

**Meeting:** Children & Young People's Partnership Board  
**Date:** 15 December 2008  
**Report Title:** Initiatives to Tackle Child Poverty  
**Report of:** Director The Children & Young People's Service

**Summary**

This report lists what practical steps are being taken to address child poverty in Haringey.

**Recommendations**

That the Board note the contents of this report.

**Financial/Legal Comments**

The Chief Financial Officer was consulted and commented:

- that the expectation is that costs associated with developing the strategy will be contained within existing resources.
- in practice the strategy, which aims to move towards closer joint planning and working across the council and with partner agencies in tackling child poverty, should increase value for money and direct resources in a more efficient and effective manner.

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report and has no specific comment to make.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 The child poverty strategy and action was discussed at the previous meeting of the CYPSPB on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Arising from the discussion was a request to demonstrate what practical steps were being taken to address child poverty.
- 1.2 This report outlines some of the key initiatives across the 5 child poverty objectives.

## 2. Initiatives

### **Objective 1: Tackling worklessness and increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs:**

- Continuing to deliver the Haringey Guarantee - which supports residents farthest away from the labour market into sustained employment.
- Delivering the Families Into Work project in Northumberland Park with the aim of tackling worklessness in the community and amongst lone parent and couple families.
- Working in partnership with mainstream welfare to work providers such as Reed, Working Links and Work Directions to encourage workless couple families and single parents back into work, particularly single parents with children under 12.
- Launching the Haringey Guarantee Employer Zone in December 2008. The Employer Zone will:
  - Create a “One Stop Shop” for Haringey Employers, to effectively market the Guarantee, Train to Gain, Employer Vacancies & Provider Provision effectively market the North London Apprenticeship offer to all Haringey employers create local employment opportunities by linking Haringey employers to local people searching for employment
  - We will also be linking with the London Employer Accord to develop a Local Restaurant Consortium which will recruit and train local residents to meet specific needs of local restaurants as employers
  - We are also developing with Marks and Spencer’s a Haringey Lone Parent Marks & Start programme which will deliver an initial programme for 16 residents which includes pre-employment training, work placements, post placement support and jobs in local M&S stores.
  - If successful both the London Employer Accord and M&S can be rolled out on larger scales.

## ***Helping Local Business & Increasing Employment Opportunities***

- Haringey is meeting with local business rate payers. It is expected that Haringey will agree to post a flyer with the December rates demand which will signpost to relevant internal and external services. Subject to agreement, assistance may be available to businesses struggling to make payments.
- In addition to this the Business and Enterprise Team have been working in collaboration with Library services and partner organisations to deliver a programme of events to celebrate National Enterprise Week from the 17th-23rd November.
  - Highlights include the “Black Boys in Business” event at the Bernie Grant Centre on the evening of the 17th where black male entrepreneurs will share their business experiences to inspire young people and a “Beat the Credit Crunch” networking event at the West Indian Cultural Centre on the 21st.

As a direct result of the current economic climate, Business and Local Taxation and Business Rates team have been taking steps to advise businesses, especially small businesses, on where they can go to take advice on paying their bills and promotion of small business rate relief.

The following actions have been arranged:

- A link to the Haringey website has been added to bills. This link informs of organisations that can help local businesses
- We are sending a mailshot to businesses in December, which advises on how to claim Small Business Rate Relief
- There will be advice printed in the Annual Billing booklet for 2009/2010
- All staff on the Business Rates team have been told to direct struggling businesses to the advice agencies that can help

### **Objective 2: Maximising incomes through improving the delivery of benefits and tax credits**

- We have been proactively working on various take up campaigns since 2006, all of which have contributed to a consistent increase in our benefits caseload over this period of time.
- In May 2006 our Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Caseload stood at 30,600. By October 2008 it had risen to 32,307 - a 5.57% increase in caseload.

- The increase also applies to Council Tax Benefit. In May 2006 our Council Tax Benefit Caseload was 29,679. By October 2008 it had risen to 30,997 - a 4.44% increase in caseload
- The Council recently held a 'Claim It' event over a week, in a trailer outside a library, which was intended to both raise awareness of the under-claiming of benefit and to provide basic benefits advice to customers. It aimed to help some individuals understand the specific benefits they may be entitled to.
- It was a big success as the council was able to provide advice to at least 500 customers. Of these, we estimate that 40% (200 customers) were advised that they may be entitled to extra benefits. Haringey is unable to provide specific figures for exactly how much additional money this will generate for customers, as not all advisors were able to calculate exactly how much may have been due.
- More 'Claim It' publicity will appear in the Council Magazine and on street sign banners.
- Advertise/market the use of web based benefits checker 'Entitled To'
- Benefits advice sessions to be piloted in primary schools beginning December 2008.
- Better coordination of benefits advice campaigns across the council – e.g. work with Neighbourhood Management to plan Access to Service Days.
- Providing local people in the most deprived areas of the borough with welfare benefit advice and debt management e.g. Reaping the Benefits campaign in eight different venues in Northumberland Park, Bruce Grove and Noel Park.
- Building upon the partnership work with the Citizens Advice Bureau to better co-ordinate benefits advice work across the borough

**Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children in poverty**

- To review the take-up of free school meals by Haringey families and qualifying criteria, to identify any potential areas where take-up maybe lower than entitlement and take active steps to improve publicity and to support families in making claims.
- The Vulnerable Children: a single multi-agency conversation and the single route of referral which both aim to identify the most vulnerable learners at the earliest stage of their education.
- National Healthy Schools Programme which aims to raise achievement as well as reduce health inequalities and promote social inclusion.

- The Targeted Pupil Initiative: a programme to support the attainment and achievement of particularly vulnerable and under-achieving groups to increase, in particular, their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The 14-19 strategy: an on-going strategy to reduce the number of young people who leave school with low or no nationally recognised qualifications, by implementing the diploma / vocational qualifications routes; developing a strong 'engagement programme' for those in years 9 – 11 who are at risk of becoming NEET; improved offer through school-based Connexions Personal Advisors (Pas) and targeted PAs for 'at risk' groups which has already led to a reduction in NEET numbers; specific specially designed accredited courses for teenage parents.
- Early Years: a range of initiatives located in Children's Centres and school-based early years settings in particular, to increase engagement of certain 'at risk' groups in the early years provision; specific language development programmes to improve the readiness for under achieving groups entering Key Stage 1.

**Objective 4: Ensuring Haringey children have decent and secure homes**

***Tackling Fuel Poverty***

- We actively promote the Warm Front scheme through which 754 households received £527,000 worth of heating and insulation improvements in 2007/2008
- We are about to introduce a new scheme which will operate throughout the North London sub Region to deliver millions of pounds worth of heating and insulation improvements to the most vulnerable households in the borough.
- Each year the Council produces 5000 Home Energy Efficiency Advice booklets
- Each year the Council distributes many thousands of low energy light bulbs. Its also gives thermometers to vulnerable residents.
- We intend to pilot a scheme whereby residents can rent a home energy meter to enable them to better understand their energy usage and reduce it as much as possible.

**Objective 5: Partners within the Haringey Strategic Partnership to take responsibility as corporate bodies for their employees in helping to reduce child poverty**

The Council has the following initiatives in place:

- Flexible working practices.
- Childcare vouchers.
- Free finance seminars (covering general awareness and specific topics).
- Staff Discount scheme (covering shopping, travel and leisure discounts).
- Interest free travel loans.
- In-house short courses covering a range of business and personal development.
- Assistance to help in studying for a relevant, recognised professional qualification.

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