



[No.]

Haringey Council

Agenda item:

CABINET

On 22nd January 2008

Report Title: Progress update on Connexions services from April 2008

Report of: The Director of Children and Young People's Service

Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Information

1. Purpose

To provide Cabinet with an update on progress with Connexions Services

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

2.1 This is an update report for Cabinet's information. The transfer of Connexions work to the Council on 1 April 2008 is an important change and one that offers the opportunity to strengthen the services provided to young people.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To note the progress made with the transition of Connexions Services and the actions to be completed

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4. Chief Finance Officer's Comments

- 4.1 The national funding formula allocations for the Connexions Grant for 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 have now been confirmed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Funding will be made available through the Area Based Grant and will be subject to a Council allocation process as this is not a ring fenced grant. The final level of funding available will be subject to the process through the Local Area Agreement of agreeing the final funding allocations for projects. It should be noted that this funding does not include £0.45m of PAYP funds which has now been included as part of the Mayor's Youth Offer. The budget will need to be monitored closely to ensure that spend is within the existing budget.

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 5.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report. Since this is a progress report for noting by the Cabinet, there are no specific legal comments. The legal framework is adequately set out in the body of the report.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 Documents used in the preparation of this report include:
- Youth Matters: Next Steps 2006
 - Targeted Youth Support Toolkit 2006
 - Draft National Quality Standards for Information, Advice and Guidance 2006
 - Targeted Youth Support – a guide 2007
 - Aiming high for young people a ten year strategy for positive activities July 2007
HM Treasury

7. Strategic Implications

- 7.1 Connexions services will transfer to the Local Authority with effect from April 2008. The delivery model was endorsed by CEMB in May 2007 and by Cabinet in June 2007. Since this time work has been ongoing to ensure that the transition goes smoothly with progress updates to CEMB in September 2007 and January 2008. The achievements to date are outlined in Section 12 Background/Update.
- 7.2 Connexions priorities will be set through national policy/standards and local priorities. Priorities will be agreed with strategic partners through the systems developed for Area Based Grants.
- 7.3 A key priority for the Council is addressing worklessness. Connexions contribution is essential both to the prevention of young people becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) and working with those who are already NEET and getting them re-engaged with education, employment or training as young people who are NEET have a high risk of future worklessness.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The budget for Connexions 2008 is set by a national funding formula the allocation

for 2008-9 is £2,476,065, 2009-10 is £2,593,898 and 2010-2011 is £2,588,100. The funding will be through Area Based Grants.

- 8.2 Connexions services must be delivered within the available grant funding and to achieve best value. Further work is being undertaken on the financial profile as the staffing structure and TUPE process continues.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The TUPE process for the transfer of staff is underpinned by a clear legislative process which must be followed. The Government has made two mandatory elements for all Connexions Services from April 2008 these are that the Connexions brand/logo continues, and that the CCIS (an electronic database which allows young people to be tracked across London) is maintained.

10. Personnel Implications

- 10.1 The Personnel processes are continuing with regard to the TUPE transfer of staff. Meetings continue to be held with Connexions and Prospects staff affected by the transfer. Both Connexions North London and Prospects have provided details of staff subject to TUPE. A new draft structure has been prepared and consultation with staff will continue. Job descriptions are being prepared and a job evaluation process is in place.

11. Pensions

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of Connexions North London to identify and fund any pension differences and scheme transfer costs with advice from their actuaries. Haringey's pension section will deal with potential transfers-in of pensionable service. This process is continuing.

12. Equalities Implications

- 12.1 A clear and transparent process will be followed for any vacant posts in the structure and staff affected by the transfer will be able to express an interest in such posts.

13. Consultation

- 13.1 A consultation process has been carried out with the Corporate Consultation Team to engage various stakeholders. For example during the summer term a consultation exercise took place with parents/carers to determine the areas that they would like to be further developed as part of future Connexions Services.

14. Background/Update

- 14.1 The following is an update of what has been achieved to date towards the Connexions transition in April 2008. The objective being to ensure that all young people have clear progression routes, are encouraged to set themselves high aspirations and to look forward in terms of their future life plan and chances. A key new development is to look at how to better engage with parents/carers to ensure that where possible young people are able to get more informed support from their families.

