

**WORKLESSNESS AND SKILLS
SPECIALIST SCRUTINY PANEL
2008/9**

**Final report and
Cabinet response
June 2009**



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PANEL FOREWORD



Councillor Rajinder Mann
Chairman, Worklessness and Skills Specialist Scrutiny Panel

Ealing has a worklessness rate comparable to other West London boroughs however its pockets of deprivation and large population size combine to mean that this borough has the largest number of workless people living in West London. Nearly 20% of all unemployed people in West London live in Ealing (10,000) and 22% of all workless people in West London live in Ealing borough (54,000). Ealing has the third highest rate of overall worklessness in West London at 33%. That equates to over 64,000 Ealing residents out of work.

Despite being seen as a prosperous outer West London borough, Ealing has for many years been faced with this stubborn core of its population who have remained workless and this issue has not been given the resourcing it has needed. The Panel's brief, therefore, identified that there existed a clear need for the Council to develop a comprehensive worklessness and skills strategy. I am delighted to say that this Panel's work has been complementary to, and iterative of, the developmental work of the Economic Regeneration Team (ERT). By providing the Panel with comprehensive briefings and presentations, the ERT gave us a firm steer on the key issues we needed to explore. This, in turn, has influenced the conclusions and recommendations arrived at in this report.

As a country, we are experiencing a recession, the length and depth of which is indeterminate. The duration of how long we continue to experience negative economic growth is also uncertain but what we know for sure is that figures for rising unemployment generally lag behind the headline statistics of an improving economic outlook and that unemployment will continue to rise long after any green shoots of recovery are identified. And in these circumstances, it is the longer-term unemployed who will find it less likely to find a job where a shrinking job market is flooded with self-motivated, skilled workers aiming to get back into work. Needless to say, the rise in unemployment will affect most badly those parts of the country and wards of deprivation in Ealing where barriers to employment are most acute (which are explored in this report), thus undoing a lot of progress that has been achieved since the last recession.

Our Panel gave its support to the Council playing a strategic, active employer role and Members advocated that the Council should engage in and promote partnerships and seek to deliver improved resourcing. Collectively, we broadly endorsed the emerging worklessness and skills strategy and wholeheartedly recommend that the Council take the steps necessary to play a leading role in the borough-wide employment and skills

agenda; that residents in Ealing who are workless can be certain that when they contact the Council for whatever reason, they can be sure to be given the correct advice, information and guidance about the routes and options available to them to order to secure training, skills and sustainable employment.

This report has produced 47 recommendations which, taken together, aim to provide the foundations for a Council forward work programme for tackling worklessness and skills.

I would like to thank the cross-party Panel members and officers for their hard work and particularly to our invited partners, co-opted members and those people – both workless and working – who gave us the benefit of their collective time, wisdom and experience.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the Worklessness and Skills Specialist Scrutiny Panel on 24 April 2008 and Panel Members were appointed by Council on 14 May 2008. The Panel held its first meeting on 8th July 2008.

The work of the Panel is assisting the Council in meeting the commitments of the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan including its strategic goals of *“making Ealing a better place to live”*.

The Panel has comprised of nine Councillors and four non-voting advisory members. It had five scheduled meetings at which officers from partner organisations, experts and service officers have given their views on the main worklessness and skills issues and provided the necessary evidence for the Panel to consider. The Panel has also undertaken a total of six internal and external [to the borough] visits.

Methodology

The Panel has received reports, presentations and examples of best practice. It has undertaken many research visits – to Southwark Council, to Northolt Children’s Centre, to Action Acton and to the Park Royal Partnership. It has also undertaken evidence gathering sessions that have been open to the public and has spoken to many workless people, lone parents and those not in work but in training, further education and skills acquisition.

Acknowledging Diversity

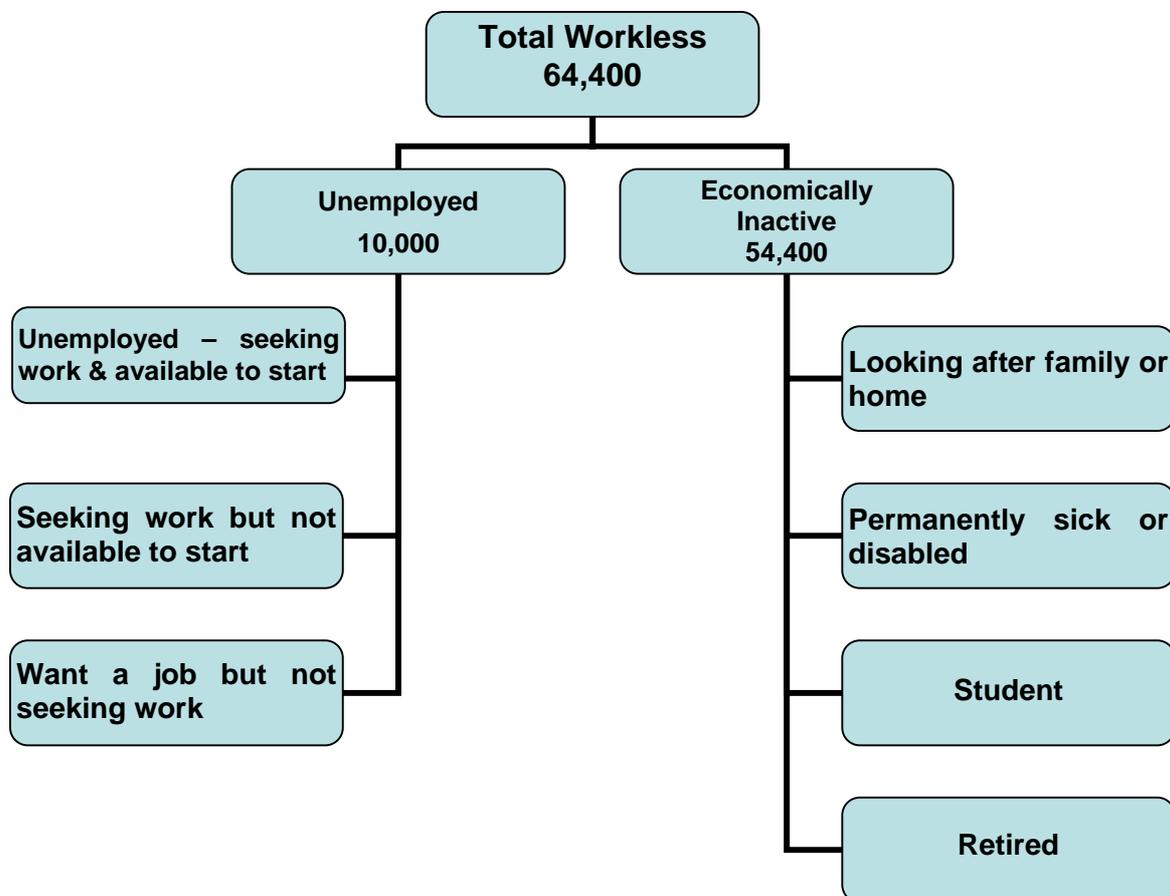
Worklessness and skills deficits afflict people from all ethnic groups, genders, faiths, religions, sexualities, ages and abilities. In this sense, worklessness is indiscriminate. That said, the scourge of worklessness in Ealing is more likely to affect sections of the community who are classified as belonging to an ethnic minority or whose first language is not English. Lone parents, too, also face often complex and multi-faceted barriers to work and this, in turn, has an interrelationship with the increasingly high profile issue of child poverty. All of the above issues are discussed at length in the main body of this report.

What is 'worklessness'?

Worklessness, as accepted by the Panel, is the **sum of economic inactivity and unemployment**. A person who is economically inactive may be so for various reasons: they are a student, are looking after the home and/or family, are permanently sick or disabled, or they are retired. Unemployed people are those able to work but are presently out of work. They may be seeking work but unable to start, or due to circumstance want to work but not seeking work (e.g. due to caring commitments).

What is the situation in Ealing?

There are 64,400 workless people in Ealing. This represents 21.09% of the borough's total population of 305,300 people.



Underpinning these figures are a host of often interrelated and overlapping factors that result in people being workless, and a host of 'barriers' that prevent people from entering the labour market. These barriers include: a lack of appropriate skills; disability; caring commitments; illness; language ability; financial cost of working versus

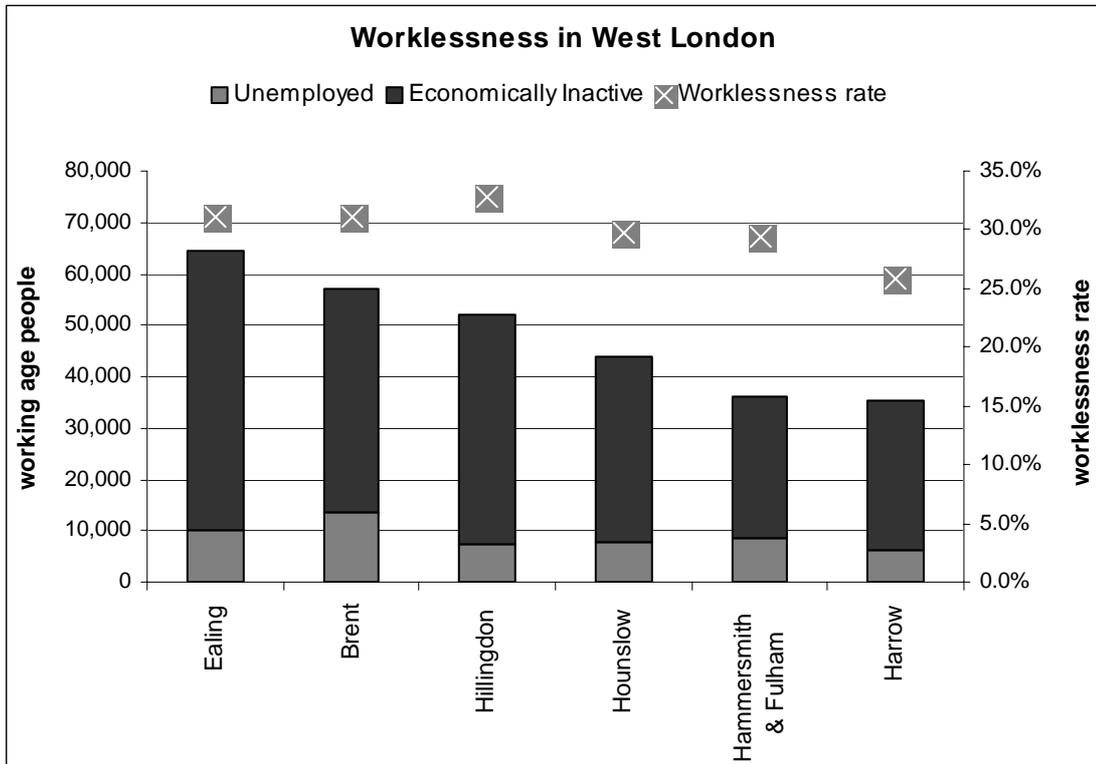
loss of benefits; limited local employment opportunities or personal issues (self-confidence, communication skills etc).

This list is not exhaustive, and it is important to note that an individual may face a number of these challenges.

Perceptions of Ealing, supported by much of the economic data, are of a largely affluent borough with high employment levels and skills rates. However, this masks the considerable scale of local worklessness.

- Ealing has a worklessness rate comparable to other West London boroughs. However, its pockets of deprivation and large population size combine to mean that this borough has the largest number of workless people living in West London.
- Nearly 20% of all unemployed people in West London live in Ealing (10,000).
- 22% of all workless people in West London live in Ealing borough (54,000).
- Ealing has the third highest rate of overall worklessness in West London at 33%. That equates to over **64,000** Ealing residents out of work.
- 7% of economically active people in Ealing borough are unemployed and a further 26% of working age people are economically inactive.
- Ealing has comparable levels of unemployment and economic inactivity to boroughs such as Brent, yet the levels of investment in direct provision and development of an infrastructure to address the problem is not comparable.

The following bar chart shows the numbers of residents who are employed, unemployed and economically inactive across West London boroughs. On the same chart are boxes showing the percentage of working age people in each borough who are workless (either unemployed or economically inactive).



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2006 to 2007)

Numbers Workless in West London

	Unemployed	Economically Inactive	Worklessness
Ealing	10,000	54,400	64,400 (32.7%)
Brent	13,600	43,400	57,000 (33.4%)
Hillingdon	7,500	44,600	52,100 (34.6%)
Hounslow	7,600	36,400	44,000 (31.6%)
Hammersmith & Fulham	8,500	27,500	36,000 (31.5%)
Harrow	6,200	29,100	35,300 (27.0%)
West London	53,400	235,500	288,900 (32.0%)
London	266,100	1,249,800	1,515,900 (31.9%)
England	1,339,500	6,728,900	8,068,400 (26.8%)

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2006 to 2007)

Worklessness and benefit claimants¹

On the claimant count measure Ealing also demonstrates significant numbers of claimants in comparison to other areas. Between August 06 and May 07 were typically around 29,000 claimants. More than 90% of claimants fall into one of the following categories:

¹ Benefits administrative data is more robust than survey results from the Annual Population Survey which has a small sample size (a few hundred in Ealing borough)

- on incapacity benefits (12,800)
- lone parents (7,700)
- job seekers (5,800)

Sub-regional comparisons show that Ealing has the second highest number of total claimants in West London.

- Ealing has the highest volume of sick and disabled claimants in West London: the largest number on incapacity benefit, the largest number on disability benefit, and correspondingly, the largest number receiving carers allowance. Ealing also has the second highest volume of lone parents in West London.
- Ealing also has the highest number of people who have been claiming benefits more than 5 years. And, the second highest number of under 25 year olds on benefits.

Numbers of benefit claimant in west London by type

	Ealing	Brent	Hounslow	Hillingdon	Hammersmith and Fulham	Harrow
Any benefit	28,928	30,090	19,810	19,640	17,875	15,703
Job seeker	5,833	6,915	3,258	3,258	3,653	2,758
Incapacity benefits	12,758	12,613	8,715	8,193	8,103	6,748
Lone parent	7,665	7,860	5,485	5,480	4,950	3,953
Carer	1,448	1,355	1,070	1,190	668	1,070
Others on income related benefit	1,128	1,300	798	773	758	603
Disabled	1,298	1,165	1,108	1,120	630	1,028
Bereaved	913	813	788	838	403	760
Claimant for more than 5 years	12,118	11,920	8,358	8,133	7,653	6,475
Under 25 years old	3,475	3,750	2,615	2,968	2,140	1,955

Source: Claimant Count, DWP (Average of 4 quarter snapshots August 06 to May 07)

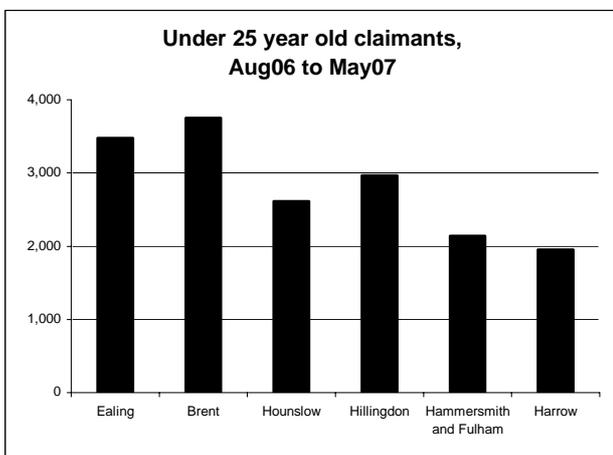
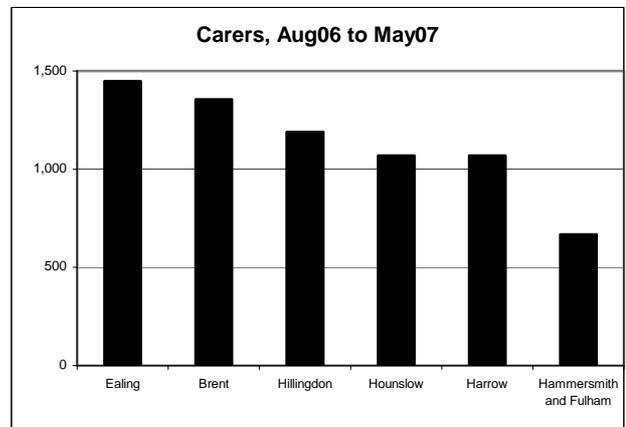
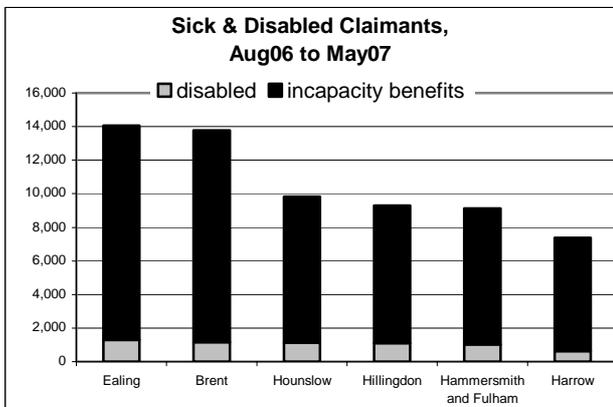
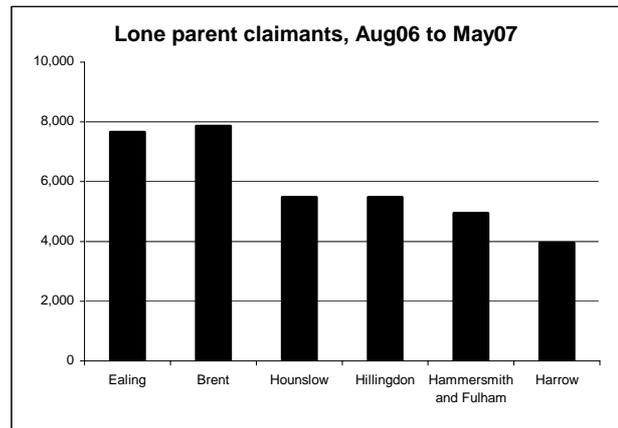
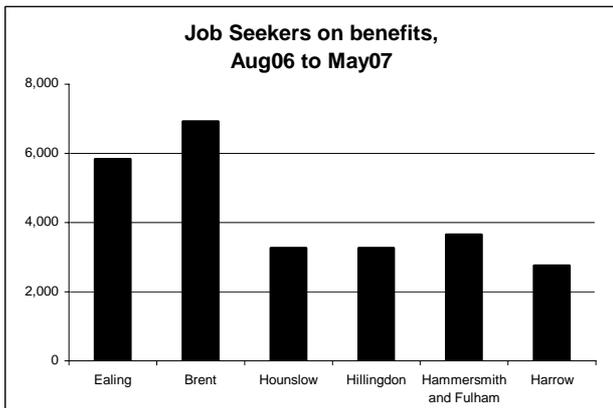
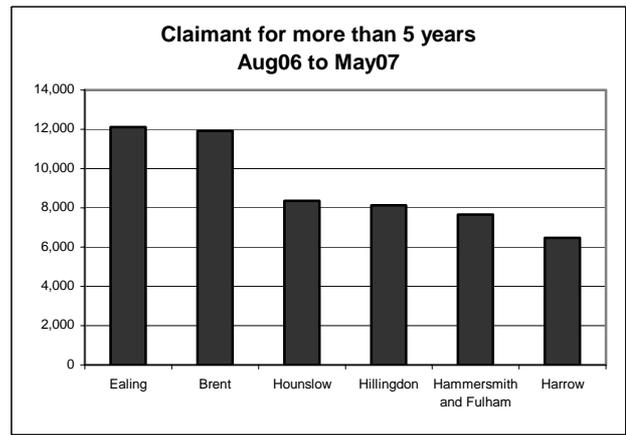
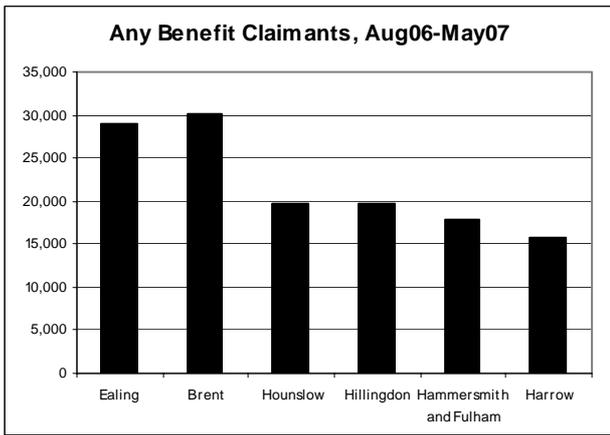
Ealing has significant issues with persistently high levels of economic inactivity and unemployment that continue to impact on a wide range of issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour, environment and housing, health and well-being and child poverty.

Unemployment and economic inactivity is particularly concentrated on areas in Southall, Northolt and Acton (see table below).

