the end of their programme and seek employment post-degree. The progression to HE from Advanced vocational programmes is as high as from AS/A2. In 2004, 1156 learners from Harrow's colleges received UCAS acceptances. These progression rates compare favourably with those in surrounding Boroughs.

Although the work-based provision locally is small, in 2004 1% of the year 11 cohort entered WBL and a further 3.8% took up employment on a full, part-time or voluntary basis. The NEET proportion remains small. Over the last three years, increasing numbers of young people have taken up education, training and employment opportunities available to them. There was a reduction in NEETS between Nov 2003 and Nov 2005, so that Harrow now exceeds its targets and maintains the lowest NEET figures in West London.

The recent Inspections of Harrow and Stanmore Colleges found them to be satisfactory and good respectively for this ECM theme.

**Action is taken to ensure that 14–19 education and training is planned and delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16–19) is of good quality**

An Advisory group tasked with steering the local development of 14-19 curriculum and its provision is well-established and it has reviewed the way in which choice at age 16 is provided in Harrow. This review process has led to the development of a Collegiate comprising all the colleges and 10 High Schools with the aim of making choice available through offering post-16 courses on High School sites. Led by the LEA, this group has also committed to the expression of interest in offering the first specialised 14-19 diplomas.

The Advisory group has recently agreed to accept a more strategic role and has set up a number of sub-groups to develop curriculum, governance arrangements and to work on funding.

Services (including Lifetime Careers, who provide careers education and pastoral support programmes, in collaboration with schools, colleges and Connexions) provide good quality careers information and advice to ensure young people enter the right courses; as a result greater numbers of young people are remaining in full time education. The drop-out rate at 16 decreased to 3% in 2004/5, compared with 9% for West London.

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Not only is provision planned to ensure young people have access to a full range of learning activities, but its delivery and support are geared around particular groups, notably vulnerable groups and those at risk of social exclusion; for example, in Harrow a Connexions Intensive Service Personal Adviser supports Irish Travellers in transition stages between middle and high school, high school and work or FE.

Harrow has second lowest level of NEETs amongst similar London boroughs. Numbers have been decreasing consistently, from 6.0% in 2004 to 5.5% in 2005 (compared with 8.1% regional average and 4.9% target). This decrease can be attributed to improved identification and support.

There are greater numbers of young people are entering full time education (increase from 78% in 2004/05 to 81% which exceeds West London average of 78% Percentage of young people leaving the YOT (Youth Offending Team) who were in full time ETE (Education or Employment with Training) in 2005 was 69% (but note a further 6% involved in ETE on a part-time basis) - in line with similar authorities but below the London and national averages.

Education and training providers (16–19) are effectively monitored, challenged and supported in improving provision. Inspection reports for the three colleges show: the quality of provision and overall effectiveness are satisfactory or better in all; leadership and management good in all; value for money good in all; Inclusive practice by schools, colleges and training providers is encouraged; social and educational inclusion good in all, outstanding in one.

### **Community regeneration initiatives address the needs of children and young people**

Initiatives are targeted at the most needy areas, and take a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the broad range of family needs;

A consultation exercise was a significant component of a large regeneration project in South Harrow and the neighbourhood plan reflects this input.

Harrow's Open Budget process included feedback on issues of particular relevance to children and young people.

### **Action is taken to ensure that young people have decent housing**

There has been effective joint working with Connexions on preventing homelessness, as a result of which fewer children and families are in temporary accommodation (reduction by 10% since 2004/5).

Children not in permanent accommodation spend significantly less time in either B&B or hostels; the average length of stay in B&B for families with children was 1 week – close to target of < 1 week and the average length of stay in hostels was 7 weeks – exceeding the target of 9 weeks.

Connexions NEET PAs visit young people in their homes and assess housing conditions, making appropriate referrals when necessary.

The voluntary sector plays a significant role in securing appropriate housing for young people; a supported housing scheme (Bonnersfield Lane), run by Harrow Churches Housing Association provides places for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds. As part of their placement these young people are provided with life skills training on the 'Move On' programme.

Harrow Council has also recently procured spaces within a 'Foyer' scheme run by West London YMCA. The scheme includes 1:1 assessment and training and a proportion of the places available are reserved for young people referred by the YOT. Supported moves for asylum seekers.

### **Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being**

Outcomes for care leavers are good; the percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training at 19 improved between 2004/05 and 2005/06, and is now significantly above the national average. This improved performance contrasts with the overall decline in Harrow;

The educational attainment of care leavers is a somewhat mixed picture; in 2004/05 a higher percentage (10%) gained 5 or more GCSEs than either similar authorities or nationally. However, this figure has dipped for 2006, largely as a result of the small, changing cohort.

Similarly, the proportion of children looked after gaining at least 1 GCSE at grade A\* - G dipped to 42% in 2006.

2005/06 saw an improvement in the percentage of care leavers living in suitable accommodation, from 65% in 2005 to 96% in 2006.

## **Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being**

Transitions are managed by a multi-agency approach which includes healthcare, education, social care and housing; a transition protocol is now in place;

Personal and welfare support is available to young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to support their education or training; this includes input from the voluntary sector (e.g. Mencap, Community Link Up).

The Connexions Personal Advisers working in schools and colleges conduct Section 140 Assessments for all clients with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). Harrow also has a full-time specialist LDD Connexions Personal Adviser (employed by Nord Anglia Lifetime Development) dedicated to work with young people with discrete LDD needs up to the age of 25 years.

There are specific courses offered for young people with LDD at Harrow College. The Learning Links programme has units designed to develop independent living, including travel training and preparation for work. There are employment opportunities, with training, offered through a number of local partners, including Choices4All and the Shaw Trust.

An increasing number of families are making use of direct payment as a way of providing help for their child or young person.

### **Key areas for development**

Improve the proportion of young people leaving the YOT and who are in full time education, training or employment to meet target of 90%. Strategies are outlined in the Connexions Business and Youth Justice Plans.

Increase the proportion of young people with LDD who are in education, training or employment. Results of an exercise to map the NEET population and thus determine risk groups currently being collated.

### **Recommendations from the JAR**

- The 14-19 Collegiate should engage the voluntary organisations and private training providers in the development of the 14-19 Strategy and curriculum.

**Clearly the continued good work in this area will be predicated on the council's capacity to develop even stronger partnership working both with other organisations and with the private and voluntary sector.**

### SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Donna Edwards
		Date: 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2007
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Jill Travers
		Date: 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2007

### SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

**Contact:** Heather Clements – GM+ Schools and Children’s Development  
020-8736 6502

#### **Background Papers**

**None**

**IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?**

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	5