Universal Services for all Haringey young people aged 13-19 and up to 25 for those

with special educational needs

- 14.2 A draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) and is being discussed with headteachers and stakeholders. The agreement will include all young people who attend Haringey schools and are of compulsory school age 13-16 years. The intention is to have the SLA in place from April 2008 and effective processes established for transition. The Personal Advisers (PA) will be allocated and seconded to schools to be part of the school staff and managed through the wider information, advice and guidance team in schools. There will be a centrally employed officer part of whose role will be to ensure that the school based PA work operates smoothly.
- 14.3 Post 16 providers will be commissioned to provide for named Haringey young people in their establishment and PA allocated to schools with sixth forms, Conel and the sixth form centre. The PA will be seconded and managed by the provider to a contract specification. Draft specifications have been prepared and are being discussed with providers and stakeholders.
- 14.4 Drop-in centres will be available in Wood Green library and Marcus Garvey library in Tottenham. The Junction is already an established part of the youth provision in Wood Green library providing support for young people on an appointment and drop in basis. A similar centre is going to be developed within the Marcus Garvey library. This provides helpful synergy with existing Council services in the library and library/leisure centre in addition to access to relevant provision which is located nearby. The drop in centres will also provide services for young people who are educated other than at school. They will also provide services for Haringey young people who are educated outside Haringey for whom there is currently limited provision.
- 14.5 The three Youth Centres will also be a base to provide Connexions Services through outreach work with young people. The Youth Centres will provide a base in each of the Children's Network areas.
- 14.6 All of the universal services will have an element of NEET prevention built into their roles and processes within each establishment will be developed to identify young people who are most at risk of disengagement with education and training and in need of early additional PA support.
- 14.7 An annual careers fair is an important way for young people and their parents to access information from employers, training and education providers and will be a key date in the information, advice and guidance (IAG) diary. In 2007 a new model event was successfully trialled using Alexandra Palace as the venue. The experience from this event in November 2007 will be used to further develop provision.

Targeted Services for young people who need additional support because of their circumstances

- 14.8 Teams within the Council will be commissioned to provide services using allocated PA based in their teams. This is linked with NEET prevention and ensuring that Haringey young people who have additional needs are provided with information, advice and guidance to help them to make informed choices. The teams include

YOT, Leaving Care, Pregnant and Teenage Parents, Education Welfare, Housing. Draft specifications have been prepared and all providers have been made aware of the change.

- 14.9 Other providers like CAMHS will also be allocated PA support through a commissioned process which will be for named Haringey young people.
- 14.10 NEET prevention is an essential element of Connexions provision and directly relevant to the future economic well-being of our young people. Additional PA support will be allocated to schools that have a greater number of young people who become NEET. The PA will be allocated to the Inclusion team within schools to provide support for young people who are most at risk of dropping out of education or training. Young people most at risk of disengagement will be identified through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) so that PA support becomes part of the package of intervention to support those young people.
- 14.11 There is also a proposal to make contact with a PA a mandatory part of a young person's job seeking activity and where possible linked through the benefits system.

Intensive intervention for young people who are NEET

- 14.12 A central team of dedicated PA will provide intensive support for young people who are NEET. The intention being to drive the figures down. This will be a challenging part of the work as the borough NEET levels need to be brought in line with the expected trajectory to achieve the LAA targets by 2010. The NEET team will be led by a central co-ordinator and this will be a key area of work for the new service.

Quality Assurance

- 14.13 Ensuring high quality provision will be the responsibility of all the staff, especially the Operations Managers and IAG Partnership Manager. However the intention is to develop quality assurance measures as a separate aspect of provision located within the 14-19 team and independent of Connexions Services. This will enable the quality of all Connexions provision to be tested through the scrutiny of reports, audits of provision and sampling across all Connexions Services. This is seen as an 'independent' inspection element for the service.

ICT Strategy

- 14.14 An ICT strategy is being developed with the Corporate ICT team to ensure that all PA can access relevant IT and software packages wherever they are located. It will also ensure that the 14-19 developments are compatible with the Connexions developments and link with future IT plans as part of BSF. Good progress has been made with this aspect of service which will be supported by relevant training.