Greatest number of Claimants in Ealing wards		
Jobseekers Allowance	Incapacity benefit	Lone Parents
Southall Green	South Acton	Northolt West End
Southall Broadway	Southall Broadway	Northolt Mandeville
East Acton	Northolt West End	South Acton

South Acton	Southall Green	East Acton
Northolt West End	Dormers Wells	Greenford Broadway
Dormers Wells	East Acton	Cleveland

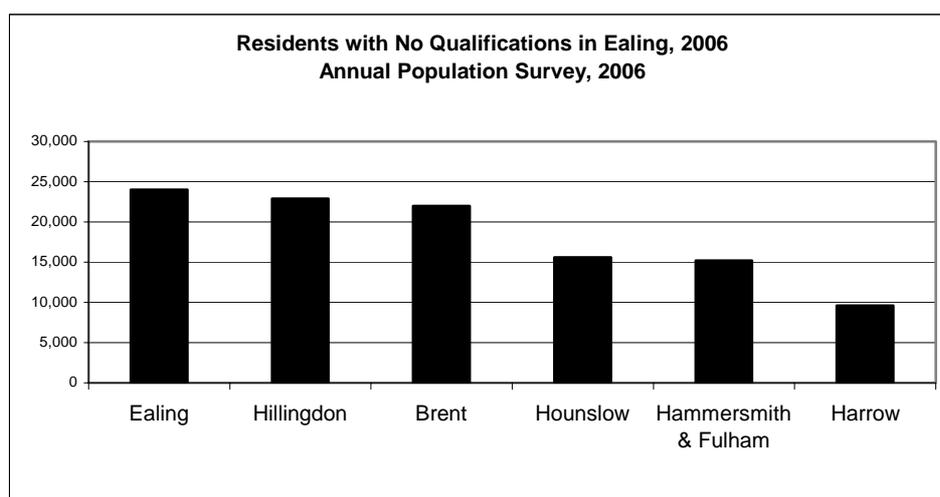
Source: Claimant Count, DWP (Average of 4 quarter snapshots Aug 06 to May 07)



Source: Claimant Count, DWP
(Average of 4-quarter snapshots August 06 to May 07)

The inter-relationship between skills and worklessness

Skills – and particularly the lack of skills appropriate to the local labour market – are one of the key factors leading to worklessness. Although the 21.9% of residents in Ealing with no qualifications is close to the figure across both West London and the capital as a whole, Ealing has a much larger *volume* of residents without qualifications than other West London borough at 24,000 – nearly as many as Harrow and Hammersmith & Fulham combined.



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS 2006

In addition, there are notable differences in achievement between the Borough's wards.

The 2001 census tells us that in thirteen Ealing wards 20% or more of residents have no qualifications. In six of these wards more than 30% of residents have no qualifications. These are Northolt West End, Southall Broadway, Southall Green, Greenford Broadway, Dormers Wells and Northolt Mandeville.

		Working Age People	No qualifications
	Ealing Borough	224,780	21.9%
1.	Northolt West End	9,339	34.2%
2.	Southall Broadway	9,515	31.7%
3.	Southall Green	9,286	31.8%
4.	Greenford Broadway	9,626	30.5%
5.	Dormers Wells	9,448	30.7%
6.	Northolt Mandeville	9,111	30.2%
7.	Lady Margaret	9,366	28.3%
8.	East Acton	10,855	23.3%
9.	Norwood Green	8,909	27.8%
10.	Perivale	10,040	23.4%
11.	Hobbayne	9,537	24.4%
12.	Greenford Green	9,384	23.9%
13.	North Greenford	9,607	23.2%

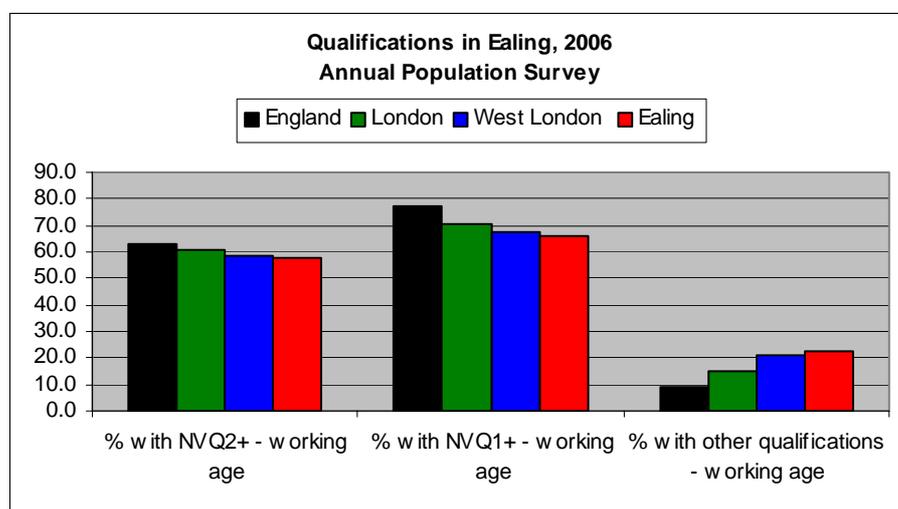
14.	South Acton	10,096	19.6%
15.	Acton Central	10,210	18.7%
16.	Elthorne	9,559	19.6%
17.	Cleveland	10,277	16.1%
18.	Ealing Common	10,243	14.5%
19.	Hanger Hill	10,722	12.0%
20.	Southfield	9,987	12.5%
21.	Northfield	9,744	12.7%
22.	Walpole	9,872	12.0%
23.	Ealing Broadway	10,047	8.5%

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

Worklessness and qualifications

Ealing also has lower than average rates for achievement at Levels 1 and 2, and higher proportions with 'other qualifications'. Levels 1 and 2 are the basic level of qualifications sought by many employers – NVQ Level 1 is the equivalent of one GCSE A* to G, Level 2 is the equivalent of one GCSE A* to C.

- Over a third (34%) of Ealing residents do not have any qualifications.
- More than two-fifths (42%) of Ealing residents do not have NVQ level 2. This is a greater proportion than West London (41%), London (39%) and England (37%).



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics 2006

Conclusions are that Ealing has lower than average proportions of residents with achievement at Levels 1 and 2, higher proportions of residents with 'other' qualifications and higher numbers of residents with no qualifications than any other borough in West London.

An interesting fixture of the skills levels in Ealing is the high proportion of residents with 'other qualifications' - over a fifth (22%). This is higher than the West London rate of 20% and the London rate of 15%. Residents with 'other qualifications' are likely to have difficulty in getting their qualifications recognised by employers. The data available does not reveal the detail of these other qualifications, but potentially there are a large number of skilled individuals unable to enter the labour market despite the fact they may have the appropriate skills for a post.

This poor level of education is not a reflection of achievement in Ealing schools: Ealing pupils continue to do better than average. In 2007, 50% of pupils in Ealing high schools achieved 5A*-C grades including English and Maths in GCSE or equivalent qualifications (provisionally). This is 3% points above the national average of 47% and has improved by 11% points in 3 years, which is nearly three times the national rate of improvement. (*Source: Schools Service, Ealing Council 2007*).

Worklessness and English as a Second Language (ESOL)

In addition, due to high proportions of black and minority ethnic (BAME) residents the availability, quality and accessibility of ESOL and Skills for Life provision is of great importance not just in terms of its impact on worklessness but also, more broadly, for integration and community cohesion.

Worklessness, employment and ethnicity

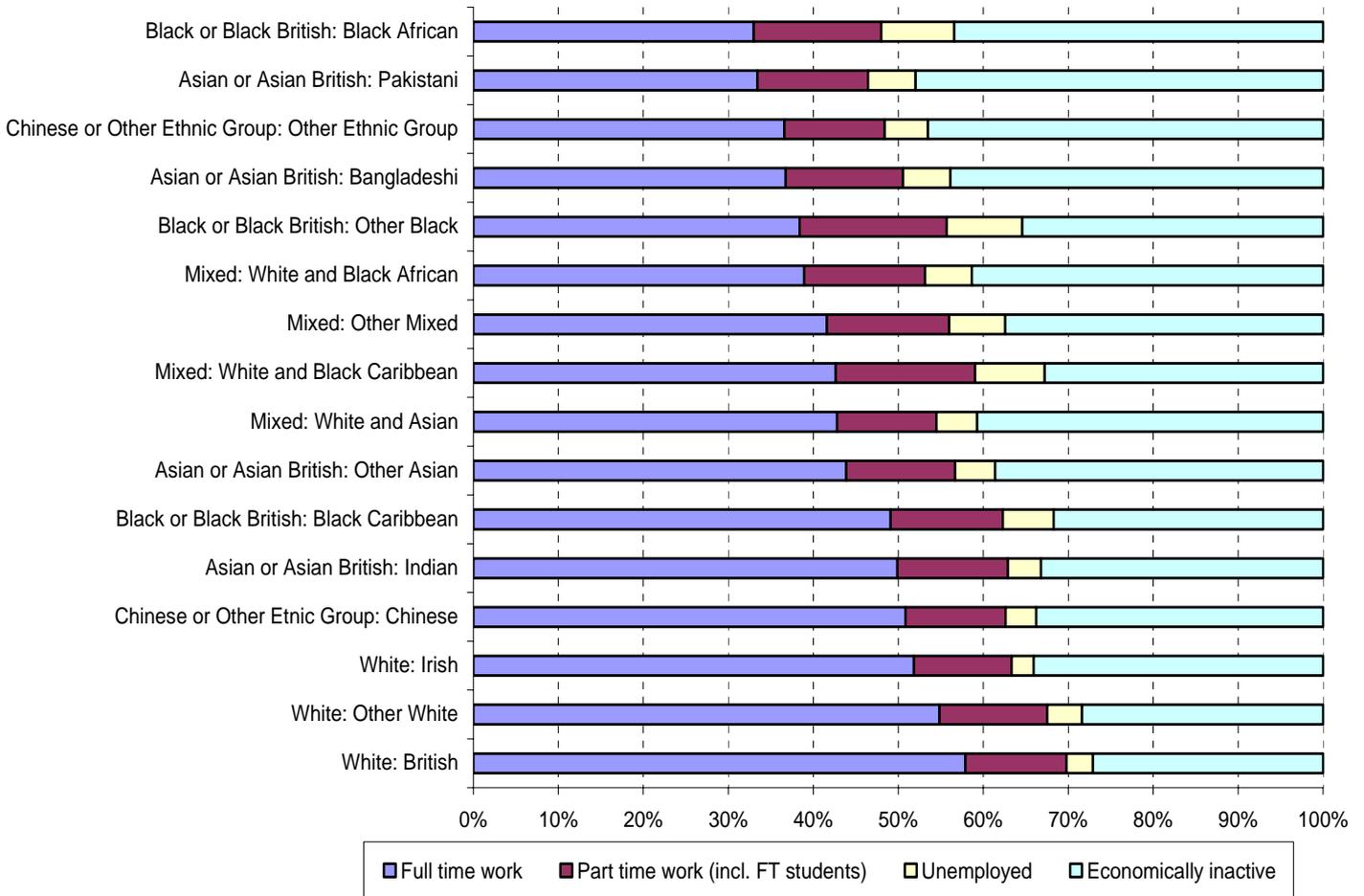
Analysis of the 2001 census shows that levels of economic activity amongst working age people (16 to 74 year olds) vary a lot between ethnic groups.

Those most likely to be economically inactive in Ealing, 2001, are Pakistani (47.9%), Bangladeshi (43.9%) and Black African (43.4%) groups. Ethnic groups least likely to be economically inactive are White British (27.1%), White Other (28.4%) and Black Other (31.7%).

Unemployment varies by nearly 6% points for different ethnic groups. Black Other (8.9%) and Black African (8.6%) ethnic groups are the most likely to be unemployed, whilst White Irish have the lowest rate of unemployment in Ealing at 2.6%. White British unemployment is at 3.1% and Indian at 3.9%.

White British have the highest rate of employment at 69.8%, closely followed by White Other and White Irish. Indian ethnic groups have an employment rate of 62.9%. The lowest rates of employment are amongst Pakistani (46.4%), Black African (48%) and Bangladeshi (50.6%) ethnic groups. Where these groups are in paid employment, they generally work fewer hours than other ethnicities.

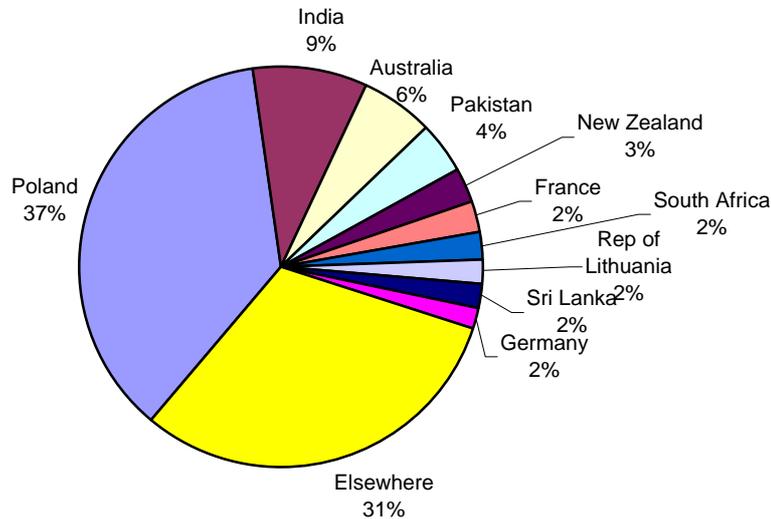
Economic Activity by Ethnicity in Ealing



Worklessness, employment and migration

Ealing has one of the highest numbers of migrants in London (alongside Brent and Newham). 14,300 migrants applied for a national insurance number in the last financial. The largest proportions of migrants to Ealing applying in last financial year were from Poland (240) and India (1,310), followed by Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand and France.

Top 10 countries of birth of non-UK national national insurance number registrants



Source: National Insurance Registrations, Department for Work and Pensions, 2007

A8 migrants (those from countries that joined the European Union since 1994) do not need a national insurance number to work. Instead, their employer can apply for a work permit on their behalf. Workers Registration scheme (WRS) data is based on the employer's address rather than the employee's place of residence. WRS data records Ealing as having the 3rd highest number of registrants (1,850 last financial year) in London after Westminster and Camden. Ealing is more probably home of the worker than either of these other two employment centres.

Ealing receives migrants from a range of countries and chances of employment are affected by the migrant's country of origin. For example, non-white migrants are much less likely to be in employment than white migrants. Perhaps surprisingly given Ealing's history of migration, the gap between the employment rate of non-white not UK nationals and white UK nationals is considerably greater in Ealing than in other areas.

The employment rate of White UK nationals in Ealing is around 81% in comparison with just 56% for Non-White non-UK nationals. This gap of 25 percentage points exceeds that of all Ealing's benchmark areas.

Employment rate of White UK nationals and Non-white not UK nationals in Ealing and comparative areas

	White UK national	%	Non white not UK national	%	Gap
England	19,733,300	76.2	720,800	57.6	18.6
London	1,986,400	74.6	317,300	54.1	20.5
West London	323,400	76.0	77,800	58.2	17.8
Ealing	66,400	81.0	21,200	56.0	25.0
Brent	30,300	70.0	15,500	54.5	15.5
Hounslow	53,800	77.0	12,100	70.8	6.2
Harrow	37,200	77.4	11,600	60.8	16.6
Hillingdon	81,300	74.9	10,000	58.6	16.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	54,400	73.5	7,300	52.4	21.1

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2006

At the local level confidence intervals are very high (over +/-10%). However, data is similar for previous years, and seems to point in the same direction with results being similar for Brent with a similar ethnic make-up to Ealing.

Comparison of Non-white employment rates with Non-UK national employment rates at a London and national level reveal that people who are not white are more likely to be out of work than people who are not UK nationals.

National policy context

Welfare and Skills Reform

The employment, skills and welfare agendas have undergone significant transformation in recent years under the twin themes of welfare reform and skills reform. Changes are set to continue over the coming years as the government seeks to reduce the number of claimants overall (and in particular in their key target groups of lone parents and the long-term sick) whilst ‘up skilling’ the population to ensure future economic growth and competitiveness.

There are a number of drivers behind the government’s reforms, including:

- The concern that despite rising general prosperity this is not being enjoyed by all sections of society;
- The ambition to achieve an employment rate of 80%;
- The need to ensure a world class skills base in the UK that can meet the challenge from increasing global competition and the rise of developing states;
- The rise in the number of long-term sick and Incapacity Benefit claimants, in contrast to the falling levels of unemployed, and the fear of a ‘dependency culture’;
- The fiscal pressures arising from large volumes of benefit claimants;
- A belief that with the provision of benefits an obligation arises on the part of the recipient to seek appropriate employment or training;

- The drive for greater choice in the provision of public services so that individuals can receive the services best suited to their needs;
- The view that challenges such as child poverty are best addressed by getting recipients of benefit into sustained employment and training.

These drivers have directed the welfare reforms of both the current government and its predecessor prior to 1997, but the pace of change has risen over the past decade with, amongst other developments, the formation of Jobcentre Plus in 2002. The agency was formed when the Employment Service, which operated Jobcentres and existed alongside separate Social Security benefits offices, merged with the Benefits Agency.

In terms of skills, the early part of the decade also saw major structural reform with the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council to replace the Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council for England.

In spite of these significant developments the government is still committed to further widespread changes to the policies and structures underpinning welfare, employment and skills.

Welfare

In 2007 the government set out in the joint DIUS/DWP publication '*Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work*' the start of a new phase of reform in which welfare moved on from simply placing people in jobs to ensuring that the UK workforce were appropriately skilled and educated to benefit future economic prosperity. It described welfare policies underpinned by five core principles:

- A strong framework of rights and responsibilities;
- A personalised, responsive and more effective approach;
- Not just jobs, but jobs that pay and offer retention and progression;
- Partnership – the private, public and third sectors working together;
- Targeting areas of high worklessness by devolving and empowering communities.

These principles were taken forward in the government's welfare reform White Paper of 2008 and a Bill will follow this year. Ministers have already given an indication of the main elements of these reforms:

- Measures to modernise and simplify the benefit system, ensuring that support provides help at the time and in the manner most needed;
- Proposals to better enable people to take advantage of offers to them and where appropriate, to undertake training that is considered essential to finding employment;
- A range of measures which strengthen the benefit contract between the individual and society – the individual's right to support in exchange for clear personal responsibility for improving their own circumstances.

One proposal trailed includes the option for benefit claimants to choose between going to either a public, private or voluntary-run job centre in their area. Job centres could also have more flexibility with budgets in helping claimants, whilst another likely proposal would be for sub-regions to pool budgets to develop bespoke schemes.

The Government sees skills as essential both in moving people off welfare into work as well as securing wider benefits to the UK economy and productivity levels.

The Leitch Review was commissioned in 2004 to consider the UK's long-term skills needs and reported in 2006. It identified:

- Disjointed skills and employment services
- Ineffective employer voice
- Supply-driven
- Lack of investment
- 'Work first' incentives i.e. incentivising work for benefit claimants

The Government has announced its response to Leitch in a number of policy statements since, including the *'Raising Expectations'* considering post-16 education and training. The responses include:

- A new Adult Advancement Careers Service that will carry out 'Skills Health Checks' for benefit claimants, covering literacy, numeracy, language and broader skills needs;
- Local Employment and Skills Boards to set the strategic direction for delivery (see LSEB above);
- The Learning and Skills Council, which currently funds all adult skills, will be disbanded by 2010 and will be replaced with two agencies: the UK Commission for Skills and Employment and a new body called the Skills Funding Agency;
- Funding for adult skills will increasingly be routed through employers (through Train to Gain) and individuals (through skills accounts);
- These Skills Accounts will enable unemployed individuals to access training, thereby providing greater choice and personalised services;
- Reform of vocational qualifications;
- National Skills Academies;
- Skills Pledges.

More recently, in *'Work Skills'*, the government has set out how these skills accounts will be accessed to fund vocational courses. Claimants of Jobseekers Allowance who have gaps in their skills will now have to attend training to help them find a job. The government also intends to consult on making it compulsory for lone parents and those on Incapacity Benefit and, from October, Employment Support Allowance (see *Jobcentre Plus report for a full description of ESA*) to attend skills training.

At the Government level, responsibility for skills provision will be thus:

- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will be responsible for education, children and youth issues affecting people up to the age of 19
- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will be responsible for adult learning, further and higher education, skills, science and innovation
- Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) will be responsible for promoting productivity, enterprise, competition and trade

London policy context

London Development Agency

The Mayor's primary agency for development and regeneration in London, the LDA currently runs the Area Programme funding received by the Local Regeneration Partnerships in Ealing.

The strategic priorities of the LDA are currently under review by the new Mayor. It is possible that this review might direct the LDA to focus more closely on small and medium enterprises, or to direct greater attention to Outer London boroughs. Whatever the outcome of this review the Area Programme will cease from March 2009, and the Council and partners will be adapting their activity accordingly.

London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB)

A London Skills and Employment Board has been established and this board will set the strategic framework for adult skills in London. It will set the strategic framework for the spending of the LSC £560m annual spend, and have a strong influence on London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus spend. It is chaired by the Mayor and is employer-led to ensure that its work meets the existing and future needs of employers.

Sub-regional policy context

West London Alliance (WLA)

The WLA comprises the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow. The WLA's aims are to:

- lobby for the interests of the sub-region
- develop collaborative strategies and initiatives on key issues such as transport and economic development
- improve the provision of public services in West London through sharing knowledge, expertise and resources, undertaking joint ventures, and securing additional resources.

The WLA meets regularly at Leader and Chief Executive level to direct activity.

West London Working (WLW)

Comprising the six boroughs of the WLA, WLW is one of the government's City Strategy Pathfinders established to increase employment and simultaneously address the high levels of child poverty in London. The WLW boroughs work in collaboration with the London Development Agency (LDA), Jobcentre Plus (JCP), Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and representatives from business, health, education and the voluntary and community sector. Collectively these bodies are working to align their activity and engagement with client groups.

WLW began as a two-year pilot in Spring 2006, but on 25th June 2008 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions James Purnell announced that the Pathfinders will be extended until 2011, with the potential for additional funding to build capacity. This will enable WLW to continue in its efforts to create a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach to worklessness.

Sub-national Review (SNR)

The Government's Sub-national Review on Economic Development proposes that local authorities carry out an economic assessment of their area and set up sub-regional structures. It advocates greater alignment of local, sub regional and regional economic development strategies.

