

10 December 2013		ITEM: 8
Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Proposals for Spending on NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and Education Commission Recommendations		
Report of: Janet Clark, Strategic Lead Operational Resources and Libraries Unit		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Accountable Head of Service: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
This report is: Public		
Purpose of Report: To provide members with an update on the growth agreed for Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and School Improvement.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the progress made to date and on the plans that are in place for the use of the growth funds agreed by Cabinet for Supporting more young people into employment, education and training and further accelerating progress in educational attainment. These priorities are set out in more detail in the Children and Young People's plan (2013-2017) and in the Community strategy.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 As part of the budget setting process in 2012 Cabinet agreed Reserve provisions of £300,000 for NEET reduction and £1m to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Education Commission. These would be available from the financial year 2013/14 for three years. The proposals had cross party support from the Children's overview and scrutiny committee and supported the council's priority of making Thurrock a great place for learning.

2.2 NEET Reduction £300,000.

2.2.1 The work to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is showing good outcomes with an increase in the number of young people who are accessing some form of provision. A successful pilot project to target specific groups of young people who have traditionally found it harder to get into employment and training or participate in education was developed in 2012/2013. The pilot has now been evaluated and has been shown to be a successful route to greater opportunity for our most vulnerable young people. The pilot will now be expanded to eradicate the significant inequality between young people who are at a high risk of being NEET and others, including young people who are known to the Youth Offending Services, Troubled Families Team, Pupil Referral Unit or who are care leavers.

2.2.2 It is proposed that this is now expanded to cover the most vulnerable young people to reduce the number becoming NEET. This proposal has two elements:

- The expansion of the Diversity in Apprenticeships programme to include all the groups listed above, and;
- The development of a programme to target those at risk of becoming NEET whilst they are still in years 10 and 11 at school to ensure they have excellent information, advice and guidance and opportunities to continue into education, training or employment with training including apprenticeships.

The NEET reduction team in the council have had considerable success in improving the take up of opportunities for young people who were previously NEET and the number of young people in this category has fallen significantly over the last three years to its lowest level recorded.

2.2.3 Breakdown of planned expenditure to cover the planned activities and programmes is as follows:

2013 - 14 £40,000

2014 - 15 £130,000

2015 - 16 £130,000

2.2.4 This will significantly reduce the gap in the number of young people from targeted groups who are NEET compared to other young people and progress will be measured through the monthly NEET monitoring processes.

2.3 Funding of £1m to support the recommendations of the Education Commission.

2.3.1 The £1m growth has been allocated to carry out the actions following on from the work carried out through the Education Commission. This will seed fund activity to accelerate educational attainment in the borough.

2.3.2 The Education Commission report made the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** Build a compelling case for change and a powerful vision for education across the community in Thurrock that increases pride in what is being achieved and ambition for achieving even more
- **Recommendation 2:** Redefine the role of the local authority, agree with partners what change means in practice and make sure services are provided efficiently
- **Recommendation 3:** Grow the role of schools themselves as the leaders in supporting other schools to improve
- **Recommendation 4:** Recruit and retain the best teachers and leaders by establishing greater pride in Thurrock
- **Recommendation 5:** Use governors as key agents of support for improvement both within their own schools and across the school system in Thurrock
- **Recommendation 6:** Recognise and celebrate education and achievements in Thurrock

2.4 To support the strengthening partnership among schools and with the local authority, it is proposed to establish a board known as the Thurrock Education Alliance. This builds on work underway to support schools improving schools. This approach is based on national research which suggests that schools are uniquely well placed to support other schools in developing excellent practice. The board would consist of representatives from schools and other education partners as well as the Council.

2.5. Schools and their governing bodies and other stakeholders have been sent copies of the Education Commission report and have been asked to make any response by the end of December 2013. An initial action plan will be drawn up by mid January. At the same time a shadow Education Alliance board is being set up to take forward the recommendations and action plan and oversee the setting up of the substantive board from April 2013. Head teachers associations have been asked to agree representation on the shadow board pending a more detailed consideration of the makeup of the substantive board to reflect the balance of different types of school. The board will also have local authority officers including the Director of Children's services. The portfolio holder for Education will be invited to chair the board.

2.6 Spending priorities are currently being drafted for the consideration of the shadow board to include:

- Delivering a cultural entitlement for Thurrock's children and young people

- Activities and support materials to support teacher and Headteacher recruitment including the use of Schools Direct, using good and outstanding local schools to train high quality teachers
- Further governor development opportunities
- Commissioning the Teaching schools and their partners to deliver high quality training in line with the priorities outlined in the Education Commission report.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

3.1 None

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Members are asked to comment on the priorities identified and endorse the proposal for the shadow Education Alliance to oversee the spending priorities for the 1m allocation over three years.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 These proposals have been discussed with and endorsed by members of the Children's Partnership board in November 2013.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

6.1. The spending priorities outlined fully support the borough's community strategy and in particular creating a great place of learning and opportunity.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652466**
kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk

Reserves for this proposed expenditure have been made from Council's General Fund. Any unspent amounts would be returned to Council's non specific reserves.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
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lucinda.bell@BDTLegal.org.uk

This report does not require any decision to be made, rather, that its contents are noted. The Authority is under a range of duties in regards to NEETS, and a duty to have regard to the Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young

People in Education, Employment or Training, produced by the Department for Education in March 2013.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

The actions outlined above will serve to reduce inequalities between groups in Thurrock. Improving educational attainment will seek to reduce in particular the underperformance of boys in Thurrock, pupils with special needs and any other groups where performance shows slower than expected progress. The activities proposed will serve to close the gap in attainment and opportunity for those with protected characteristics.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None.

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Not applicable.

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