Client Caseload Information System (CCIS)

- 14.15 The CCIS system is used to track young people in education, employment or training across London. It is used as the basis for making mandatory returns to Central Government and for the provision of information, data analysis and making reports on the destination of young people in Haringey, as such it is a fundamental part of the NEET tracking and reporting system. Connexions North London is aiming to establish as an independent business and sees the provision of CCIS as a

core aspect of their future business. Discussions have been taking place with the four North London boroughs who have agreed to purchase CCIS from the current Connexions for one year 2008-09. A specification for this service is being developed.

Accommodation

14.16 The majority of PA will be based in schools, the drop-in centres and with providers. The centrally based Connexions staff will be based at the PDC. The three senior posts in the structure will have desk space at the PDC. The centrally based PAs will spend the majority of their time off site but will have hot desk space at the PDC.

Working hours

14.17 PA will be contracted to work a range of different hours. This will be to best meet the needs of young people the intention is to provide extended hours through the drop-in centres, which will include weekends and evenings. More flexible access to PA will be essential for young people who go to school out of borough. Special arrangements will be made for PA cover during the school holidays particularly in the summer time, which is one of the busiest periods and a critical time for transition as young people get their results from examinations and make choices as to future courses and destinations.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Manager

14.18 In order to ensure that the work of the Connexions Services can be driven forward in a timely manner an IAG Partnership Manager post has been created in advance of April 2008 to start to lead the Connexions transition and secure service delivery post April 2008. This post will be the lead post for Connexions Services in Haringey.

Training and development

14.19 The provision of NVQ programmes is an essential qualification for Connexions PA's. The vast majority are already trained to NVQ Level 4 in careers guidance. In addition those PA's working with young people who have special needs or young people post 16 will be expected to have attended relevant training/development and where possible to have achieved additional relevant qualifications including additional NVQ modules. Discussions have taken place with the Council's OD&L team who currently provide a range of NVQ programmes and they are confident that they could oversee the relevant NVQ awards. Staff already enrolled on an NVQ will continue with their existing provider until the course is concluded. A range of training is routinely provided and offered to Connexions staff this provision will continue as part of the Council offer.

Tender Process for Other Services

14.20 An advert was placed in The Guardian in August for expressions of interest from organisations to develop three further areas of Connexions provision: careers information; marketing material; and to develop employer engagement post 19 and up to 25 for those with special needs. Expressions of interest have been received and the tender process is underway.

14.21 The intention from this exercise is to determine what partnerships may be possible

between the Council, the voluntary sector and private businesses. The whole area of access and the provision of relevant careers information is an important strand as young people and their families need easy access to impartial information and advice to aid their decision making as well as PA support. A key strand of 14-19 developments is the sharing of resources and courses across Haringey providers. This development means that young people must be made aware of all their options and providers for study post 14, 16 and 18. The intention is to develop electronic access as well as hard copy information. The marketing of the services provided by Connexions will be critical to the future success of the provision for young people and during the transition phase an important aspect of communicating with young people, their parents/carers, schools, providers, teachers and other stakeholders.

- 14.22 The whole area of employer engagement is one which we are seeking to improve as part of the development of Connexions. Work has already started linked with the work of the Regeneration Manager Employment and Skills in the Council, to develop a strategy for improved engagement with employers for pre 19 and up to 25 for those with special needs. This will develop alongside the strategy for adult employment. The intention from the procurement exercise is to see what partnership arrangements might be possible to better engage with employers and to improve links with education, training and employment. This will be a critical aspect of the 14-19 diplomas which are linked with particular occupational areas and in particular Haringey's employer engagement across the diploma specialisms.

Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

- 14.23 The provision of high quality diversionary activities for young people during the holidays was an aspect of Connexions provision and approximately £0.45 million of the Connexions annual grant was allocated for PAYP activities. The PAYP funding has now been allocated by Central Government to the Mayor's Youth Offer and we now have £1.6 million to spend over two years on positive activities for young people. The funding is used for the delivery of PAYP activities during school holiday periods. As well as offering activities to all young people the underlying intention is to focus on the engagement and re-engagement of young people who are most at risk of becoming NEET and those young people most at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Access to PA's will be an integral aspect of the PAYP provision with each young person being encouraged to make longer term positive plans for their future. It is intended to more closely link PAYP with other extended school activities to provide greater synergy.

15. Conclusion

The transition process for Connexions from April 2008 is well underway as can be seen from the progress made to date. The next three months of preparation will be pivotal in ensuring that the service is well placed for a smooth transition and full operation from April 2008.