Proposals on the implementation of the SNR are currently being consulted on, and Ealing has responded via London Councils. The Council supports the aims of the SNR, endorses the strengthening of partnerships, and believes boroughs should have a duty to carry out an economic assessment, albeit at the sub-regional level. Alongside this, however, the Council believes the LDA should devolve funding and activities to sub-regional or borough level.

Ealing Policy Context

Worklessness and a lack of skills frequently leads to low household incomes and high levels of benefit dependency, which in turn can result in poor standards of health and education and general deprivation.

Ealing's Sustainable Community Strategy – owned by *Partnership for Ealing*, the Local Strategic Partnership - aims to address these inequalities and improve quality of life for all residents. The vision of the Partnership is that:

“In 2016 Ealing will be a successful borough at the heart of West London, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper and live fulfilling lives in communities that are safe, cohesive and engaged.”

Addressing the challenges around worklessness and skills will be crucial to realising this vision.

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) has been refreshed since its first publication in June 2006 in order to take account of the excellent progress that has been

made and the challenges that now lay ahead. The 6 themes and associated key goals to be achieved by 2016 now read:

Theme	Key goals for 2016
Environment and Culture	Make Ealing a better place to live
Safety	Make Ealing one of the safest places in London
Children and young people	Create a great place for every child and young person to grow up in Ealing
Health and Independence	Reduce health inequalities and promote well-being and independence for adults and older people in Ealing
Economy and Housing	Ensure Ealing is a thriving place to live and work
Residents First	Provide efficient, well-run services that are good value for money; promote a cohesive and engaged community; reduce inequalities and balance community interests

Reducing worklessness and raising local skills levels will help to drive the goals for Health and Independence and Economy and Housing, and will contribute to success across all elements of the SCS.

Economy Enterprise and Housing Board

This is the ‘second tier’ thematic partnership of Ealing’s LSP that oversees the strategic vision and objectives for regeneration, economic activity and housing. The Board will monitor the LSP’s level of success in delivering on the worklessness and skills agenda using performance indicators in Ealing’s Local Area Agreement (LAA) and other relevant performance measures.

The Board itself will discuss the issues around worklessness and skills, and the challenges of delivery. To assist in delivery and to facilitate operational level activity a ‘third tier’ partnership has been established, the Skills and Employment Group. This group had its first meeting on the 4th June (it will meet again in September) and has already set out a series of actions including improving:

- the marketing of employment and skills services;
- employer engagement and job brokerage; and
- access to basic skills and ESOL.

Ealing’s Local Area Agreement

In order to achieve the goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the LSP has set itself some immediate priorities for improvement over the next three years, set out in its Local Area Agreement with central government.

One of these priorities for improvement directly addresses worklessness. Based on one of the national indicators for local government, the target is to:

- 'reduce the percentage of the working age population claiming; and
- out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods'.

The LAA target is therefore specific to certain areas within the borough, namely those neighbourhoods with a benefit claim rate of 25% or more. There are 13 such neighbourhoods in Ealing, listed and mapped overleaf. These neighbourhoods all contain significant levels of social housing in the form of estates.

Whilst many of the interventions undertaken by the Council and its partners in the LSP will be directed with a view to this LAA target, given these are the highest concentrations of worklessness in the borough, these activities will also help address worklessness more generally across the borough as many of the issues in the 13 target neighbourhoods will be relevant across Ealing. However, some agencies (such as JCP) and some interventions operate on a borough-wide basis, and consideration will need to be given as to how these are given a neighbourhood focus.

National Indicator 153: Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing 'neighbourhoods'*

Quarters 1-4 (May '06 to February '07)

'Neighbourhood' 'Lower Layer Super Output Area'	Ward	Main/closest local estate	% WAP claiming out- of-work benefits (Q1-Q4 Average)	Average number on out of work benefits
E01001219 : Ealing 029A	Dormers Wells	Golf Links Estate	26.3%	303.75
E01001220 : Ealing 029B	Dormers Wells	Golf Links Estate	26.4%	253.75
E01001334 : Ealing 029C	Norwood Green	Havelock Estate	26.7%	258.75
E01001357 : Ealing 033D	South Acton	South Acton Estate	26.9%	257.5
E01001206 : Ealing 018C	Cleveland	Copley Estate	27.3%	305
E01001330 : Ealing 008D	Northolt West End	Radcliff Estate	27.5%	257.5
E01001320 : Ealing 003E	Northolt Mandeville	Islip Manor Estate	27.7%	235
E01001210 : Ealing 016A	Cleveland	Gurnell Estate	27.8%	280
E01001257 : Ealing 008A	Greenford Broadway	Rectory Park Estate	28.2%	253.75
E01001249 : Ealing 028A	Elthorne	Green Man Estate	28.5%	323.75
E01001358 : Ealing 033E	South Acton	South Acton Estate	29.5%	291.25
E01001356 : Ealing 033C	South Acton	South Acton Estate	31.3%	337.5
E01001340 : Ealing 029G	Norwood Green	Windmill Estate	36.2%	456.25
			28.6%	3,813.75

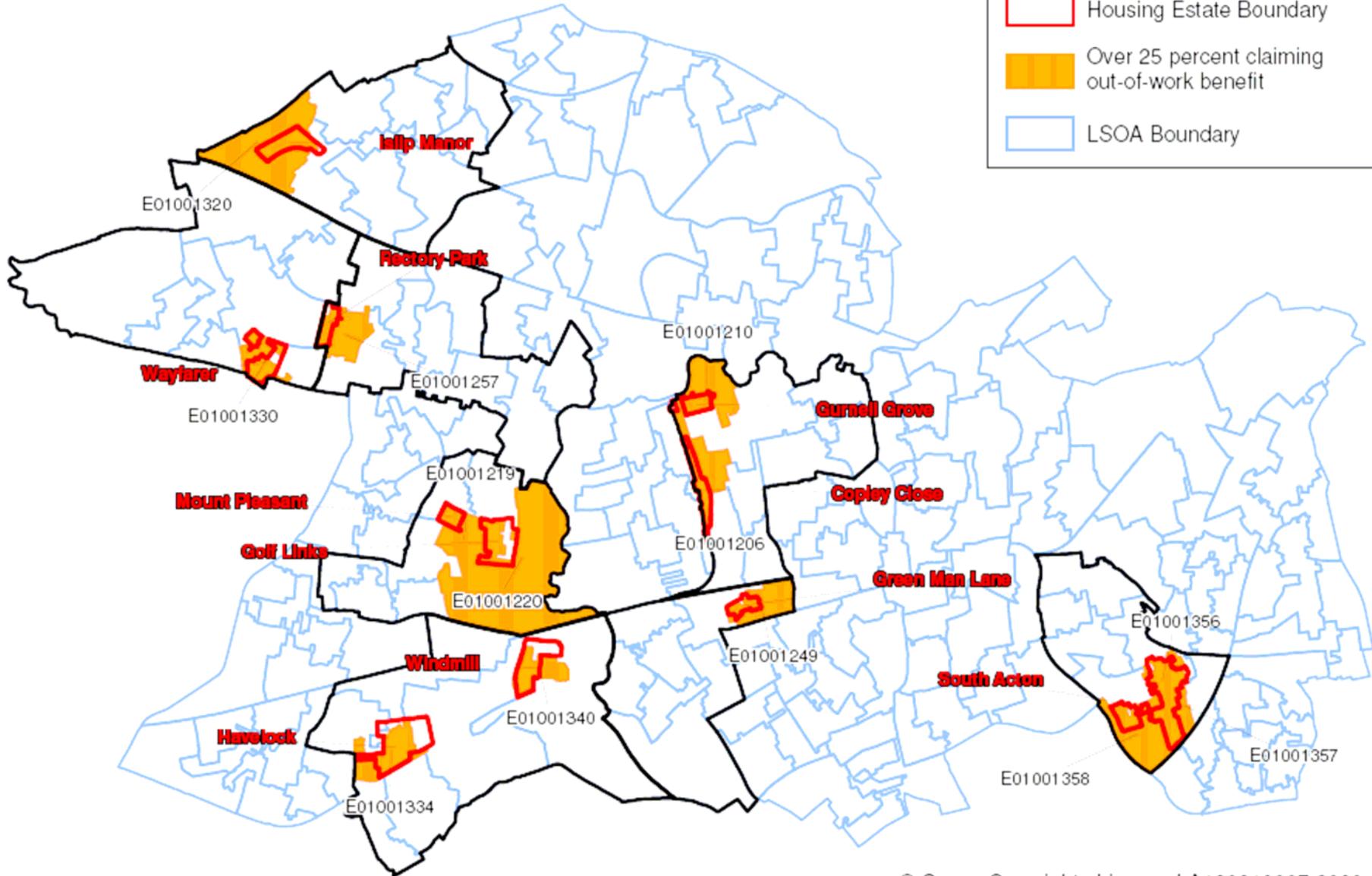
- Though the term 'neighbourhood' is used the actual unit of measurement is the 'Lower
- Super Output Area' (LSOAs). These LSOAs are sub-divisions of wards, used by government for statistical purposes. Each contains between 1,000-1,500 residents.

This is the list of LSOAs where the proportion of people claiming out of work benefits is greater than 25%. Across these 13 an average of 28.6% working age residents were on out of work benefits between May '06 and Feb '07. This equates to a total of 3,814 residents.

Working age people claiming out of work benefits - the 13 worst performing neighbourhoods

Estates and Worklessness
Produced by GIS Team

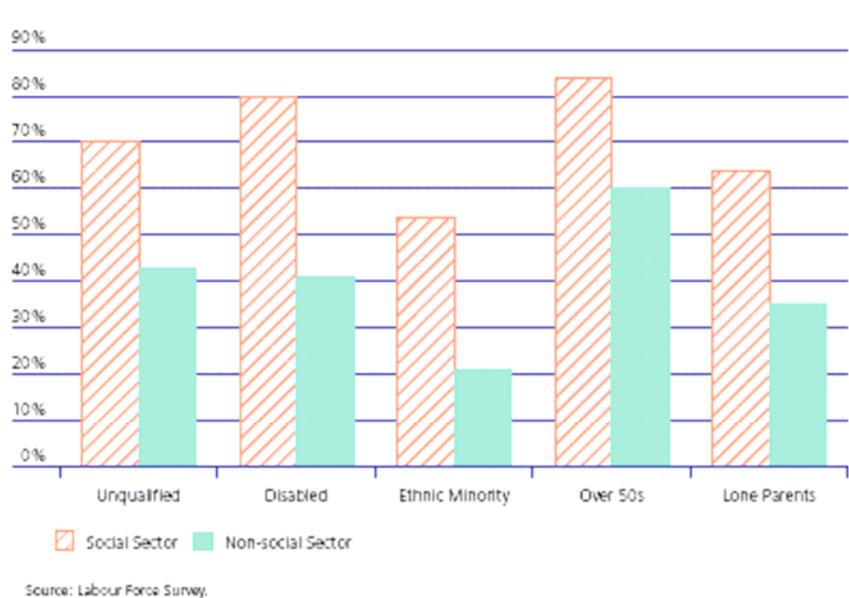
-  Housing Estate Boundary
-  Over 25 percent claiming out-of-work benefit
-  LSOA Boundary



Social Housing

There are numerous social, economic and physical factors that can interact and reinforce each other and result in concentrations of deprivations and worklessness, and one of the most prominent of these is housing, particularly in the social sector.

The relationship between social housing and worklessness has been considered in recent years against the background of the major changes to tenure since the 1980s and the growing residualisation of social housing. It has gained further prominence via the Hills Report (2007), which highlighted the fact that people of working age who are workless are too heavily represented in social housing, and that this could not just be explained by the labour market disadvantages associated with social tenants. Even allowing for a wide range of personal characteristics, the likelihood of someone in social housing being employed appears significantly lower than those in other tenures – see diagram.



Worklessness by DWP PSA Target group, Spring 2006

The report suggests a number of ways in which housing-related policies might be altered to provide better outcomes for social tenants, and many of these are within the purview of local authorities:

- Housing benefit: improving the understanding of tenants (and employment staff) of the potential employment options under HB and the implications for personal income;
- More integrated support: joined-up, personalised support similar to 'Pathways to Work' that addresses the specific needs to the individual, beyond only housing need;
- Local employment: potentially generated by local public services, social landlords and other partners; and
- Mobility: Job-related reasons (including, for instance, potential childcare support) could be included as factors in establishing priorities for who can

move. Expansion of “choice-based lettings“ onto a basis that covered wider areas could also help mobility to some extent.

A recent study published by DWP (‘Social Housing and Worklessness: key policy messages’) involving qualitative, in-depth interviews with social tenants with a recent or ongoing experience of worklessness suggests not all of the assertions made by Hills may be valid. For example, it found that:

- The vast majority of respondents reported that living in the social rented *did not* present a barrier or disincentive to work. There was no evidence that levels of labour market attachment shifted when respondents moved between tenures;
- There is no consistent evidence of cultures of worklessness in deprived areas;
- Few respondents reported that the difficulty of moving house within the sector acted as a barrier to securing work (however, some respondents did report that their views on moving house might shift if they had a firm offer of a well-paid and secure job).

It also provided additional issues for consideration in addressing worklessness amongst social tenants:

- The complexities of the benefit system were found to act as a disincentive to entering work for some respondents;
- The social tenants interviewed tended to face multiple disadvantages that were often severe in nature and sometimes hidden from view;
- The social tenants interviewed faced multiple disadvantages that were sometimes hidden or denied. The lives of many of these individuals were found to have been made more difficult by the fragmented way in which public services operate.

The situation in Ealing with regards to social housing suggests that the relationship with worklessness and the issues outlined above will be of clear interest to this Panel:

- Nearly one fifth (19%) of Ealing’s households live in socially rented accommodation – 12% Council rented and 7% from a housing association or registered social landlord (ONS Census 2001). This figure of 19% is similar to that of Outer London as a whole and lower than the London average.
- In addition, nearly two-thirds (61%) of London’s workless households occupy social rented accommodation.

From this we can estimate that some 14,400 households in the social sector in Ealing are also workless.

Key issues in Strategy

The Council and its partners have responsibility for delivering LAA targets on worklessness and yet at present lack a clear strategy, action plan and identified resources to do so. The LSP has opted for LAA targets on worklessness (National Indicator (NI) 153) and reducing child poverty (National Indicator 116).

The LAA target on NI153 requires an improvement in employment outcomes in Ealing's 13 'lower super outputs areas' (a sub-unit of a ward, used for statistical purposes) with the worst employment position. Highly localised and specialist work will be required to address this target. Public funding of employment and skills services tends on the whole not to work at very local, sub-borough levels. Jobcentre Plus normally work at borough level and the LDA and LSC work at sub-regional and regional levels.

If we are to meet LAA targets then we need to develop an operational model which gives us much greater ability to influence not only how provision works locally but also in tandem with other Council services.

Meeting these LAA targets requires a clear strategy and integrated approach across local public services and beyond into employment and skills provision.

Integrated public services

Increasingly, both national policy and public services recognise the need to improve the way in which the operation of frontline services can contribute to the worklessness agenda. Large numbers of Ealing residents attend or contact Council services every day and there is great potential to connect them to basic employment and skills advice, which could for those residents be the single most important factor in helping them into work.

The Council should consider how to make better use of its influence on key service areas within Housing (RSL sector, Ealing Homes, TA, Strategy); Customer services (Housing Benefits Services); Early Years (Childcare provision, Children's' centres); HR – (Recruitment and Corporate Learning and Development); and Disability Services.

A much more effective corporate approach to worklessness and child poverty could achieve results. This needs to be developed alongside a much more coherent employment and skills offer in the borough. Currently, front line Council services are not able to link their clients to the local employment and skills offer for a variety of reasons all of which could be considered as part of the scrutiny panel's work.

This would entail a more holistic approach, involving outreach work on estates, linked back into key public service areas.

Procurement and employer offer – relationship building

The Council's annual spend is approximately £490m. The Council and partners have influence with developers and many major contractors. In addition, the Council is carrying out programmes of town centre redevelopment and estate regeneration. There is potential to make an impact on worklessness through better use of S106s and our contracting procedures. However, this is difficult to achieve and requires consistent and continuing effort not just within economic development and procurement but also across the Council.

There is a need to improve the Council's understanding of what can be achieved through contracts and procurement procedures, and to have a clear and sophisticated appreciation of the needs of developers and end-users in order to make local recruitment work.

In summary, the Panel acknowledged that the Council needs to develop a clear strategy and action plan on worklessness and identify the resources needed to address the issues and meet LAA targets. The Council, too, needed a much stronger and more integrated public service approach to worklessness and child poverty. Finally, it was concluded that the authority needed to make better use of procurement and S106s to support local businesses and local recruitment and skills. As part of this, the Council needs to undertake high-level negotiations with JCP to attain more flexibility about how this provision will work in Ealing in order to address NI 153. JCP holds the main resource.

Key issues in Skills Delivery

Ealing Council commissioned independent research on worklessness in Ealing in 2006/7 by Rocket Science. Their reports were published in March 2007 and recommended that Ealing Council develop a much more coherent delivery offer. There was some concern that provision was fragmented, partnership working needed to be improved and quality standards across providers were variable.

Economic Development has just established the Ealing Skills and Employment Group as one of the 'third tier' delivery partnerships of the Economy Enterprise and Housing Board, part of the Local Strategic Partnership. This group has representation from all the major skills and employment providers in Ealing and will focus on improving employment and skills at an operational level.

The key question now is how do we develop this forum into a delivery vehicle which allows the Council and its partners to direct provision, fill gaps, and respond to very local needs with all partners playing to their individual strengths and together, maximising partner relationships.

Ealing has no coherent 'employer offer' which is badged as Ealing and allows easy access for businesses to a range of good quality recruitment, training and business support services which would allow them to fulfil S106, and access job-ready local people, apprentices and so forth. Other local authority models have been based on large external funds such as Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or WNF flowing through the Council and contractual arrangements where the Council can commission services to fill gaps in mainstream funds and meet local needs. If the Council itself does not have contractual/commissioning influence it is likely that any delivery model will lack 'teeth' and partners will lose interest because they will not see immediate and direct benefits to their own services.

The challenge for sustainable economic development is trying to use the Council's influence, engagement, and investment to achieve wider impact in terms of the broader economic regeneration agenda and in particular, to change the skills and employment profile of some of Ealing's poorer neighbourhoods and communities where problems have become entrenched. The reward, if the Council takes a strong lead on this issue, will be to create a longer-term impact on some of Ealing's poorest and most work-deprived neighbourhoods.

In summary, the Panel has learnt that Council has started the process of improving the coherence of the local delivery infrastructure however how exactly this develops will depend to a great extent on the breadth and scope of the role the Council chooses to play. Ideally, the Council would want to be in a position where it had a local provider base which is flexible and responsive, able to form partnerships easily in response to funding opportunities, clearly aware of local priorities and able to address these in proposals. It also needs that provider base to work much better with front line public services and on Ealing's most deprived estates and to connect effectively with sub-regional and regional delivery structures.

Key issues in Funding

Ealing has an unemployment and economic inactivity profile similar to Brent (*see following table*) and both boroughs have high levels of need. However, the boroughs are radically different in terms of access to and use of key funding streams to reduce worklessness.

Working Neighbourhood Fund

Working Neighbourhoods Fund was announced in 2007 to support Councils and communities in developing more concentrated, concerted, community-led approaches to getting people in the most deprived areas of England back to work.

Ealing has been one of 88 boroughs nationally that qualified for Neighbourhood Renewal funding (NRF). This was based on having at least

one ward (Dormers Wells) in the 10% poorest wards, according to indices of multiple deprivation. Ealing Borough has received £6.4 million in NRF since 2001. Since then NRF has been used to improve service outcomes and narrow the gap in achievement of national floor targets between the deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the borough.

In October 2007, details of the Comprehensive Spending Review were released, outlining government's long-term approach to public services and key challenges of the decade ahead. At this time, Government announced that NRF would cease on 31st March 2008 and be replaced with Working Neighbourhood's Fund. However, Ealing did not qualify for Working Neighbourhoods Funding, though Government did allocate a limited amount of transition funding for two years.

While Brent will access £8.1m WNF over the three years to 2010/11, Ealing is ineligible. This fund is distributed by the department for Communities and Local Government. London Councils has been lobbying on behalf of Ealing and the other 8 London boroughs that lost out during the change from NRF to WNF. It should be noted that no consultation took place with boroughs, the Local Government Association or London Councils on the allocations process and methodology.

It remains an anomaly that boroughs like Ealing with high numbers of workless residents do not have adequate resources to meet this need.

London Development Agency - Area Programme

The Area Programme is the LDA's funding stream providing employment and business support to identified areas of deprivation close to areas of opportunity. These funds are aimed at ensuring the best regeneration outcomes for the local area. Ealing has benefited from the Park Royal/Wembley Area Programme since 2004.

The funding is given either to the local authority, who then commission it out according to local priorities (as is the case in Brent and Hammersmith) or directly to providers (as is the case in Ealing). The fact that funds do not come directly to the Council means that the Council has less influence and control over the outcomes delivered and these resources are not linked as well as they could be to Local Area Agreement (LAA) and borough priorities.

The Economic Development team has been working to achieve improved job outcomes from the Area Programme funding for Ealing residents through negotiations with the LDA and have gained some improvements. For example, the LDA have now agreed to monitor and report on provision at borough level so Ealing can see how particular streams of investment are working for its residents. This influence, however, is second hand and difficult to maintain.

The Area Programme fund will discontinue after March 2009 but the point is raised here because, given the overall reductions in funding available, Ealing now needs to exercise much greater control over any funds available to ensure it has greater local impact. This will be true for whichever system of funding succeeds the Area Programme, given that there may continue to be an area focus.

Some examples of the ways in which other Councils have acted include Hammersmith and Fulham and Brent. In these boroughs the Council received Area Programme funds directly into the Council and aligned it with NRF and S106 to create a much bigger pot from which to commission services. These services would complement mainstream provision, fill gaps in mainstream funding and target local priorities.

Needs and resources - comparisons between Ealing and Brent

Unemployment and economic inactivity measures	<u>Brent</u>	Ealing
Economically inactive (ONS APS survey - NOMIS July 06- June 07)	43,100	53,400
Wanting a job (ONS APS survey - NOMIS July 06- June 07)	9,300	11,900
No qualifications (ONS APS survey - NOMIS Jan 06- Dec 07)	22,000	24,000
Claimant numbers		
Job seekers allowance claimant (DWP benefit claimants May 07)	6,830	5,690
Incapacity benefit claimant (DWP benefit claimants May 07)	12,400	12,720
Lone parent claiming income support (DWP benefit claimants May 07)	6,150	5,860
Investment in worklessness		
NRF	N/A	Transitional funds for 08/09 £1.3m
Working Neighbourhoods Fund	£2.4m (08/09) £2.8m (09/10) £2.9m (10/11) Total £8.1M	Ineligible
LDA Area Programme Park Royal Partnership is funded £1.9m in 08/09 under the LDA Area Programme for delivery employment and business support programmes (Covering Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham)	 Total £2.85m (08/09)	Funding directly to regeneration partners. With the exception of the Routes to Work contract at Heathrow City partnership Ealing residents receiving support is not monitored by the funder.

National, regional and sub-regional changes

The employment and skills arena has undergone steady transformation in recent years, under the twin themes of welfare reform and skills reform and 2008 will see further changes.

These changes have culminated in London with the creation of the London Skills and Employment Board and the publication of *'Raising expectations: enabling the system to deliver'* this year. The latter heralds radical changes to the way in which employment and skill services are designed and delivered across the UK.

The Learning and Skills Council who currently plan and fund skills provision will be disbanded by 2010 and replaced by two agencies: The UK Commission for Skills and Employment (a planning body); and the Skills Funding Agency (a funding body). Funding for adult skills will become increasingly demand led through Train to Gain (employers) and Skills Accounts (individuals).

Additionally the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review announced a Review of Sub-national Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) to consider how to strengthen economic performance in regions, cities and localities throughout the country. Consultation on the implementation of the SNR is currently underway and proposals include:

- Concentrating neighbourhood renewal funding more closely on our most deprived areas;
- A proposed new duty for local authorities to analyse the economic circumstances and challenges of their local economy. This will help them to provide clear economic vision and leadership;
- Supporting groups of local authorities in city regions to work effectively and accountably together through new Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs), and pool economic responsibility on a more permanent basis;
- Greater devolution to regions of powers to influence investment priorities, through a new extended round of Regional Funding Allocations to give regions a greater say on how spending is prioritised including for transport and regeneration investment;
- Sharpening the role of RDAs with a clear focus on increasing economic growth, with increased scrutiny by local authorities and simplified and strengthened performance management by central government. RDAs will also be expected to delegate funding to local authorities where possible.

These new policy directions and changes in structures in London present the Council with a series of challenges, but also an opportunity to re-consider the local authority role and the best way forward for Ealing. For example:

- *What role should the Council play to ensure that Ealing residents and providers do not lose out during this on-going change process?*
- *What role and local infrastructure will best enable us to articulate area needs, be responsive to opportunities and maintain the provider base?*

Local Authorities Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI)

The Local Authorities Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI) is designed to give local authorities an incentive to maximise local economic growth by allowing them to receive a proportion of increases in local business rate revenues to spend on their own priorities.

Ealing did receive one of the highest amounts of LABGI of any authority in London. This funding totalled £3.8m in 08/09. In some authorities, for example Westminster Council, this fund is diverted for use back into business support, employment and skills.

The Government has committed to reform the LABGI system and issued a consultation paper in October 2007 seeking views on the overall aims and objectives of LABGI. A further consultation paper on the detailed workings of a reformed system is due to be published in Autumn of 2008.

Area Based Grants

From April 2009 ring fencing on Area Based Grants will be removed and the LSP will agree a process whereby a single pot will be created and allocations made against the full range of LAA outcomes (*see report 'Overview of policy context'*)

It would be useful for the Council to consider the rationale and business case which demonstrates the wider social affects of low skills, unemployment and poverty and the impacts on the range of Council priorities including community cohesion, crime and safety, housing, health and social care provision.

To summarise, the Panel understood that it was now imperative that Ealing organised itself better. A more coherent employment and skills infrastructure and greater leadership will act as a draw for funding, maintain the health of the provider base and ensure that resources are targeted according to local needs. In terms of the end of the Area Programme, the Council must ensure that it is well positioned to access whatever replaces this funding stream and that the Council is much more involved in its use to ensure synergy with LAA priorities. In addition, Ealing should be aware of the impact on providers and support them access funds through other streams.

In terms of WNF, the Panel strongly agreed that the Council should work actively with London Councils and lobby central Government on this issue and on the reform of LABGI. The Council should also consider the allocation of LABGI and Area Based Grant and the potential to impact on cross cutting LAA targets through initiatives to support employment and skills.

Finally, given this time of changing policy and structures, it was agreed that it is a good time for the local authority to re-consider its role. The Council needed to be able to take full advantage of national, regional and sub-regional developments. If the Council and its partners are to have responsibility for place shaping and LAA targets on worklessness then it also need the necessary tools and resources.

Economic Development – the way forward

Ealing Council's employment and skills priorities in 08/09 are as follows:

Improve functioning of employment and skills sector - Strong strategic leadership

Helping to create a more strategic approach within the borough – where funding is targeted on areas of highest need – where partners work better together to support residents from the point of engagement through skills into work. Agree priorities /lead by example.

Improve functioning of front line Council services

Tapping into service areas which interact with the client groups:

- Housing – RSL, ALMO, HB, TA, Strategy
- Early Years – childcare provision, use of childrens’ centres, lone parents
- HR – developing pathways – LEP /Skills pledge

Improve influence through planning and procurement

Develop a more sophisticated influence on local businesses and major employers which works for them and works for local people – improving S106s, our work with planning and procurement colleagues, developing pathways etc – to achieve more through understanding business needs.

Options analysis

At an early meeting of the Panel, the Economic Development team set out three broad options as to how the Council specifically could move forward in tackling the worklessness and skills agenda. Of the Options, which included “do nothing” and “Play a direct delivery role”, the Panel endorsed the following option and the Scrutiny Panel continued its evidence gathering on this basis:

Option 3 - Play strategic role, active employer role, and promote partnerships and improved resourcing

The Council would adopt an active, facilitative role including strategy development, partnership development, fundraising, commissioning and capacity building. This would be underpinned by delivery roles in a small number of flagship projects (Apprenticeships, Jobs Pledge and Skills Pledge) and/or where funding streams required a local authority lead.

Advantages

- This is a more appropriate role for the Council and would not set us in competition with providers in the borough.
- This model would strengthen partnership relationships in the borough and ultimately garner significantly more resources towards corporate priorities.
- It would enable the Council to provide a better strategic steer on all resources coming into the borough towards LAA priorities.
- It would encourage rationalisation and enable all partners including the Council to play to their strengths rather than compete for resources.
- It would strengthen the provider base.

Disadvantages

- Costs would be medium – core funding would be required for core functions.

It is on this basis that the Worklessness and Skills Specialist Scrutiny Panel draws its conclusions and makes its recommendations.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Theme 1 – Removing Barriers To Work

As identified in the introductory diagram, people who have been out of the job market for some degree of time are often faced with multiple and complex barriers to work which might include mobility issues, care commitments, mental health problems, social exclusion, language and confidence issues to name but a few.

On Wednesday 10th September Cllrs Mann, Yeo, Greenhead, Reeves and Rose represented the Worklessness and Skills Scrutiny Panel on a visit to the Northolt Children's Centres in order to identify what services and programmes a typical children's centre was delivering in terms of worklessness and how it was seeking to reduce and/or dismantle barriers to work. The visit was hosted by Clare Welsby, Ealing's Children's Centres Project Manager, and Kate Saunders, Northolt Sure Start Manager.

Northolt Sure Start drop-in centre

The visit commenced at the Northolt Sure Start drop-in centre, where the members met two mothers and a child minder who told members about the barriers parents experience when trying to access employment, training or education. The names in the case studies below are fictional.

Case study 1

Tamica is a young lone parent of two children, who are aged 21 months and 8 weeks old. Tamica is about to return to college following the birth of her baby, but as a lone parent is facing many barriers. Firstly, Tamica has had a lot of trouble finding a nursery near to her college that has crèche vacancies for both of her children. Currently, Tamica has to travel by bus to drop her children off at two different nurseries. After much searching, Tamica has recently managed to find a child minder that can look after both of her children. However, this is not the only hurdle. Tamica is also struggling financially as nurseries and child minders are very expensive, especially given the age of her children as a higher rate is charged for children under the age of two. Tamica will receive childcare benefits once she starts college, but these benefits won't kick in until she actually starts college. This means that Tamica has to budget very carefully in the weeks leading up to starting classes, as she wants to be able to settle her children in with child minder. College would be much more accessible to Tamica if she received some kind of childcare benefit in the weeks between enrolment and starting classes.

Case study 2

Amina is a fully trained GP from Somalia with a young son. In order to practice in the UK, Amina has to undergo a one-year training programme. Having to forgo an income so she can study, Amina is struggling to cover the childcare costs for her son. This is a problem for many immigrants arriving in the UK.

Case study 3

Karolina is a qualified child minder. Currently there are not enough child minders to meet demand. Child minders are also facing many barriers of their own. Karolina is given stated hours in which she must offer her services, meaning that she's not able to offer any flexibility to clients. Karolina also has many expectations placed on her in terms of statutory reporting requirements. Karolina isn't able to complete the reports while she is looking after children, as the child minding requires her full attention. This means that she has to complete the reporting during her own time, which is unpaid and takes time away from spending time with her own family.

After meeting the mothers and child minder, the members were introduced to a representative from the Heathrow City Partnership who told them about the Work Opportunities for Women (WoW) project. The project is funded through Ealing's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and provides direct support to women with children in low-income households to access opportunities to training and employment through free one-to-one information, advice and guidance sessions at convenient locations in Northolt and Southall. Activities during the sessions may include referrals, CV writing and confidence building. The WoW project is principally advertised through leaflet distribution in Sure Start centres and Extended Schools. The WoW project co-ordinator works closely with the Jobcentre Plus Lone Parent Employment Adviser.

Limetrees Children's Centre

Following the visit to the Sure Start drop-in centre, the hosts escorted members to the Limetrees Children's Centre, where they met the centre staff along with Sarah Jay, the local Extended Schools co-ordinator, to talk about Children's Centres and the worklessness and skills agenda.

Sure Start makes a home visit for every newborn child, which it learns about through the PCT. As much as possible, Sure Start tries to compliment the home visits with other health outreach services so that visits are not duplicated. Children's Centres also do other outreach with families in their catchment areas.

Children Centres have found that their play ethos attracts a lot of families who may not normally access services from the Council. The staff build a relationship with the parents, which leads to a position where they are able to provide information and advice and make referrals.

Members were interested to hear about the links between Children's Centres and Jobcentre Plus. Children's Centres are entering into Service Level Agreements with JCP to establish formal links in order to help support parents back into work. Each Children's Centre will have access to JCP from the Children's Centres through Internet kiosks and phone lines. Appointments with JCP employment advisers will still mainly be held at the JCP office. The Northolt Sure Start drop-in centre has tried holding JCP sessions on site, but they were poorly attended. As such, Children's Centres are finding it more useful to book the PlusBus to take clients to JCP as required. It isn't good value for money to have a JCP adviser sitting in the Children's Centre, as not enough people will come through and

use the service. Though they will still make appointments for clients to see a JCP adviser at the Children's Centre when they cannot get to JCP.

The Children's Centres have employed Apprentices and volunteers to work in their offices. They encourage volunteers that have been placed with them to take up formal childcare qualifications and support them to do so.

West London Academy

The visit ended with a tour of the West London Academy (WLA) and a meeting with the Northolt Children's Centres Worklessness Group.

The Northolt Children's Centres Worklessness Group is a partnership comprising: Northolt Children's Centre; Northolt Sure Start; Extended Schools; Ealing CVS; Jobcentre Plus; Ealing PCT; West London Academy; and the Greater London Enterprise.

The partnership has formed to take a coordinated and joined up approach to taking targeted interventions with workless families with very young children in the Northolt area to ensure that the children don't grow up to have the same needs as their parents.

The partnership has decided to focus on raising the aspirations and expectations of workless families to support their children to achieve educational attainment and break the cycle of intergenerational unemployment.

As the next step, the partnership wants to develop an action plan on a pilot basis in Northolt that draws upon family learning activities to break the cycle of unemployment and low skills. The partnership also wants to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Children's Centres and Extended Schools as community hubs. This is particularly pertinent for Northolt, which is isolated and lacks services.

Need to maximise the potential to use schools for other activities. WLA has the flexibility as its privately owned and not bound by PFI arrangements. Though need to be aware that WLA, like most modern schools, is hard to access due to increased security and can be intimidating, especially for parents with an existing negative view of schools.

In the discussion with members, the partners identified the following areas as being key issues for the worklessness and skills agenda in Northolt:

- Northolt is geographically isolated from the rest of the borough and as a result has had little investment. This has contributed to the issue of intergenerational unemployment in the area.
- Many of the employment opportunities in the area involve shift work (like Heathrow Airport), which is not compatible with childcare hours offered through nurseries and child minders.
- Parents with multiple children are simply not able to afford childcare.
- There are a lot of lone parents in the area, who often need childcare from 8am through to 6pm, which is difficult for the child. What lone parents need is flexibility from their employers.

- The partners have found the white working classes in the area to be the hardest to engage as there are many barriers, including an apparent lack of trust of the local authority and statutory services in general. They find it difficult to encourage this group to leave their estates, and even their homes, and often have to do home visits. It is thought that part of the problem is the negative experiences of that the parents and grandparents had with the education system in the past. The WLA in particular is trying to overcome these barriers through the family learning activities, which includes activities like football. The partners have had a very different experience with Asian families, who seem to have high aspirations for their children.
- There is a problem with 15 to 20 year old males who will not travel outside of their estate because of the territorial youth culture. The partners feel that there is a need to take learning opportunities to them, maybe through an IT bus. There is a need to engage the Youth Service in the worklessness and skills agenda in Northolt, but not through this group as it is very much focussed on young children and their families.
- A big challenge is employer engagement. The partners find it difficult to find work experience opportunities for young people, which is critical for young people whose parents have never been in work.

The partners action plan will be based on the success experienced by the WLAs investment in family learning activities as part of the worklessness and skills agenda, which are being funded through the LSC and National Lottery. The aim of these activities is to build a relationship of trust and confidence with local families and build a learning culture within the family to break the cycle of unemployment and benefit dependency.

Recommendations 1-3

1 That the Council should better publicise the available information and guidance on childcare provision in order to remove barriers to work for all interested parties, particularly for lone parents, holding all the information in one place and involving partners in the community as well as Council officers.

2 That the Council and its partners should take innovative approaches to engaging families in order to build a “learning culture” that overcomes intergenerational barriers to work.

3 That the Council should identify those Lower Super-Output Areas in Ealing where literacy, numeracy and ICT support skill levels are low and take steps to ensure all workless residents are able to access this teaching support.

A further consideration of the theme of removing barriers to work was undertaken as part of the Panel’s visit to the Ealing branch of Jobcentre Plus. On Wednesday 10th September. The visit was hosted by Sandy Fenwick, Anu Bilon, Michael O’Sullivan and Inder Matharu.

The visit began with a meeting with three job seekers and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) employment advisers, who told members about their experiences of employment support in Ealing.

Case studies

Case study one: Amber – New Start 18–25 client

Amber wanted to find a job straight away after finishing college, but she lacked the job seeking skills and found herself unemployed and without any information, advice or guidance. In fact, it was some six months before Amber even registered with Jobcentre Plus and started to claim Jobseekers Allowance. Living in Northolt, Amber hadn't seen any information to promote Jobcentre Plus and only registered after being encouraged by a friend. However, Amber has recently won a job after successfully completing a Work Trial.

Case study two: Seema – Restart client

Seema is a secondary school maths teacher with 13 years experience of teaching in her home country of India. Whereas any teacher with overseas qualifications can work in the UK for up to four years without being required to obtain Qualified Teacher Status, Seema hasn't been able to find a school willing to take her on as a maths teacher without the required further training. Seema had been offered supply work, but didn't feel capable to accept positions teaching in subjects other than maths. Part of the problem appeared to be the lack of expert knowledge and advice on Qualified Teacher Status requirements, including from JCP. Without an ongoing income, Seema cannot afford to undertake the required further training.

Case study three: Philomena – lone parent

Philomena is a lone parent who has been looking for a job for the past five years. As a lone parent with young children, Philomena doesn't have to work and is entitled to continue claiming Income Support, however she has aspirations to train to become a hairdresser. Having left school at age 11, Philomena has very poor literacy and numeracy skills, which has been a significant employment barrier. At one of her periodic interviews with a Lone Parent Adviser (held six monthly) she decided to go on to the voluntary New Deal for Lone Parents scheme and was subsequently sent on a training course to help with her literacy and numeracy skills. Philomena is now studying full time to improve her literacy and numeracy skills and is hopeful that she will be able to find a job at the end of her course.

Disability Employment Adviser

The Disability Employment Adviser works with disabled clients who are able to work and claiming Jobseekers Allowance. The few disabled clients who are not able to work and claiming Incapacity Benefits but who are still interested in employment opportunities are referred to REED recruitment consultants for employment support. The key issues that were identified following a discussion with the DEA included the following:

- There are not enough local employers who are willing to do Work Trials with disabled job seekers.
- Other than Learning Curve, the DEA does not know of any local skills training providers specifically set up for disabled people. This is a barrier as disabled clients often do not want to travel very far, nor can they afford it, as public transport is very expensive.
- The Learning Curve training can be too basic for some disabled job seekers.

- There is only one Disability Employment Adviser in Ealing, so disabled clients claiming JSA usually have to wait around 2 to 4 weeks for an appointment. The resource is due to be increased shortly.
- The Work Preparation training contracted through Citizens Trust has been successful.
- JCP use a Workstep programme if a person is at risk of losing their job, i.e., retention or redeployment cases. Workstep is also used for job ready customers who are still looking for work but will need the support to stay in work once they find employment. JCP help to keep people in their jobs (work with the Shaw Trust).

New Deal 18 – 25 Employment Adviser

Panel members were informed that it is mandatory for all young people to go onto New Deal after six months of unemployment. The key issues identified following a discussion with the New Deal 18 – 25 Employment Adviser include the following:

- The adviser is coming across many 18 to 24 year olds with literacy and numeracy problems. As a result JCP have plans to start screening people for basic literacy and numeracy skills as part of the basic health check.
- The main issue for this age group is that they have little or no work experience, making it very difficult for them to win positions in a competitive labour market.
- Work Trials, which last from one to 30 days, have been very successful for this age group. Young people completing Work Trials are still entitled to their benefits.
- YMCA tenancy rent is expensive, which is a barrier as once people get a job it becomes too expensive to pay, especially for low-income job earners. This has been identified as a barrier for all age groups.

Following the meeting with the job seekers and employment advisers, members were given a tour of the operational office by Michael O'Sullivan, Customer Service Operations Manager. Members were impressed by the tour and commented on how they thought the JCP experience has improved over the years. Members were also interested to try out the JCP Internet kiosks, where job seekers can quickly search for job vacancies by a selection of criteria.

After the tour, the members sat down with Inder Matheru, Sandy Fenwick and Anu Bilon for a discussion about worklessness and skills in Ealing. In response to concerns about JCP not having a strong presence in the north of the borough following their meeting with Amber, Inder explained how JCP is increasingly linking up with other service providers, such as Children's Centres, to ensure that it has a presence across the borough. It is essential for JCP to work through partnerships like this, as the resources are not available to occupy physical office space in all areas.

JCP told members that 96 employers in Ealing have signed a Local Employment Partnership (LEP) with them, all of whom are willing to employ priority groups. JCP identified Primark as being an example of a good employer, as last year they had 130 vacancies of which they were willing to fill from priority groups.

When asked about how the JCP works with the Council, JCP informed members that it promotes the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme amongst its clients. Inder Matheru also told members how he thinks that the Local Area Agreement is leading to more meaningful partnership working through the Partnership for Ealing. He also stressed the importance

of the Council working with service providers to fill gaps in the market, and not to duplicate work being done by JCP.

Recommendations 4-6

4 That the Council does more to engage and support employers to participate in employment and skills initiatives, such as work trials and apprenticeship schemes, and to take on job seekers from in disadvantaged groups in the Ealing labour market.

5 That Worklessness Partnerships, in particular Ealing Skills and Employment Group and any area based worklessness partnerships, need to be further developed to establish a robust employment and training support infrastructure across the entire geographical spread of the borough.

6 That the Council needs to identify how to “provide” more literacy and numeracy support in order to remove barriers to work for all ethnic groups, including for White British and those who speak English as a first language.

Catalyst Community Housing

Removing the barriers to employment was also a major theme during the Panel’s visit to Catalyst Community Housing. The visit was hosted by Kerry Starling, Catalyst’s Regeneration Investment Manager and it began with a meeting with Kerry Starling, who introduced members to Catalyst’s flagship Get Learning and Moving into Employment programmes.

Get Learning resident training programme

Catalyst is an accredited training provider through the Open College Network and is offering training courses and qualifications at no cost for its tenants through its Get Learning resident training programme.

Funded by Catalyst, the London Development Agency and European Social Fund, the programme aims to provide lifelong learning opportunities for socially isolated tenants who may not have the confidence to go to a mainstream provider.

The programme currently aims to train 100 tenants per year. Catalyst also offers a one-to-one Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service for all of its learners to help them move into further education or employment once they have completed the training course.

The Get Learning programme is advertised through internal magazines, tenant meetings and outreach work. But the most effective promotion has been through word-of-mouth by the learners themselves. In fact, learners are creating a forum to communicate positive messages about the learning.

Moving into Employment programme

Moving into Employment is a two-year programme led by Catalyst Housing in partnership with Dominion Housing, Ealing Homes and Ealing Council.

The programme is a free IAG service that aims to move tenants into further education and/or employment by helping with: CV preparation; completing application forms; job interview preparation; one-to-one job search support; voluntary work placements to get people ready for work; confidence building; Preparing for Work workshops; gaining a qualification; and finding out more about the services in the local community.

Catalyst are targeting 150 tenants over two years across the borough in areas of high unemployment, like Northolt. Tenants will predominantly be from deprived areas of the borough and face multiple, complex barriers to employment and training. Catalyst has a target of moving 75 of its participants into further education.

Youth Work

The members met with seven learners who were completing the 'Introduction to working with young people' course, which is an Open College Network progression award level 1/2 for residents who are interested in, or are currently working with, young people. The course aims to provide learners with an understanding of youth work, as well as to introduce some of the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in activities related to youth work, paid and voluntary. The course also aims to prepare learners for further study.

The learners enthusiasm and confidence made a strong impression on members. All of the learners were overwhelmingly positive about the Catalyst resident training programme and the quality of the youth work course, and all had similar stories about how before completing this course they would never have had the confidence to enrol in similar course in a college setting. However, having completed the course many of the learners are seriously considering doing just that. All of the learners were incredibly motivated by what they had learnt about youth work and were keen to develop their skills. Some of the learners told members how they were now motivated to enrol in a foundation course, with some aspiring towards a degree. The learners were requesting Catalyst to deliver the Level 3 youth work qualification.

The learners all agreed that flexibility and informality provided by Catalyst was a significant incentive for them to complete the course. The course is delivered within school hours and Catalyst also pay for childminders for those children who are not of school age. Catalyst also provide the option for learners to undertake the course in the evening. Learners commented how they wouldn't get the same level of childcare support and flexibility at college.

Case studies

Anne Marie was already doing voluntary work with young people in her community, and saw the course as an opportunity to improve her skills. Since completing the course, she has been approached by the local Youth Inclusion Programme to do some paid sessional work.

Rae had a long-term ambition to work with young offenders at Feltham. The Catalyst youth work course gave her the confidence to approach Feltham and she is now a volunteer as part of its mentoring programme, thus removing an obvious barrier to work.

Angelina is using the course to bridge the gap between her work experience with 0–8 year old children and working with young people. She has found it hard to find work with young people without experience or a qualification, so she was really excited when this opportunity came up to do this course.

Abdi was very nervous when he first joined the course but has grown in confidence throughout the course and has felt his skills develop. He is now doing voluntary work in his local youth club and feels as though his newly learnt skills are transferable to other jobs working with young people.

Resident Involvement

Members met with some learners who were completing the 'resident involvement' course, which is Open College Network progression award level 1/2 for residents who are interested in participating in resident involvement activities or would like to pursue a career in this field. The course aims to provide learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in activities relating to resident involvement.

The learners put on a role-play for members to demonstrate their skills to effectively participate in resident involvement committees, including chairing, assertiveness and negotiation.

Case study

Iris has been approached by her Resident Association for the last two years to be the chair, but she has always turned it down, as she did not feel confident in her abilities. But now that she has completed the course, her confidence has been boosted and she has accepted the role as chair.

Learning Champions

Learning Champions are residents who are interested in pursuing a career in housing and as such are undergoing the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 certificate in Housing. This course aims to provide learners with a basic understanding of housing as well as prepare them for further study.

Learning Champions are all provided with work experience opportunities within Catalyst Housing. The aim of this is to provide learners with background knowledge to course work and to give them some real work experience.

Learning Champions are also tasked with spreading positive messages about learning amongst their fellow tenants. Each Learning Champion has a target of recruiting five students each to the resident training programme.

All of the learners were very enthusiastic about the course, and learners were travelling from as far as Reading and Oxford to take up this opportunity provided by Catalyst. Learners felt that by being a social housing tenant enhanced their skills learnt on the course, as it allowed them to understand the role more.

Case studies

Denesha had always wanted to work with young people, but did not associate it with a career in Housing until now and motivated to work with young parents in social housing. Given Catalyst are helping her with childcare, she had attended every single class.

Denise felt that becoming a Learning Champion had opened a door to a career in Housing. She had already been involved in their Residents Association, has finished college and has a youth work qualification and sees this as the next step in starting her career.

Action Acton

In the run-up to Christmas, Councillors continued to examine the theme of removing barriers to work through a visit to Action Acton. The visit was hosted by John Blackmore, Director of Action Acton and co-opted member of the Panel.

Action Acton is a registered charity and voluntary body delivering a wide range of community, economic and business initiatives. Action Acton's mission statement is – *'To work in partnership with statutory, voluntary, community and private sector agencies to promote economic and community regeneration in Acton and the Borough of Ealing and to help develop Acton as a thriving multi-cultural community, which has a clear identity and sense of belonging, where all residents and businesses are able to benefit from the opportunities arising from its West London location'*.

Members learnt that Action Acton was established in 1998 and was born out of funding from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) with a remit to help the unemployed in a small part of Acton. From a very small number of staff, AA has grown significantly over the past decade and currently employs 22 full-time staff who work on a growing list of projects, initiatives and activities. Action Acton, the Panel was told, was not in receipt of recurrent grant funding (aside from a nominal sum from Ealing Council) and it has to keep bidding for funds from assorted agencies and organisations to keep itself 'afloat'.

Visit to Crown Street Shop

Members began their afternoon with a briefing from John Blackmore, Director, and Gary Burgess. A large chunk of the discussion time was devoted to the work being undertaken by Action Acton on Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs) in Ealing and Hammersmith. The aims of the provision are to support PPOs in custody and on release in order that they secure training or employment. This support takes place at Action Acton's Crown Street office or at a suitable outreach location. The Panel were told that there were approximately 30 PPOs in Ealing, each of whom often get referred to Action Acton with often chaotic lifestyles and, for them, basic skills are often what are needed as a priority. PPOs provided the biggest challenge to Action Acton as they were the most difficult to deal with (in terms of emotional, physical and living problems).

Action Acton advisers dealing PPOs cite barriers to employment for these people being acute and that PPOs are the client group who take up the biggest proportion of workers'

time for the fewest jobs. It was suggested that a rate of 15-20% of PPO gaining a job was considered a big success rate. Action Acton does not deal with PPOs in isolation, however, and it works with Drug Action Teams, the Police, the Probation Service and Council's Offending Teams. PPOs are asked to list their priorities on release from prison and Action Acton draw up an Action Plan and, where necessary meet PPOs on release at the gates of prison. Advisors also liaise with Jobcentre Plus, give talks on offending to officers at JCPs and other related advice giving.

Panel members were then presented with the work Action Acton is undertaking on the South Acton Estate. The problem advisers faced on the estate was a culture of young people being 'normalised' and sustained by an income deriving from drug selling. Action Acton again work as part of a multi-agency approach and work with the Police, Victim Support and local schools and colleges to put out a negative message about gang culture and its numerous victims; Action Acton recognise that there are often unwilling members of gangs who fear what will happen to them if they chose to leave. Clearly, gang culture on the estate was a serious inhibitor of employment to those young people living there. Action Acton expressed its desire to undertake more peer group work in this respect.

As a conclusion to the briefing, Councillors were informed of other the assorted various projects and programmes undertaken by Action Acton. The Market, South Acton work and Learning Resource Centre notwithstanding, AA spoke of the work it was doing with the City Parochial Trust (on the child poverty agenda), its work with Surestart and as a deliver of business advice, services and training in Acton, its activities in Brent and Hounslow (and Northolt and Greenford) and its view about funding and the future.

It was asserted that Action Acton had become adept at bidding for sources of money and that its future would be secured through offering bidding in consortia and collaboration. Funding would always present challenges to local organisation such as Action Acton. Structurally, Action Acton is a registered charity and a development trust and, it argued, this allowed its clients to feel less intimidated than a formal agency when using its services. In conclusion, the Panel heard that the organisation felt it could do significantly more 'business' i.e. getting people into work if its funding was increased; it was estimated the organisation could get between 5 and 10-times more people into work and that they felt that they were merely scratching the surface.

Visit to Acton Market

The Panel was originally due to spend about half an hour talking to traders as part of the Acton Market scheme however it soon transpired that members wished to spend considerably longer exploring with the traders themselves the big picture in terms of workless and the journey to employment, via skills acquisition. The first stallholder the Panel spoke to was a trader in fresh fruit and vegetables. He spoke with tremendous enthusiasm about the changes that have been brought about by the creation of a new market in the centre of Acton. He mentioned that the market had not only provided people with new jobs and the chance to become a self-employed trader but that it had given what was a once unsafe environment a sense of community, a shared purpose.

Case Study

Richard had lost his business a few months ago and was completely shattered by the loss. He came to AA very devastated for help and is very pleased by the support he got. He keeps the market busy and has a lively personality. He hopes to continue getting the same level of support and help from Action Acton in advertising his business through Newsletters, websites or flyers. He is very much a part of Acton Market. His family has run market stalls in Acton in the past.

You'll have heard Richard shouting his wares in traditional London style. He's been a regular feature at Acton Market since September selling fruit and veg at reasonable prices. You could say that the family have been a fixture in Acton since long before even the Market started. Both his father and Grandfather ran fruit and veg shops in Acton, one in Crown Street and in South Acton.

Councillor Joanna Dabrowska and John Blackmore considered the fact that Action Acton did not just simply fund and oversee the market but that it saw it as a **social enterprise**. The Panel were unanimous in accepting the argument put forward that Acton Market was not just commodity in a former unused and unattractive area of the town but that it provided a new focus for Acton. It was evident throughout all the discussions with the stallholders that they did not see themselves solely as providers of goods and services, but that the Market was a community of local residents who were enjoying trading in Acton and who were increasingly being seen as providing a regenerated heart with safer and cleaner streets. It might appear strange in a report to comment on the 'ambience' of an area but Panel members wholehearted concluded that Acton market was a positive space with a contented and lively vibe. Stallholders were all extremely positive about the Market and what it was achieving. Each stallholder felt proud and indeed grateful for the opportunities it had afforded them.

The Panel were informed of the changes that the market had brought about and it was often repeated by traders that a heart had brought back to Acton, that the assorted activities within the market had facilitated the dispersal of problem drinkers. This had effectively created a safer and more welcoming town centre. Visually, it was hard to argue against that.

Panel members were taken through a typical day in the life of a Market Inspector. It might appear strange in a report to comment on the 'ambience' of an area but Panel members wholehearted concluded that Acton market was a positive space with a contented and lively vibe. Stallholders were all extremely positive about the Market and what it was achieving. Each stallholder felt proud and indeed grateful for the opportunities it had afforded them.

Case Studies

Jasbir was unemployed for several years and has struggled. He approached Action Acton enquiring about a stall and was offered help straight away. He attended the Market Traders training course and with AAs help he applied for Health and safety and Food Hygiene certificate, so he could get into food business. He is now experimenting and is building up a number of regular customers and enjoys being part of Acton Market.

Jasbir and Angela Jauhal's Indian food stall at Acton Market is getting something of a reputation for their special 'Alloo Tikki', a spicy potato cake that regularly sells out every Saturday. Jasbir and Angela are also veterans of the Market Traders' Training Scheme, a series of free workshops to help unemployed people learn how to start a market stall business. They've been trading every day at the Acton Market since June 2008. Jasbir says previous to starting Express Curry, he was unemployed and getting very depressed. Then he, his wife and daughter all attended the Market Traders' Training Workshop and started the business. Jasbir, who is over 60, also now caters for private functions.'

Mustafa was unemployed and did not know what to or where to get help from, till he found out about Action Acton. He had very unique ideas but wanted help to express them. He came to AA for help where he was advised to attend the Market Traders training courses which he did. Action Acton has played a very strong part in his life. He got help through the Market project to promote his business. AA contributed to producing stall banners and Trader liability insurance. With this help and support he has expanded his business so that today he has three stalls and has people working for him. He is looking forward to continued support from Action Acton next year to carry on his business. He is also creating some employment for other individuals who help him run stalls.

Mustapha is a typical example of how Action Acton have taken an unemployed person out of worklessness and raised his expectations. The conversation he engaged in with members went beyond the normal talk about the economic benefits of working-status but it covered the mental, health and physical side effects of being in employment again for the first time in a long while. Since he started traded in April, Mustapha's shoe stall had grown and be now employed a further 2 people. Without Action Acton's help, he would still be at home "*watching telly*" as he told Councillors.

Julie has attended Action Acton's Market Traders Training course and has built up a solid, successful business in the past 18 months. With AA help she is now representing the traders in the market at Action Acton steering group meetings. She is hoping to get continued help and support from AA in future to expand her business.

If there's one Acton Market trader who's known as a fixture, its Juma Jewellery stall holder Julie. Julie is one of the Market's most dedicated traders who has been part of the Acton Market since its inception in March 2007.

Julie, like most traders, had started her stall in April 2008 and is relying on the financial support from Action Acton to continue so that she can grow her business. The Acton Market is a subsidised venture and its funding comes to an end in 2009; Action Acton, through the market, offer traders cost-free market stalls – initially targeting people with disabilities, the unemployed and black and minority ethnic would-be stallholders, all of those who have faced one or more barriers to work.

Action Acton's Learning and Resource Centre

The Panel did not have sufficient time to visit AA's LRC despite it being scheduled on the agenda. The Panel felt that it was of greater importance that members spent time in the market talking to traders who have become employed through Action Acton's efforts from being workless.

That notwithstanding, the Panel learned through their briefing notes that the Acton Learning Resource Centre (ALRC) is based in the heart of the South Acton estate. The ALRC was developed by Action Acton Regeneration Partnership and London Borough of Ealing (LBE) Adult and Community Education in 2001, with financial support from London West Learning and Skills Council (LWLSC) and London Development Agency (LDA).

ALRC is a Basic Skills centre that offers assessment, learning support and Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) to meet the needs of local residents in helping them to overcome existing barriers to learning and employment. This estate-based provision provides a friendly, flexible and supportive environment for current learners and in attracting new learners who have not been involved in learning before, or for a very long time.

The aim of ALRC is to provide free, accessible, flexible and supported accredited Basic Skills training to unemployed and economically inactive local residents that is of a high quality and is externally validated. The quality of teaching and learning is facilitated through a highly qualified professional workforce.

The ALRC offers learners an opportunity to take an Edexcel accredited 'Skills for Life' qualification in ESOL, Literacy or Numeracy with the majority of learners achieving the full qualification within 3 months. Presently, courses are funded by the London Development Agency and are free. They are available for unemployed people with the right to stay in the UK only.

In addition, the ALRC run courses on behalf of London Borough of Ealing Adult Education, which currently include ESOL in Citizenship Context.

Each learner has the opportunity to receive the following for free:

- Initial Assessment to establish strengths, skills & areas for development
- Enrolment onto an appropriate programme
- Comprehensive Individual Learning Plan, reviewed regularly
- High standard of supported learning
- Registration with the exam body
- Accredited qualification
- Minimum of two hrs Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) for all new enrolments
- 1:1 information, advice and guidance support available for Job Search or college progression

Case Study

Beneficiary MW (age 22) enrolled on the EXODUS PPO Project with Action Acton (AA) in November 2005. He was initially registered with another advisor and was not engaging well. He did not communicate easily and regularly failed to attend appointments.

MW has mild mental health issues and poor levels of concentration; he could also easily become frustrated if he didn't understand tasks and this could manifest itself in aggressive/irritable behaviour. He started the Prince's Trust programme at Queens Park Rangers Football Club, through a referral from AA, in September 2006. Initially his AA advisor would contact him daily to provide support as well as meet with him during his weekly Probation supervisions to pay travel expenses and discuss his progress. His attendance at the Prince's Trust improved and AA advisor liaised regularly with the Prince's Trust Team Leader to identify any problems, create a support network and identify the most effective learning environment. MW found the experience very positive and he invited AA advisor and probation officer to attend his Prince's Trust presentation. This was particularly important to him as he had no family or friends attending.

After completing the programme MW attended regular appointments at AA and began to frequently use the facilities on a drop-in basis. He started a FA football coaching course with Active Planet which he initially enjoyed but after an incident with a Tutor, walked out.

This significantly effected MW's confidence. AA set-up a meeting with tutors to discuss the incident. He felt unable to return to the course but with support and encouragement continued to volunteer at the weekends. We worked with MW on his jobsearch and particularly communication and interview skills. We used role-play to build confidence and appropriate use of language. During a training day AA hosted for another organisation, we asked each trainee to submit an application for the fictional position of MW's advisor and he was responsible for selecting and interviewing the candidates, he was then asked to make a decision and this gave us an opportunity to discuss themes around the recruitment process. This is one example of innovative techniques used to develop MW's social skills.

Another service that MW has benefited from is "Voicemail4All". As his mobile phone was frequently lost or stolen he was provided with a landline number that he could give out to employers, probation, friends etc, where they could leave a message and he could access these messages via a freephone number on any landline. He has also completed the 5 week GOALS/Street League project for football coaching. During his graduation at the FA headquarters he was required to give a presentation which he delivered confidently. We have used training to assist MW in confidence building and general life and employability skills such as; punctuality, organisation, interpersonal skills, time-management, dealing with conflict and behaving appropriately in different environments and situations. He has also completed, a customer services course, a food hygiene certificate and is currently studying for his Health and Safety card. Action Acton has recently put him forward for the Adult Learner Award.

MW has continued to attend regular jobsearch workshops and one-to-one sessions with AA, sometimes attending 3 appointments a week. MW was still having trouble securing employment so we speculatively called local charity shops and he began volunteering at Cancer Research to develop his skills and improve his CV. We continued regular

jobsearch sessions and he secured a position in December 2007 at Beauty Base in Whitleys which he hopes will lead to a permanent position.

MW has been removed from the PPO list and completed his supervision order. AA offers a provision for him to continue to receive support. MW's confidence and motivation have improved significantly and he has recently appeared on a video promoting the Action Acton PPO project.

In May 2008 MW was awarded the ESF National Adult Learner Awards for his commitment to education he is currently studying s BTEC in sports science at South Thames College. He also won the Ealing Gazette Pride in Our People awards for his volunteering and contribution to the community. He has recently taken up a position as Ambassador for the Prince's Trust.

Lone Parents

Of particular interest to Panel members was the issue of access to work by those who were deemed lone parents. It was felt that lone parents faced many barriers to employment and were a marginalised group particularly at risk of being caught in the benefits trap, unable to upskill or train and of raising children in a state of poverty. In essence, this group was central to the work of the Panel.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) published a timely evidence briefing in September on the multiple impediments to accessing work faced by single parents.² Employers are often reluctant to take on lone parents – as our Panel has repeatedly heard on its many research visits – and lone parents themselves worry about combining work with their childcare commitments. Financial stability is vital but is often hard to achieve: some lone parents moving into low-paid jobs find they are simply worse off in work than living on benefits. The complexity of the combined benefits and tax credit systems make it very difficult for others to manage and a bigger stick is on the way in the shape of the Government's Welfare Reform Bill, currently at 2nd Reading Stage – which will in effect financially penalise those parents who refuse work because the childcare arrangement is not suitable for them (too far away, too poor quality). Keeping a roof over the family's head is equally critical but housing often comes under threat as income levels fluctuate. As well as the financial issues, single parents face significant problems with juggling family needs by themselves, especially finding affordable, good quality childcare.

The Government has pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 and eliminate it by 2020. However, it is behind its target, having failed to reduce the number of children in poverty by a quarter between 1998/99 and 2004/05. Child poverty figures actually rose between 2003/04 and 2006/07 to a current level of 3.9 million on an after housing costs measure. The Worklessness and Skills Panel think that the link between worklessness and child poverty that it has devoted Theme 4 to an exploration of it and what is being done in Ealing to counter it. The Panel set out and support 18 recommendations which specifically deal with worklessness and child poverty.

² **Barriers to work: Lone parents and the challenges of work**, CAB Briefing, September 2008.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Theme 2 – Ealing Council Services Working Better Together

As identified in the introductory chapter to this report, there are many key challenges for the Council in the worklessness and skills agenda and a fundamental one of those challenges is how best to play a leading role in current and future strategic partnerships and joint working.

The Government is placing increasing pressure on statutory frontline services to participate in the broader worklessness and skills agenda in recognition of the crosscutting relationship between worklessness and other factors affecting peoples life opportunities, such as crime and anti-social behaviour, social housing tenure, health and wellbeing and child poverty. Many of these statutory services are very willing to take up this role and are being proactive in setting up referral arrangements with partners and establishing small-scale initiatives. However, most services are facing resource barriers as they are not receiving adequate funding to implement worklessness and skills initiatives meaning that when they do, they are often short-term and unsustainable.

Where funding does exist for worklessness and skills initiatives, it is often disjointed and consequently activities are not always co-ordinated. Added to this is the relatively limited cross-departmental working between Ealing's service departments at both at the strategic and delivery level with relation to worklessness and skills (however, there are some very good examples of where joint working is occurring within service departments and also between some service departments). Many of the statutory frontline services are now starting to work with Jobcentre Plus (JCP), including Children's Centres, Connexions and Learning Curve. However in many areas, service links with JCP is still a developing relationship.

The Panel has noted that some frontline services are starting to establish links with private sector employers via the Council's regeneration partners – for example the Heathrow City Partnership, Action Acton and Park Royal (the latter two visited by Panel members). Most of the statutory frontline services have established links with colleges and training providers and the voluntary and community sector. However, these links can be very fragmented between services.

In terms of the capacity of employers to employ disabled people and other vulnerable groups, it is evident that there are still fundamental barriers experienced by disabled people and other vulnerable groups with relation to employment and skills, particularly for people with learning difficulties and disabilities and mental health difficulties. All of the statutory frontline services working with disabled people are frustrated by the lack of incentives for employers to employ disabled people along with the lack of sustainable funding to establish the necessary networks to support disabled people into employment.

These services also want to see the Council and its partners develop 'in house opportunities' for disabled people, such as building agreements into contracts with providers and working to overcome the barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

The Panel also discovered that in terms of data quality and sharing protocols, many of the services working with residents who are claiming out-of-work benefits are not able to collect data on their economic status. This is having an impact on those services that would benefit from being able to target residents who are workless. For example, the Panel heard that Children's Centres aim to support parents return to work through its links with JCP, but are not able to identify which clients are claiming out-of-work benefits, or where they are able to it's not of high quality.

Whereas data collection and quality is a problem, there are services in Ealing that collect good quality data on residents' economic status, including the Benefits Service in Customer Services.

In addition to this, the Panel concluded that there clearly existed a pressing need for staff training. Frontline customer-facing Council staff dealing with workless clients should be trained to refer onto employment support services.

Turning to frontline Council services themselves, the Panel discovered a mixed picture in terms of integration, data sharing, working with partners and outreach, localised workless initiatives but no over-arching joined up approach underpinned by a clear strategy. The following pages set out the precise role individual service areas of the Council playing in terms of worklessness and skills. Each provides a service overview, partnership arrangements and future opportunities for each service to develop an active role in the worklessness and skills agenda.

Youth and Connexions Service

Of interest to the Scrutiny Panel is Connexions' role in the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme and its targeted interventions with 16 to 19 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (though the Government agenda is currently heavily steered towards encouraging young people of this age group into education and training, with a much weaker focus on employment).

Service overview

The Panel heard that Ealing's Youth and Connexions Service is a key element of integrated youth support services within the borough. The Youth Service provides both universal and targeted provision for young people within youth centres, estate based provision and a range of specialist services and projects.

Connexions supports every young person to make successful transitions into adult life. Connexions personal advisors provide information, advice, guidance and support for all young people aged 13 –19, and up to age 25 for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). Support is provided in schools, colleges, community settings and from the Connexions one stop shop in central Ealing. In addition to providing universal support for all young people, support is targeted at young people that need it, including:

- young people that have poor educational attainment or attendance;
- looked after children;
- young offenders;
- those on the Apprenticeship Scheme;

- young people with LDD;
- Travellers;
- the Newly Arrived;
- lone parents;
- black and minority ethnic communities;
- young people from “hotspot” areas; and
- those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Connexions provide support to every young person to get into employment, education or training. Support includes supporting the young person to apply for college, writing CVs, career advice, interview skills and so on. The level of support largely depends on the young person’s needs.

Service customer base

In Ealing, there are approximately 18,000 young people in the Connexions cohort at any one time. Information on benefits status is not collected by Connexions, but the numbers of young people aged under 18 claiming benefits is relatively low compared with the figures for people aged 18+ because most young people are not eligible to claim benefits as they are in learning, living at home, etc.

Partnership arrangements

Connexions is a service that promotes partnership working, with the 14 –19 Partnership Board overseeing the Connexions strategy.

Ealing commissions Connexions services from a guidance company, CfBT Advice and Guidance Limited, who carries the major responsibility for meeting the NEET and other targets as well as performing a number of statutory duties on behalf of the Council, such as providing information, advice and guidance in schools, colleges and the community and co-coordinating statutory reviews with young people that have learning difficulties.

There is a Connexions One Stop Shop in central Ealing that is used by a variety of agencies to provide information and support to young people on topics including health, housing, education, employment and training, counselling, finance and volunteering. Connexions personal advisers offer support to individuals appropriate to their needs. This could range from information only to indepth guidance and support to help young people make choices about and access and sustain suitable education, training and employment.

Connexions does not have a very strong relationship with JCP, particularly around provision for young people with disabilities.

In term of the relationship with Ealing’s Youth Offending Service, Connexions has a personal adviser that is trained to support young offenders based in the Youth Offending Service. Connexions also has trained personal advisers based at the Horizon Centre to support looked after children, Mencap to work with disabled young people, YWCA to support young woman who are pregnant, lone parents or have been affected by poor sexual health, and the Study Centre (pupil referral unit).

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

A key part of the Connexions service is to ensure that young people are provided with information, advice, guidance and support to access opportunities in education, training and employment that are available both inside and outside the borough.

As such, Connexions holds the responsibility for meeting the NEET target set by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) – reducing the proportion of young people aged 16 –18 that are NEET. This target is also part of Ealing’s LAA and is subject to a challenging stretch target each year until 2010. The average reduction of 16–18 year olds in NEET between November 2007 and January 2008 was 326, or 5.9% against a target of 6.4%. Connexions targets considerable resources into supporting young people who are at risk of becoming NEET as well as identifying, supporting and tracking those who are NEET.

Connexions also supports the Council’s Apprenticeship Scheme by advertising the scheme to young people, helping to prepare young people through the application process and providing mentoring support for each young person joining the scheme from September 2008 onwards. To date, Connexions has offered two Apprenticeships: one Apprentice has been working in Perceval House for the last 12 months working for the Partnership Support Unit that provides management Information to Connexions related services to the six boroughs in west London; the second Apprentice has recently been appointed to work in the one stop shop starting in September.

In addition Connexions and Economic Development jointly fund a personal adviser to support Apprentices and their managers in the Council.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

The emerging Integrated Youth Support Service and Targeted Youth Support provide Connexions with opportunities to integrate more closely with other agencies and services and to share good practice and develop a shared database/information sharing alongside more effective joint working.

Leaving Care Service

Of further interest to the Scrutiny Panel is its willingness to develop partnerships to support more young people into education, training and employment, as well as the successes that the Leaving Care team has already had in this area.

Service overview

The Leaving Care Service currently provides services to 351 young people aged 16–24 who have been looked after by the Local Authority for a minimum of 13 weeks prior to their 18th birthday. The Looked After Children (LAC) and Leaving Care service delivers the following services to support to LAC and care leavers:

- Horizons Education and Achievement centre: a multi-disciplinary service including a connexions personal adviser and two full-time youth worker equivalents
- The LAC Education Team, including a post 16 teacher
- The Substance Misuse Team

- The LAC nurse
- Semi-Independence Outreach Team (SOT)
- Aim Higher: A mentoring service run by care leavers in Ealing for care leavers to support young people in education

Service customer base

As at 22nd August 2008, there were 351 young people in the Leaving Care Service, which are classified by the following three criteria:

- 98 young people are aged between 16–17 and are LAC (classified as 'Eligible')
- Four are aged 16–17 but no longer LAC (classified as 'Relevant')
- 249 are aged 18–24 and who were looked after between the ages of 16–17 ('Former Relevant')

The following numbers of young care leavers aged 19 were engaged in education training and employment:

- 2005/06 – 63.8%
- 2006/07 – 61.5%
- 2007/08 – 71%

This figure is classified as 'good' by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and in the highest attainment bracket for this performance indicator (PAF A4).

As at 22nd August 2008, there were a total of 351 young people in the Leaving Care Service aged 16–24. Of these:

- 43.8% were in further education (equates to 154 young people)
- 12.2% were in higher education (43 young people)
- 9.1% were employed either full-time or part-time (32 young people)

– Note: This figure does not include those engaged in education who are also in part-time employment, these have been captured under further and higher education categories.

- 3.7% were in school (13 young people)
- 0.2% were in training (1 young person)

30.1% of young people aged 16–20 in the Leaving Care Service are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET), which equates to 106 young people. A breakdown of these young people is as follows:

- 34.9% are classified as 'other' (37 young people)
- Many of these young people have been emotionally damaged due to the abuse they have suffered prior to becoming a LAC. 11 of these young people receive subsistence from the Local Authority as they are on Care Orders until their 18th birthday. The remaining 26 receive Jobseekers Allowance.
- 16.9% are either a parent or pregnant (18 young people)
- Ongoing work is taking place to reduce teenage pregnancy in the Leaving Care population. Of these young people, 15 claim Income Support plus Child Benefit, with the exception of one young person who is under 18 and for whom the Local

Authority still share parental responsibility. The remaining two young people are pregnant and claiming Income Support.

- 11.3% have substance misuse issues (12 young people)
 - These young people have serious substance misuse issues involving addiction to class A drugs, alcohol or solvents.
- 10.3% have a learning disability (11 young people)
 - Although many of Ealing's care leavers with a learning disability are in employment or education, there are 11 young people who are not engaged in employment or education. 3 of these young people have a high level of disability and claim the Incapacity Benefit including DLA. 6 have a mild learning disability and are claiming Jobseekers Allowance. The remaining 3 are subject to Care Orders until their 18th birthday and therefore the local Authority are responsible for their subsistence.
- 9.4% are in custody (10 young people)
 - Four of these young people were remanded to Local Authority Care due to their youth offending whilst living within their families. This subsequently made them eligible for a Leaving Care Service. The Leaving Care team work closely with the Youth Offending Service (and Connexions) to support young people into education or employment once they have been released.
- 8.4% have mental health difficulties (nine young people)
 - These young people have a diagnosed mental health condition which prevents them from working, such as schizophrenia or bi polar disorder. All are claiming Incapacity Benefits including DLA.
- 4.7% have poor health or a physical disability (five young people)
 - This includes one young person with terminal cancer, two young people with diagnosed chronic health conditions and two young people with visual impairments. Four young people claim Incapacity Benefits.
- 3.7% have an immigration status that does not allow them to work (four young people)
 - Subsistence provided by the Local Authority as unable to receive benefits.

The Leaving Care Service undertakes intensive targeted support with its young people who are NEET. For example:

- The Substance Misuse Team work with all of the 12 young people who are NEET with substance misuse issues to provide treatment, one-to-one outreach work along with identifying training, education and employment opportunities.
- The SOT and Horizons NEET outreach teams provide both one-to-one and group work with 140 young people per year.
- A Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) has recently been introduced for all young people in care aged 4–16 years in order to provide additional support. The aim of this tool is early identification of those children and young people who may develop emotional or mental health issues at the earliest opportunity in order to provide services via the PCT to meet these needs, thus reducing the numbers of 'other' and mental health category numbers in the future.

This year the SOT and Horizons NEET outreach teams will expand their targeted support to work with young parents to encourage them into training, education and employment

and are developing links with Children's Centres to provide childcare to young parents in order to pursue employment and education.

Partnership arrangements

The Panel were informed that there is good cross working in the following areas:

Health: The Children's Substance Misuse Team has excellent links with PCT and Adults Substance Misuse Services, providing rapid intervention for young people with substance misuse problems or at-risk of developing such problems. The aim is to evaluate, provide treatment and then to support the young person to make positive choices in relation to education and employment where possible.

Early Years: Work is beginning between the SOT and Early Years with regard to childcare to enable young mothers to return to education or employment.

Educational establishments: Thames Valley University and many of the local further education colleges have close links with the LAC Teacher's Education Team, Horizons and the ME mentoring project.

Housing: A joint training venture between Ealing Homes and the Leaving Care Service is offering a training package to care leavers to support them in maintaining their tenancies. The SOT also works closely with Supporting People to provide a nurturing and supportive after care service. Encouragement in education and employment is key to this.

Adults and children with additional needs: The protocol for transfer between Children's and Adults teams is currently being worked on at a strategic level to ensure each care leaver receives the best possible support into adulthood. Transition planning includes training, employment and education.

Youth Offending Service (YOS): The Leaving Care Service works closely with YOS to support offenders and for early identification of potential young offenders to carry out preventative work.

The feedback that the Leaving Care Service has received from its outreach teams is that care leavers in the hard to reach group of 'other' would benefit from Apprenticeships in local businesses which are very practical, such as mechanics, gardening, building and plumbing.

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

The Leaving Care Service plays a significant role in the worklessness and skills agenda. Care Leavers are vulnerable to social exclusion in many areas. As such the Leaving Care Service address all of the needs identified in the young person's Pathway Plan, a key feature of which is employment training and education (the Plan charts how the young person is going to make a successful transition into adulthood). The aim is to reduce the gap between those children who have been brought up within their families and those within the care system in relation to education and employment.

The Leaving Care Service has been using existing resources to achieve some excellent employment, education and training outcomes for its young people leaving care:

- Ealing continues to exceed targets for young Care Leavers aged 19 and in training, education or employment (PAF A4).
- Ealing is quoted as having exceptional performance in relation to the numbers of care leavers attending university, having maintained an average of 45 young people at university each year.
- 10 care leavers have found employment within the Council.
- The provision of a mentoring service run by care leavers for care leavers has proved invaluable in the high university and further education figures.

Future opportunities

The Panel were informed that the Leaving Care Service had identified the following opportunities [which it fully supported]:

- To work with the Economic Development Team on Local Authority and Local Area Agreement targets for worklessness and child poverty and to transfer learning within this area to the Leaving Care Service.
- Develop more opportunities for care leavers to gain work experience and Apprenticeships with Ealing contractors.
- To look for opportunities to overcome the social barrier of children who have grown up in generations of families who have not been in employment or with low educational aspirations – this cycle can be difficult to break.

Health and Adult Social Services

Integrated Mental Health Service

The Scrutiny Panel was interested in finding out how the service's intensive support relationship with residents who have been unemployed for long periods of time due to mental health difficulties and its willingness to support these residents to enter/re-enter the workforce or undergo training.

Service overview

Ealing's Integrated Mental Health Service provides a wide range of culturally diverse services for people aged 18 to 64 experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health difficulties. These services are mainly provided within the community in order to promote independence and wellbeing.

The service is comprised of the following teams:

- 4 x Community Mental Health Teams
- Assertive Outreach Team
- Early Intervention in Psychosis Service
- Day Services that deliver the health and social care agenda and out-of-hours social networks services e.g. Solace Centre

The service is also responsible for delivering the following:

- Rehabilitation
- Recovery and Independent Living Service
- Home treatment
- A&E liaison
- Psychological Therapy Services
- Art, music and drama and Occupational Therapy services
- A range on inpatient facilities.

Service customer base

As of July 2008, there were 3,500 service users accessing these services in the community, with 84 inpatient beds in use.

Many of these service users are on Incapacity Benefits, with some claiming Income Support. A recent survey of the inpatient wards revealed just one service user was employed of those currently admitted.

Partnership arrangements

The service works closely in partnership with the Council's Housing, Education, Children's and Family Services and Older People Services, along with the Probation Service and the police.

The service also has many working relationships with a wide range of partners from the voluntary and community and private sectors, as well as good partnership initiatives working closely with Primary Care, West London Mental Health Trust, the PCT and local colleges.

However, the service faces a significant barrier as it needs more local businesses to support the employment of people with mental health difficulties, in addition to developing 'in house opportunities'. It needs to build into its contracts with providers its expectations that they do employ those with disabilities.

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

The service is committed to working with service users to empower them, and enable them where possible to enter into further education and employment. Via the Mental Health Grant, the service offers a range of Vocational Taster Packages that are delivered in partnership with local colleges, as well as sponsoring individuals on training courses.

The service works closely with the voluntary and community sector to provide and deliver the social inclusion agenda and have engaged service users in permitted work posts, volunteer jobs and some have returned to employment, with others who have never previously worked, being supported to gain employment.

The Service offers via its Links Project (Mental Health Day Service) a buddy system, for those who need support to engage with education, leisure and work related opportunities.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

The following activities are currently underway, which will improve the service's capacity to contribute to the worklessness and skills agenda:

- There have been two vocational workers based in both of the Community Mental Health Team's for the past 12 months, with a further two to be in place by September making it a borough-wide service.
- Existing supported permitted work posts in place – trying to work with HR and Occupational Health in the Trust to formalise the arrangements.
- Possibility of work placements being explored with various central services including housing estates. So far contact made with Learning Curve to be a client for service users with mental health or learning difficulties who want work placements.
- Exploring possibility of Apprenticeships.
- Signed up to the Ealing Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.
- Service has made contact with David Etherington, from Middlesex University re. Ealing PCT job rotation pilot for IB claimants.
- Looking at briefings for HR in September regarding employees with mental health issues (through the Disability Sub-Group).

The Links Project:

The Links Project is a Day Service that runs from two geographical bases: one in the East of the Borough (Acton), and the other in the West of the Borough (Greenford). Links are currently running a training programme to empower people living with mental health problems to return to work or gain employment. This may be:

- Supported permitted earnings
- Voluntary employment
- Full time work

The training programme runs for 10 weeks and is split into two parts. The first part consists of six weeks in a group setting using discussion and role-play to prepare individuals to apply for work, including:

- CV writing and covering letters
- Personal presentation
- Interview techniques (mock interviews are held which are recorded with permission from SU's)
- Mock application form filling
- Rights and responsibilities within the workplace
- Supporting individuals to access relevant training/education

During the last four weeks the participants will be seen on an individual basis to source employment. This may include:

- Attending job fairs
- Sourcing jobs via internet, newspapers, job centre etc
- Accessing library facilities
- Handing CV to prospective employers who currently have no vacancies

Links is also hosting a course run by West London College on retail, which around six clients currently access.

Links network with other employment services, such as Reed, Citizens Trust and Jobcentre Plus. Links is also building relationships with voluntary employment organisations to enable individuals to gain valuable work experience.

For those that secure work Links offer ongoing support and advice to enable individuals to maintain their employment status. Links is currently looking at the possibility of offering advocacy and support to both the employer as well as the employee.

Adult Disability Services – Learning Curve

Service overview

Learning Curve is an employment and training centre for adults aged 18 and over with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs. Its aim is to help people obtain the skills needed to get into work.

Learning Curve offers direct support but can also refer to more appropriate agencies if needed. Some Day Services in Disabilities also provide support and advice to assist people into employment.

Service customer base

All clients attending Learning Curve must be out of work and are assessed to determine their training and/or employment support needs. As such, all clients are benefit claimants. Approximately 25% claim the Incapacity Benefit, 10% Job Seekers Allowance, 10% Income Support and with the remainder claiming Disability Living Allowance.

Learning Curve currently has 102 registered clients. Over two thirds of these clients have a learning disability, with the remaining clients having mental health needs, physical disabilities or multiple needs.

Partnership arrangements

Learning Curve has referral arrangements set up with the following agencies:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Connexions
- Care Management Teams
- Colleges
- Other training providers
- Learning & Skills Council
- London Development Agency
- Schools

Learning Curve links with other agencies via the following strategic partnerships:

- Ealing Local Strategic Partnership
- Social Inclusion Network (PCT, Ealing Acute Hospital Trust, WLMHT)
- Learning disabilities partnership board
- Physical disabilities partnership board
- Valuing People Leaders Network (London region)

- Ealing's skills and employment third tier partnership

Learning Curve currently has contracts for vocational training and employment support for disabled adults with:

- London Development Agency in partnership with Ealing MENCAP and Shaw Trust
- London West Learning and Skills Council in partnership with Ealing MENCAP

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

Learning Curve has taken the lead on Ealing's Disability Employment Strategy, which is being developed by the Employment sub group that reports into the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Learning Curve is a fully accredited training centre and provides training in basic skills, catering, stores and warehousing, horticulture and information technology. It runs a community café called Café Eat, which earns money through external catering. Café Eat was originally set up with SRB funds and offers work experience placements to our students. Learning Curve can also offer basic entry-level food preparation courses (although not at the moment as there isn't a skills gap). The Café is open to the public and offers an external buffet service.

Learning Curve is experiencing the following barriers:

- External funding is outcome based in terms of primarily qualification and job outcomes, which means that lower achievers and those with high support needs are often being overlooked.
- Funding for people with disabilities needs to be extended to support them into employment. Current funding is on a one-year basis, which is insufficient to address the needs of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems that have been out of the labour market/ have no experience of employment.

Future opportunities

After a slow start in Ealing there has been good progress over the past year regarding developing the employment and skills agenda, which needs to be consolidated.

Statutory employers, including the Council, need to do more to overcome the barriers to employment of people with disabilities e.g. a more proactive response by HR departments; more focussed recruitment; and support for reasonable adjustments in respect of current employees (with a disability).

Government policy and funding is not sufficient to meet the challenges of difficult to reach groups, such as people with learning disabilities and mental health problems, as funding is too short-term.

Community Benefits Team

The Panel was interested in the success that the small Community Benefits Team has achieved in its hand-on support to vulnerable people, its understanding of the clients personal situation and its potential ability to refer clients who are claiming the Incapacity Benefit and Income Support who may wish to return to work.

Service overview

The Community Benefits Team provides advice and assistance on welfare benefits for any resident, whether they are social care client or not, to maximise their benefits. However, there is a focus on vulnerable client groups such as people with mental health needs, physical disabilities and older people. The team supports clients when they can be at their most vulnerable to navigate red tape bureaucracy and are unsure where else they can go for advice and support.

The team provides help with:

- identifying appropriate benefits and services;
- completing and submitting claims;
- making sure those in need receive financial help;
- individual casework on welfare benefits of a complex nature; and
- information, advice and practical assistance in pursuing applications for any UK benefit up to, and including, representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals.

The team also works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and are currently developing a 'joint visiting' team scheme to help people to live full and independent lives.

In four years of operation, the team has secured an additional £3.75million in income for its clients. This has helped the local economy, provided extra Council income, helped clients become better off and is a good example of how the Council demonstrates a positive commitment to its social responsibilities.

Service customer base

The team works with a variety of clients, many of who are sick or disabled. About half of the team's client base are over the age of 65, and therefore not of direct interest to this particular scrutiny panel. The remaining clients include people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation, young adults and people with mental health problems.

It is known that a few of the team's clients are claiming Jobseekers Allowance, with most claiming the Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. However, as a rule the team does not collect this data from the Advice Line customers.

Partnership arrangements

The team has close referral arrangements in place with the organisations represented on the Ealing Community Legal Service Partnership, particularly Age Concern and Law For All.

The team also has a formal joint working partnership agreement with the Pensions Service (DWP). It also works in partnership to deliver its services, which are delivered through monthly advice clinics in five Mental Health Resource Centres across Ealing. The team also holds regular advice clinics at Ealing Carers Centre, Age Concern and St. Bernard's Work Rehab Unit amongst others.

The main barrier experienced by the team in working with partners is IT compatibility. The team delivers across a wide variety of care management service areas, which requires flexible working. So when IT falls down the service inevitably suffers.

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

The team delivers a small Supported Permitted Work 'bolt-on' project under the New deal for the Disabled, employing three people on a part-time basis, two of whom are former service users on long-term Incapacity Benefit. These individuals are allowed to keep their Incapacity Benefits, Disability living Allowance etc, and receive small remuneration for a max of 16 hours a week each. They have been supervised and trained to deliver all aspects of our team's services and operate according to their individual abilities including representation at Tribunal hearings. One of them is currently looking for full time employment in our field of work. We would like to expand upon this type of scheme.

The team has also hosted one successful Social Work Student Placement in co-operation with Social Services Training, for a student attending Brunel University.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

The teams requires a small amount of 'top-up' funding to enable it to employ more supported workers under the New Deal for the Disabled scheme; which has proven to be extremely cost effective as the workers are able keep their welfare state benefits and receive wages on top within DWP statutory limits.

Supporting People

Supporting People intervene with the most vulnerable people in the borough and know their economic status. The Supporting People (SP) programme commissions and provides housing related support services for vulnerable people in Ealing. Its services are funded through a grant payment from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which is currently ring fenced for the provision of housing related support services.

SP provides practical housing related support services that aim to develop or maintain the ability of vulnerable people to live independently, often in their own homes. Support includes:

- help with obtaining benefits;
- access to life skills; and
- signposting and assisting people to access other services.

SP currently commissions more than 200 services from more than 60 providers. These services include:

- floating support services delivered to people in their own homes for 1–2 hours a week;
- accommodation based services, such as women’s refuge services;
- sheltered housing; and
- community alarm services for vulnerable people living in the community.

Service customer base

SP is currently supporting more than 4,000 people to live independently, including:

- Older people with support needs
- People fleeing domestic violence
- People with Learning Difficulties
- Vulnerable young people and care leavers
- Homeless families

The majority of SP clients are older people above retirement age, which is not of specific interest to this scrutiny panel as they are not eligible to receive Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Income support. The next largest group is people with mental health problems and disabled people, followed by people with generic support needs, vulnerable young people, offenders and people at risk of offending and homeless families.

SP tracks the economic status of its clients, based on whether they are in full-time employment, part-time employment, participating in a government training programme, are seeking employment, are not seeking employment, are long-term sick or disabled, retired or a student. In addition, SP recently held a consultation with its clients to refresh the SP five-year strategy, and it was found that service users felt strongly that more services were needed around helping people back to work or education. This was a particular issue for single homeless people with support needs and people with mental health problems.

Partnership arrangements

SP is a multi-agency partnership, with many of the services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations or social housing providers.

Referrals for access to the services come from a wide variety of sources, including Housing, Adults Services, the PCT, voluntary sector organisations, the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team and the Probation Service.

One of the key measures of performance for SP services is how the providers links and signposts with relevant organisations to support vulnerable people. This may include links with colleges, health centres, GP’s and so on.

SP’s current funding conditions prevent the team from directly funding services around worklessness, but there is willingness from SPs providers and partners to engage in joint work and commissioning around this agenda.

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

SP has been key in maintaining the independence of vulnerable people through provision of supported housing and housing related support services. These services help people to maintain their tenancies and provide additional support in terms of independence, which includes returning to employment and education. Supported housing also contributes to reducing re-offending rates and helping people to successfully avoid relapses for substance misuse or hospital re-admission.

Future opportunities

SP wishes to explore further options in 2009/10, once it has clarity around its grant funding. SP will also be submitting a bid for Area Based Grant to assist vulnerable people back into the workplace for 2009/10.

Customer Services

Benefits Service

Of key interest to the scrutiny panel is the quality of the worklessness information captured by the service on its large customer database, which may allow for intelligence gathering and the potential for direct interventions.

Service overview

The main purpose of the Benefits Service is to administer housing benefit, Council tax benefit and local housing allowance on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The service currently pays benefits to over 30,000 households in the borough. It makes 100,000 decisions on benefit claims, deals with over 150,000 customer transactions and generates excess of 750,000 payments and awards, totalling £197 million in 2007/08.

The key priority of the service is to contribute to the Council's wider corporate ambitions, strategies and priorities for improvements and include customers in the designing and delivery of the service to meet their needs.

The service aims to continue improvements in respect of claims processing performance and is continuing its work with the DWP and partners to achieve this and make an important contribution to the Council's commitment to be a consistently high performing organisation focussed on the needs of our communities.

Service customer base

Benefits Services has a customer base of 30,000 which includes customers aged between 12 and 103.

The service knows the ethnicity of around 30% of its customer base. This percentage is growing, but will never be 100% as information for ethnic monitoring is given voluntarily.

The Housing and Council Tax Benefit are means tested and consequently the service holds details of its customer's financial circumstances. In all cases it is known if the

customer is claiming Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support. Incapacity Benefit is known where it is not an underlying award. With relation to the Housing Benefit, details are also recorded of the claimant's household.

Partnership arrangements

The Benefits Service does not currently have any formal partnership links other than with DWP. However, the service is currently exploring opportunities with Jobcentre Plus and working with internal contacts in Housing and Economic Development. The service recognises that more contacts need to be made to encourage partnership working.

Current role in the worklessness and skills agenda

The Benefits Service will be training more than 70 staff on the implications of the introduction of Employment Support Allowance (ESA), which comes into effect from 27 October 2008.

The Benefits Service involvement in the worklessness and skills agenda to date has been somewhat limited. However, the service is looking for opportunities to be more involved and as such staff from the Benefits Service attended a meeting in July chaired by Ealing's Economic Development Manager together with representatives from Housing's Help Team and Jobcentre Plus concerning how the various partners could work together on the issue of worklessness. It is hoped that this meeting is only the start of an ongoing dialogue between partners to further the understanding and role that each can play in reducing the level of worklessness in the borough.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

The Benefits Service is keen to be involved in the worklessness and skills agenda in Ealing, however the potential for any additional activities to be carried out by the service is restricted by the need for additional funds. Given the current economic climate, it's likely that unemployment will increase over the medium term which means that the Benefits Service's capacity to deal with its core function will be stretched as it is without having to absorb any additional duties.

It is possible to extract anonymous data from the Benefits Service database on those customers who are not working, or who are not in receipt of Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or the Incapacity benefit. It's also possible to extract details of customers by postcode and potentially by ward with the assistance of the GIS team. GIS mapping would be possible for customers with different income types, age profiles, Lone Parent status and so on. There are many variations possible.

Furthermore, analysis of the data held on the database may establish whether the customer would benefit from a referral to employment training or support. Details of whether a customer is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (care or mobility) and the rate (lower, middle or higher) may shed light on a customer's ability to work.

However, it's essential to note that all information provided by customers to Benefits Services is restricted to staff within the Benefits Service under the Data Protection Act and the guidance issued to us by the DWP. If it was considered in the customer's best interest to make contact with them regarding worklessness this could be done using a Benefit Service letterhead.

Housing

Housing

Of interest to the Scrutiny Panel is the relationship between social housing and worklessness, and the opportunities for housing-related policies to provide better outcomes for social tenants.

Service overview

The Council's Housing service provides services in relation to the Council's role as a landlord including:

- Ensuring a high quality management service for the Council's housing stock through intelligent Clienting
- Effective Clienting of the delivery of the decent homes standards by Ealing Home through a programme of capital works
- Housing management of temporary and hostel accommodation
- Supporting services to residents in sheltered housing

The Council's Housing service also plays a strategic role, which includes:

- Identifying the demand for housing across all tenures
- Enabling the supply of permanent housing across all tenures
- Ensuring an adequate supply of temporary accommodation
- Delivery of duties to homeless households
- Delivery of an advice service to prevent homelessness
- Maintaining the housing register and managing the allocation of social housing through choice based lettings
- Setting the Council's housing strategy and responding to national and London wide housing policy
- Ensuring resident involvement in housing services
- Addressing private sector housing issues including disrepair, decent homes, and minimising empty properties
- Addressing fuel poverty across all tenures.

Service customer base

There are about 23,000 households registered on Ealing's Housing Register (housing waiting list). These customers are residents of the borough, including tenants and lessees, homeless households, those in temporary accommodation, private rented residents, owner occupied and sheltered housing tenants.

Households that approach the Housing Application and Homelessness services are asked questions about their income, savings and benefit dependency.

As of November 2007, the Housing service knew of 24,520 residents claiming the following out-of-work benefits:

- Job Seekers: 4,790
- Lone parent: 5,720
- Incapacity Benefit: 12,680

- Disabled: 1,330

Based on the West London Accommodation survey carried out in October to November 2007, 655 customers were asked if they would like to be put in touch with organisations that could help them find a job, which 155 customers responded positively to. They were also asked if they require help getting into training, which 170 customers responded positively to. Also, 141 customers indicated that they would like to meet an employment and training advisor.

Partnership arrangements

Ealing's Housing service has a number of current cross-departmental and partnership working arrangements in place, including:

- HELP: Ealing has taken part in a West London project called the Housing and Employment Link Project (HELP) aimed at testing ways of improving homeless people's access to skills and employment. Ealing's housing options staff have been trained to make referrals to skills and employment providers and discuss employment options with their clients.
- A partnership between RSL forum members and the Economic Development Team to raise awareness and develop capacity of the RSL tenants in Ealing with employment opportunities.
- A partnership between Ealing Homes and the Economic Development Team to set up the Apprenticeship Scheme.

Role in the worklessness and skills agenda

The Housing service is currently playing the following role in the worklessness and skills agenda:

- RSL forum members play a role in raising awareness amongst RSL tenants.
- Ealing Homes is participating in the Apprenticeship Scheme.
- HELP contributes to improvement of employment opportunities for Ealing residents to tackle long-term unemployment and benefit dependency.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

About 19% of Ealing housing stock is managed through Ealing Homes and other RSLs.

It is known that people who live in social housing are far more likely to be workless. The hourly rates of pay are below average for nearly 80% of social housing tenants who are employed, offering little incentive to work.

Ealing has identified seven estates in the high intervention band and has taken a holistic approach to the regenerate of its estates creating further opportunities for tenants to seek employment.

The Housing service claims that its key barrier to participating more effectively in the worklessness and skills agenda is data quality. The following actions would provide an increased opportunity for Housing:

- collecting info by ward in order to map where workless people live;
- introducing more affordable housing options;
- making better use of existing data; and
- improving info sharing between agencies across the borough.

Ealing Homes

Service overview

Ealing Homes (EH) was formed as an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) in September 2004 to manage the Council stock on behalf of Ealing Council. Although the Council owns EH as its only shareholder, EH is a company that has its own Constitution and Board of Directors who are responsible for the operational direction of the company.

EH is responsible for the following landlord functions:

- Housing and estates management
- Rent collection and arrears management
- Responsive repairs and maintenance
- Planned repairs and major works
- Leasehold management
- Tenant participation
- Management of non-residential HRA assets

Ealing has a mixed property portfolio of traditional and non-traditional construction, however some estates suffer from severe design and layout problems that prohibit any attempts to produce sustainable decent homes without substantial additional investment to possibly demolish and rebuild whole or parts of some estates.

Service customer base

EH manages 12,713 Council tenancies and 4,953 leasehold homes. The majority of the homes are situated on 33 estates. Of these tenants:

- The majority of tenants are White British (39.19%), which is followed by Black African (10.29%).
- 25.56% of tenants consider themselves to have a disability.
- The majority of tenants are aged 35–44 (24.76%).
- 23.5% of tenants are over 65 years old
- 63% of tenants are women
- 66% of EH tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

According to data collected by the Council, we know that ‘nearly two-fifths (19%) of Ealing’s households live in socially rented accommodation – 12% Council rented and 7% from a housing association or registered social landlord. The proportion of people living in social rented accommodation in Ealing is similar to that of Outer London as a whole and lower than the London average.

Partnership arrangements

EH have a number of partnerships in place to deliver worklessness and skills initiatives, for example EH works in partnership with the Council and Catalyst Community Housing as well as training providers and community organisations on a number of employment and training initiatives, which are outlined in the section below.

EH is a member of the Local Strategic Partnership and has Service Level Agreements with:

- TIDE: provides affordable training for voluntary and community groups in the boroughs of Ealing, Brent and Harrow. They run three short course programmes per year and also deliver in-house training.
- Social Services
- Mental Health Team
- Victim Support

Role in the worklessness and skills agenda

As a housing management contractor, EH has an important role in the worklessness and skills agenda. Also, the highest levels of worklessness in the borough are concentrated in EH estates. As part of its Financial Inclusion Strategy, EH worklessness and skills initiatives includes the following Apprenticeship opportunities:

Ealing Homes Apprenticeships: In recognition that young people are under represented in EH, in September EH will be recruiting three Apprentices (aged 16–24) living in social housing to build careers in the Housing Sector and to provide these young unemployed people an opportunity into paid work. They will study for NVQ Level 2 over a two-year period. Recruitment starts in September 2008 for the Apprentices, who will be recruited into the Finance, Asset and Investment and Human Resources teams. They will initially be paid £160 per week for a 35-hour working week, with a pay review after six months and a possibility to rise by increments to £200 after 18 months. These are being recruited in partnership with Ealing's Economic Development Team.

The aim of this initiative is to:

- Provide high quality training opportunities to young people in order to give them a better chance in obtaining sustained employment at the start of their adult life, and
- Use Ealing Homes key role in the regeneration of Ealing to engage and train young and unemployed people in disadvantaged areas as part of the social regeneration process.

Construction Apprenticeships:

EH could be in a position to facilitate Apprenticeships through its investment in the Decent Homes Scheme. Discussions have taken place with EH's Partner Contractors with regard to Apprenticeships on future contracts. These will be subject to negotiation with individual contractors.

Decent Homes contractors as part of their contracts will be required:

- to provide apprenticeships recruited by EH or another agreed source; and
- in addition to this, provide some unwaged work experience opportunities.

All framework contractors have a target of achieving 20% of local labour, which is hoped will improved upon. EH is also involved in the other following worklessness and skills activities:

- EH has a partnership with the Building One Stop Shop (BOSS), to which Action Acton provides skilled local labour opportunities for contractors.
- PATH provided a trainee for EH's Apprenticeship Project Manager role.
- EH was successful as part of bid with Catalyst Housing Association to undertake the 'moving into employment' project.
- EH is working with repairs contactors on worklessness and training initiatives, including a First Start project for young people project. As part of this project, Kiers trained 10 young residents for 10 weeks across all trades. Three Apprenticeships were awarded at the end of the programme. Kiers currently employs 65% of its workforce from Ealing Council and surrounding boroughs.
- EH is delivering a volunteers scheme, which invests in residents to do work experience in partnership with Ealing Volunteer bureau.
- EH is delivering residents' training program, tailor-made by Ealing CVS, covering IT skills, resident involvement and fundraising.
- Working in partnership with Catalyst Housing in Ealing to deliver an accredited resident training programme in youth work, resident involvement and volunteering, preparing for work and housing studies.
- Sponsored three young residents on an accredited course in youth work, and funded their project to engage with young residents on their estates.
- Publish a training calendar on the internet so that residents are aware of the training provided by Ealing Homes, as well as partner agencies.
- Provide free community centre usage as in-kind funding to Extended Schools Services; training includes ESOL classes among others, to enable residents to use their skills on the UK labour market.
- Publish bi-monthly 'Active Communities' newsletter, send out to residents from 'Interested Residents' database, advertising EH training opportunities and training initiatives delivered by the residents themselves.
- EH provided in-kind support for residents and groups delivering training by providing free of charge space in EH community centres.
- Golf Links IT suite provides training for local residents
- Trafford Hall provides residential training for residents and community volunteers.
- Choosingchange: provides training for tenant and community groups
- Instepservices: a national organisation providing training for residents of social housing

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

EH would welcome ideas, proposals or partnerships for other initiatives that could be adopted and included in its Financial Inclusion Strategy and which would assist its residents into employment.

Recommendation 7

7 That all frontline housing officers are trained to develop the skills in order to be able to refer clients to relevant employment and skills support agencies.

Safer Communities

Community Safety

The Scrutiny Panel was informed of team's strong partnership arrangements and its leadership role amongst these partnerships.

Service overview

The Community Safety team is the main point of contact between the Council and the police and provides the strategic direction and operational support for the Safer Ealing Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership).

The team carries out a range of activities including:

- providing anti-social behaviour casework services to private homeowners and tenants;
- delivering crime reduction and community reassurance projects locally through the Community Safety Liaison Officers;
- running the Council's alley gating scheme;
- securing vulnerable properties;
- supporting victims of crime through the burglary and sanctuary projects;
- running the boroughs Acceptable Behaviour Contract scheme;
- coordinating partnership legal enforcement such as ASBO's, crack house closures, dispersal orders and drinking control zones;
- undertaking crime analysis to highlight hotspot areas and emerging crime trends; and
- supporting partner agencies in meeting their duties under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

In addition to this, the team produces the Safer Ealing partnership plan and strategic assessment (both statutory requirements) and manages the Section 115 Information Sharing Protocol. The team also supports and assists all of the Safer Neighbourhood Police teams across the borough.

Service customer base

The team respond to all sections of the community. Some of our customers may be victims of crime, some may be just people we meet whilst working in the community. There is no one-target customer group.

The Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service primarily deals with ex-offenders. It can be assumed as many ex-offenders struggle to find work that they will be claiming such benefits. As such, ex-offenders could benefit from a more co-ordinated approach to

support into getting into work, whilst there are a number of projects operating on the borough; it is often dependant on insecure funding streams or the voluntary sector.

Partnership arrangements

Community Safety has the following partnerships in place:

Safer Ealing Partnership

Managed by the Community Safety team, the Safer Ealing Partnership is an integrated partnership that oversees the functions and statutory responsibilities of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and the Youth Offending Service.

Community Payback

Partners include the police, the Community Safety team and The Probation Service. Community Payback is a reparation scheme to give offenders practical employment skills (painting, carpentry etc.) and to 'give back' to the local community. Ex-offenders have found employment through involvement with the scheme.

Prolific Priority Offenders Panel

A multi-agency sub-group of the Safer Ealing Partnership that reviews the key offenders in the borough, which includes identifying needs around employment and housing.

Supporting Others through Volunteer Action project (SOVA)

Funded by the Community Safety team through SSCF, this project is aimed at giving life skills to young offenders on the borough.

The Panel heard that the service felt that much of the work being done by these partnerships was ad-hoc and somewhat disjointed in terms of funding.

Future opportunities for the worklessness and skills agenda

The team does not currently play a strong role in the worklessness and skills agenda, however it's key role in the abovementioned partnerships puts the team in a strong position to lead the co-ordination of worklessness and skills activities. For example, the Safer Ealing Partnership could play a key role in co-ordinating more work on the resettlement of offenders. The key barrier currently preventing this is the lack of funding for these activities and the lack of a strategic lead on this agenda.

Children's Centres

The aim of Children's Centres is to deliver integrated services and information to children and families so that children can have the best start in life and fulfil their potential. Ealing has 22 designated Children's Centres (Phase 1 & 2) and another 6 planned for Phase 3. Of the current 22 Centres, 19 of which are in the 30% most deprived areas of the borough. The remaining 3 fall within the other 70% of the borough. Each Centre has an allocated catchment area based on the number of children within their wards (Appendix 1-3).

Children's Centres work to a Core Offer of essential services and information they must provide. These include; integrated early education and childcare, parent support, health care and helping parents return to work. Children's Centres may link to 'satellite' centres in order to provide the whole offer.

The services provided by Children's Centres are monitored through bespoke software which is currently being used by 13 centres. A system has also been implemented to assist the management of childcare.

There are 20750 children 0-4 in Ealing. These have been divided between centres to form catchment areas for each centre (Appendix 3)

5520 of the children in Ealing are dependant on workless benefits and reside in the following areas:

- Acton: 1080
- Central Ealing: 1290
- Southall: 1380
- Northolt: 1770

To date the service's recorded reach to children is 3959 and it had contact with them 39000 times. In addition the service had reached 3540 carers and had contact with them nearly 32000 times.

Provisional data suggests that families' ethnicity is generally representative of the borough as a whole. The three main ethnicity groups being White British, Asian and Black.

Northolt has the highest number of children dependant on workless benefits with 1770. The centres are attracting parents and carers in the community as 1264 were registered at just four centres in the area. However, what centres cannot currently report with confidence is how many of these are claiming out of work benefits. This is mainly due to parents/carers reluctance to provide what they consider to be very private information. This issue has been raised by centres across the borough and as a result CCs are looking at ways through which it can improve this area of data collection. Anecdotal evidence suggests a high number of parents and carers are in receipt of out of work benefits in areas such as Southall, Acton and Northolt.

41.7% of male and 58% of female lone parents are economically inactive (2001 census). It is not possible to report on the number of lone parents we have registered at the borough's centres. This is another key area for development in terms of data collection and staff training.

A borough wide exercise is underway to raise staff awareness of child poverty and worklessness. Using The Together for Children Poverty toolkit Centres can assess their current knowledge and address gaps. Individual needs assessments are already underway with some Centres using Jobcentre Plus' calculator which works out how much better parents would be financially by working and not claiming benefits. There is also a Working Tax Credit calculator being used which calculates how much they can claim depending on their current circumstances or if they return to work.

Centres currently refer to Jobcentre Plus, other Centres, external organisations, partners and training providers for services they currently do not provide.

Children's Centres are divided into quadrants with quarterly Area Partnership meetings held to discuss the needs and provision within each area. Children's Centres also work with the Family Information Service to ensure information held is correct and up to date. Relevant information from the Research & Consultation (Policy & Performance) team is disseminated to centres; key data is discussed at Area Partnership meetings and used to inform services. Children's Centre team also works closely with the PCT for advice and information sharing.

The Early Years Business Support Manager worked with Southall based Small to Medium size Enterprises (SMEs), two nurseries and Heathrow City Partnership to formulate a bid to offer nursery places for parents whilst they worked at a local SMEs. The bid was successful a feasibility study is underway.

Centres have made links with services within their areas for referrals, which include GP surgeries, colleges and training providers.

Children's Centres are committed to reducing the number of children living in poverty mainly through helping parents back to work. This is achieved through:

- Centre staff providing advice to parents
- Use of Jobcentre Plus and Working Tax Credit calculators
- Service Level Agreements between Centres and Jobcentre Plus
- Advice on Working Tax Credit and the children care element by means of posters, leaflets and further contact details.
- Information on events such as workshops being held by Jobcentre Plus' Lone Parent Advisors
- Jobcentre Plus list of vacancies
- running events at some Centres
- Internet kiosks
- Heathrow City Partnership provides one to one advice on childcare funding and access to work schemes.
- ESOL for Work training
- Sign posting and referrals between Centres and external organisations and partners
- Creating working links between the Family Information Service and Children's Centres for information sharing and referrals
- A joint piece of work between the Children's Centres, Extended Schools, Adult Learning and Jobcentre Plus is underway to create crèche places in the children's centres linked to ESOL classes and will begin delivery in September 2008.
- A Children's Centre Worklessness group has been formed comprising of key partners, local authority, PCT and Children's Centres to formulate a plan to address worklessness. This group will initially concentrate on Northolt and share it's findings across the borough. (Appendix 5)
- Centres building new partnerships locally
- Family Information Service's targeted recruitment of lone parents for vacancies within childcare
- Childcare Sufficiency review and subsequent actions to increase childcare
- Childcare Affordability Programme 1 funding provides subsidised childcare and the funding has been used by approximately 400 children since its introduction in November 2005

- Childcare Affordability Programme 2 is covers the full cost of childcare for short and long term training, back to work and volunteers. Since its introduction in April 07 we have provided 105 free childcare places.
- Commitment from LBE's Economic Development Unit to work with Children's Centres to reduce worklessness amongst parents with young children
- Developing childcare services linked with training needs of the individual. For example, offering crèches for 'ESOL for work' classes.
- The completion of Phase 3 centres will allow dissemination to an even wider audience information on worklessness support and opportunities available from Children's Centres.
- Findings of the Northolt worklessness group will inform service development within the area and good practice will be shared throughout the borough
- Continued and consistent promotion of Working Tax Credit and the take up of the childcare element to help people back to work
- Each centre to have a nominated Working Tax Advisor who will be the main contact for both parents and the FIS
- Continue the efforts and development of partnership working to provide a seamless service to encourage and support employment.
- Reed employment are delivering a Pathways to Work programme in Ealing. Opportunity for Children's Centre to work with them.

People housed in private properties as opposed to Council properties are reported to be particularly disadvantaged; employment will effect their portion of rent payable to well above that of someone living in a Council property. This will need to be considered by staff when advising parents and carers.

The availability of crèche places would allow more parents to access training and back to work support (i.e. workshops, interviews, volunteering etc).

Working Tax Credit has complicated eligibility criteria. Even with financial support, childcare needs to be affordable. Parents are carers are concerned about over payment and sharing of their personal details. Consistent and continued information, advice and support is required to encourage take-up.

Opportunities

There is a lot of Government policy driving integrated and targeted support, particularly around children, young people and families, whose established partnerships and links are to be used as an opportunity.

There are lots of community hubs located around the borough from which residents are currently able to receive support, including for employment and training. Many of these are located within the most deprived areas, which coincide with the worst performing super output areas (local neighbourhoods).

Several of the Council's statutory frontline services come into direct contact with residents who are claiming out-of-work benefits on a regular basis. Many of which develop ongoing relationships of support with these residents.

The Panel have noted that there are a lot of small-scale worklessness and skills activities occurring throughout the Council but that there is no strategic co-ordination of them under the umbrella of a Worklessness and Skills Strategy.

Conclusions

The frontline services outlined in this report need to be committed to the LSP's third tier Skills and Employment Group in order to develop partnerships and joint working arrangements, as well as to link into community-based networks, to maximise outcomes for worklessness and skills.

There is a lot of localised support being provided for residents in the super output areas with the highest levels of residents claiming out-of-work benefits. The Skills and Employment Group could work to consolidate these activities and improve the links between statutory services with local colleges, training providers, employers and community organisations. This would make it easier for frontline staff to refer workless clients to the right support.

Standard levels of quality need to be applied to all provision to ensure that it is best meeting the needs of job seekers and employers. These standards would go beyond meeting hard outputs (such as job outcomes) to measure the experiences of clients and what specific value the support adds to the range of provision in the borough.

Relationships need to be strengthened with services such as Connexions and Leaving Care who are working with young people approaching adulthood who are not in education, training or employment. There are many opportunities with relation to Apprenticeships and work experience, which should be fostered by both the Council and our regeneration partners.

Work being done to support disadvantaged and vulnerable job seekers through the application and interview process needs to be built upon to get more people into jobs, in particular for disabled people and people with mental health difficulties.

Supporting the employer through the recruitment and interview process would enable them to offer opportunities to vulnerable and disadvantaged job seekers, and to ensure that they are able to make reasonable adjustments to employ jobseekers with a particular need e.g. lone parents and disabled people.

Developing local data sharing protocols between services and commissioned employment support providers would enable them to share intelligence and provide more effective and targeted support for out-of-work residents. A co-ordination role via the LSP third tier Skills and Employment Group would help in developing data sharing protocols for a central data source for partners and in managing data protection issues.

Improving the co-ordination of employment support services would mean that job seekers would be less likely to get "stuck" in the system or drop out altogether. Developing consistent client tracking mechanisms across services would help individuals to be appropriately supported throughout their pathways towards employment.

Frontline customer-facing Council staff dealing with workless clients would benefit from training on referring clients onto employment support services. The training would be most useful if it was developed by an expert in the field, such as the Economic Development Team, who would work with service areas to identify training needs and develop programme of workshops and events.

Recommendations 8-14

8 That Economic Development undertake high level negotiations with Jobcentre Plus in order to attain more flexibility in targeting provision for worklessness at priority neighbourhoods, in order for the Council and its partners to address NI 153.

9 That in order to continue the process of improving the local delivery infrastructure, one full-time fundraising officer be recruited on behalf of the Skills and Employment Group to concentrate solely on employment and skills funding.

10 That Economic Development carry out or commission a mapping exercise to identify the various employment and skills support service providers operating within Ealing in order to establish gaps in provision.

11 That Economic Development carry out or commission a further mapping exercise to identify how many people in the borough do not have a level 2 qualification and to identify the number of Ealing residents whose level of English is below Level 1.

12 That the Economic Development Team should take the lead on developing a Data Sharing Protocol starting a feasibility study and with a view to rolling out a full model late in 2009. This work should be reported to and guided by the LSP Third Tier Skills and Employment Group.

13 That Economic Development set up an employer engagement group to develop a worklessness strategy and a more co-ordinated approach. This would help develop a more co-ordinated employer offer for the borough building on what already exists. This improved co-ordination will be underpinned by local commissioning.

14 That Economic Development manage and develop the Jobs Pledge programme and roll it out across the Local Strategic Partnership.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Theme 3 – Working with employers and Ealing Council as an employer

Ealing's Strategic Procurement Team

On Monday 20th October 2008, the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Rajinder Mann, met with the Head of Strategic Procurement, Laura Langstaff, and the Economic Development Team to discuss the opportunities for the Council's procurement processes to promote local employment and skills.

It was established that the Economic Development Team should take the strategic lead for negotiating local employment and skills opportunities with the Council's services with regard to s106 agreements, as Strategic Procurement are autonomous from individual s106 agreements.

Recommendation 15

15 That the Council gives consideration to making the resources available for the Economic Development Team to take a strategic lead on negotiating local employment and skills opportunities within s106 agreements.

It was recognised that the Council's procurement processes could and should be exploited to create local employment and skills opportunities. One such example was the negotiation of local labour clauses placing an obligation on the contractor to employ local people. Greenwich and Brent Council's were cited as best practice examples as they've achieved success in this area, furthermore Greenwich Council has been awarded Beacon Status for its innovation in removing barriers to work.

Strategic Procurement made the case for an evidence-based approach to developing discrete clauses with contractors and that any such local labour clauses are only pertinent for contracts where services are being delivered locally. Any such clauses should also be flexible and offer a suite of options, including recruitment brokerage, Apprenticeships, voluntary work placements and work trials. As such, a blanket local labour clause would not be effective or efficient, as it would have the potential to increase the on-costs to the Council who could be expected to remunerate the contractor. There are also EU directives that state tender processes must not be geographically exclusive in order to stimulate EU-wide competitive procurement.

Recommendation 16

16 That the Economic Development Team take the lead to facilitate a process that will see the identification of individuals who can be matched to the contractor's employment skills needs.

The Council needs to establish an ongoing relationship with procurement contractors and set up a rolling process whereby employment and skills opportunities are identified and negotiated with the contractor at the outset.

Employment and skills opportunities should be identified with clauses arbitrated for all relevant new medium-term procurement contracts. In addition, it was agreed that the Strategic Procurement and the Economic Development Teams should work in partnership to test the viability of negotiating clauses with large long-term contracts, using the Adult Services 'home care' contract as a pilot.

Recommendation 17

17 That Strategic Procurement should check the history of all tenders social responsibility at the pre-qualification stage of the procurement process. Strategic Procurement also should encourage local businesses and services to apply when inviting tenders.

Case study

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) was established by the Council in 1996 as a key mechanism for linking local people to new employment opportunities. The Council makes use of the planning process through s106 agreements to secure commitment from developers using GLLaB to source local labour from construction through to end user employers. In return, GLLaB offers a job brokerage service and trains local residents to match their specific skill requirements. GLLaB works in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. GLLaB has been acknowledged as an example of good practice by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Audit Commission.

It is recognised that the Council's procurement processes can be exploited to create local employment and skills opportunities. One such example is the negotiation of local labour clauses placing an obligation on the contractor to employ local people. Greenwich and Brent Council's were cited as best practice examples as they've achieved success in this area, furthermore Greenwich Council has been awarded Beacon Status for its innovation in removing barriers to work.

Strategic Procurement made the case for an evidence-based approach to developing discrete clauses with contractors, and also that any such local labour clauses are only pertinent for contracts where services are being delivered locally. Any such clauses should also be flexible and offer a suite of options, including recruitment brokerage, Apprenticeships, voluntary work placements and work trials. As such, a blanket local labour clause would not be effective or efficient, as it would have the potential to increase the on-costs to the Council who could be expected to remunerate the contractor. There are also EU directives that state tender processes must not be geographically exclusive in order to stimulate EU-wide competitive procurement.

The Council needs to establish an ongoing relationship with procurement contractors and set up a rolling process whereby employment and skills opportunities are identified and negotiated with the contractor at the outset.

Work Placements, Jobs Pledge and Apprenticeships

The Panel was in agreement that the Council needed to be pioneering and appoint an HR champion. It was noted that Economic Development had received a commitment from senior managers across the Council to provide 30 placements for workless people. However more job placements and opportunities needed to be created within the Council if the employment needs of workless persons were to be met, in particular those from largely excluded groups such as young offenders, mental health service users, the disabled and care leavers.

A Council officer reported to the Panel that work placements were needed to help groups such as young offenders and care leavers into employment. By offering direct experience of a work environment such placements could greatly improve the self esteem and confidence of young people.

There was, however, a recognition of the potential cost of greatly extending work placements across the Council. However closer working between the Council and other bodies and organisations would help to ensure that the Council could deliver on its Jobs Pledge to the unemployed.

Whereas frontline services had a good understanding of their clients and their needs they did not have coordinated links with employers. Frontline services were able to provide the training and support, but with no opportunities for jobs to achieve the real outcome. The Panel agreed that Council should encourage employers to achieve employment outcomes by taking small steps. The best approach was not always to try and place people straight into a paid job or other long-term opportunity. An effective initial step could be to provide work trials or short-term voluntary work placements that can lead to clients receiving job references if they do a good job. This is often what people really need particularly if, for example they had had years out of work due to mental health issues.

The Panel strongly supported the Jobs Pledge and argued that it needed to appoint a coordinator to organise the Council's Jobs Pledge placements. In addition, the Council should work in partnership with registered social landlords and Ealing Homes to provide opportunities for Jobs Pledge placements and that more Jobs Pledge opportunities should be made available for young people, as voluntary placements with the Council are popular with young people for work experience.

Improving resourcing

In terms of the worklessness and skills agenda, one aim of the Council was to complement those services already being provided by other agencies, to ensure that regional and sub regional funding streams were properly aligned and to act as an enabler and facilitator with its service delivery involvement restricted to a limited number of flagship projects.

The Panel on several occasions was referred to the work that the West London Learning and Skills Council was doing to fund education and skills training in a wide range of institutions across the region including the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College (WLC).

The Panel were cognisant of the importance of the Council's fundraising role. In this context the Panel noted that whilst the boroughs of Brent and Ealing had similar numbers of economically inactive and unemployed people, Brent received significantly higher levels of grant support from central funding sources.

Following a roundtable discussion on funding, the Panel identified that additional funding was needed to support the work of the Employment and Skills Team and to enable more job placements, work trials, etc. to be offered. The majority of funding needed to be invested in creating employment opportunities. The aim would be for the Council to complement what was being provided by other agencies.

As emphasised above the key role for the Council was to be a facilitator and coordinator with its service delivery role limited to a number of flagship projects such as the apprenticeships scheme, the Jobs Pledge and the Skills Pledge. There was a need to ensure that the Council worked more effectively with the Learning and Skills Council and other agencies to provide support to skills training, work placements and employment opportunities across the borough as a whole. To this end there was a need to align regional and sub-regional funding streams to support this work.

The Council should lobby the London Development Agency (LDA) for additional funding. In this context it was noted that whilst the borough of Ealing had similar numbers of economically inactive and unemployed persons to Brent the latter received significantly higher levels of grant support from central funding sources. In part this appeared to be because pockets of deprivation in Ealing were more widely dispersed whilst in Brent economic deprivation appeared to be geographically concentrated. The Council needed to ensure that Ealing residents got appropriate funding and to position itself so that it could access funding on behalf of service providers in the borough.

In the light of these funding issues, Councillor David Millican was requested to write to the LDA as a matter of urgency to try and influence its current activities to allocate the next three years of funding. At November's meeting of the Panel, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Transport welcomed the Panel's debate and the proposals for improving partnership working with agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and others to help more workless and unemployed people into education, training and employment, particularly those who were traditionally disproportionately disadvantaged in the labour market such as young offenders, care leavers and those with mental health problems. Together with his Cabinet colleagues, the Panel was informed, he would be looking in detail at the critical funding issues which had been highlighted.

Recommendations 18-25

18 That Corporate Board periodically review the process for setting departmental targets for Apprenticeships and volunteering placements.

19 That the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Transport should submit an annual report to Cabinet setting out the local labour market picture and any amendments to policy and procedure relating to skills and employment in Ealing.

20 That the Council should engage with all service providers (to include the voluntary sector) at the initial planning stage on any strategic activity relating to worklessness and skills, primarily via the LSP Skills & Employment Group.

21 That the Council further strengthen links with the JCP, LSC, LDA and GoL with regards to funding for worklessness and skills initiatives and on the LAA targets for reducing benefits claimants.

22 That the Council should also consider how the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative and Area Based Grant might be used to support the employment and skills agenda and relevant Local Area Agreement targets and the voluntary sector.

23 That the Council should work where appropriate with adjacent boroughs via West London Working on the borough's emerging Worklessness and Skills Strategy.

24 That the Council should improve its partnership working with Information, Advice and Guidance agencies.

25 That the Council should appropriate opportunities to lobby central and regional government to direct appropriate resources into the borough, reflecting the scale of the worklessness challenge in Ealing. The Council should ensure that it is well positioned to access whatever replaces Local Development Agency Area Programme Funds.

Visit to Southwark Works

On Friday 24th October 2008, the Panel's Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Cllrs Rajinder Mann and Edmond Yeo, represented the Worklessness & Skills Scrutiny Panel on a visit to Southwark Works, Southwark Council's flagship worklessness programme. The visit was hosted by Southwark Council's Economic Development Manager, Andy Scott. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were most impressed and enthused by the innovation of Southwark Works and it be reported so that Ealing's Economic Development Team could consider aspects of their approach it may wish to adopt.

About Southwark Works

Southwark Works (SW) is a Southwark Council led multi-agency borough-wide worklessness programme that focuses on the additional barriers to work experienced by disadvantaged client groups, such as long term Incapacity Benefit claimants, for which assistance is not provided by mainstream employment services. These additional barriers include skills, housing, health, disability, drug misuse and/or language barriers.

SW is a brand under which a number of different specialists organisations are contracted to work in partnership to provide targeted employment services. The contracted organisations include Pecan, Red Kite Learning and the South London and Maudsley Mental Health Trust. These services are provided as a portfolio of specialist services that compliment each other, and do not duplicate each other or any other services operating in the borough.

The key features of SW are its:

- a) client focussed approach;
- b) provision of tailored support programmes targeted at hard-to-reach groups;
- c) specialist employment advisers; and
- d) employer engagement activities.

Client focussed approach

Clients are accessed at their point of need by SW's contracted specialist organisations that understand the client's specific requirements and barriers to employment. SW use a variety of locations relevant to the particular client group as well as a number of additional delivery locations, including two SW offices in areas of high deprivation within the borough.

Provision of tailored support programmes targeted at hard-to-reach groups

SW's contracted specialist organisations provide targeted programmes that provide a level of support that's not achievable by Jobcentre Plus (JCP). The organisations are also able to access existing networks to reach a wider client base than mainstream provision is able to achieve.

Specialist employment advisers

SW employs a team of specialist employment advisers who provide personal and confidential support for unemployed residents affected by: long term health problems and incapacity benefits; mental health issues; physical disabilities; learning difficulties; refugee status; young people leaving Council care; drug and alcohol misuse and being an ex-offender; and children and being a lone parent. The fact that employment advisers are specialists means that they have a full understanding of the needs and requirements of their client groups whilst retaining a focus on employment.

The specialist employment advisers provide support on: childcare provision; in work benefit entitlements; CV and interview preparation; training course availability; work experience opportunities; and employment decisions and advancement.

The employment advisers are based with direct service providers to allow them immediate contact and engagement with the target groups of the programme. The role of the adviser is to provide intensive and long-term one-to-one employment, training and education advice and guidance.

Advisers include:

- 1 x Young People Leaving Care specialist based in Southwark Social Services.
- 1 x substance misuse and ex-offender specialist based with Southwark Social Services drug intervention programme and Red Kite Learning. Referrals are also received from the Probation Service and Jobcentre Plus.
- 4 x mental health specialist based at the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. Referrals are also received from five specialist teams within the SLAM.
- 4 x health and Incapacity Benefits specialist based at Pecan, a specialist organisation working with unemployed disadvantaged people. Referrals are also received from the SW hotline, outreach at various locations, JCP and GP surgeries.
- 2 x refugee specialists, one based with the Southwark Refugee Communities Forum and the other with Southwark Adult Education. Referrals are also received from other refugee organisations, other outreach done through libraries, SW hotline and Adult Education.
- 2 x learning disability specialists based with Southwark Social Services. Referrals are also received through the Southwark Disability Association and other Southwark outreach services.

- 2 x childcare specialists based at Southwark Children's Services.

In recognition that each individual client's needs are different and many face multiple barriers, SW employment advisers are able to take decisions on a case-by-case basis and have access to flexible adviser budgets. Furthermore, the one-to-one support provided by SW advisers is not time limited. This flexible approach has helped to facilitate strong and ongoing client-adviser relationships.

Employer engagement

There is also an employer engagement element to SW, encompassing employer liaison officers and the provision of **public and private sector work placements**.

SW's public and private sector work experience placements aim to broaden the clients experience, improve their skills and given them the opportunity to show an employer what they are capable of. SW pitches the placements as a chance for the employer to develop its own workforce and improve its company image. Placements are expected to last from two to eight weeks. SW covers the client's travel and meal expenses and also helps out with childcare. A SW support officer is on hand for the business and client before, during and after the placement.

SW also provides a free job brokerage service for local businesses that matches candidates from diverse backgrounds to a range of vacancies with local employers. Some customers include Asda, Government Office for London, Harrods, ITV and Southwark Credit Union.

SW is working with local businesses to promote diversity in the workplace in order to encourage local employment. SW have a guide for small businesses operating in and around the borough to highlight some of the business benefits of recruiting local people, maintaining a diverse workforce and to signpost employers to places offering further advice and guidance. For example, research shows that customers tend to use services where they can relate to, and feel understood by, the service provider. Therefore a workforce that reflects the nature of the local population can improve business performance.

Key successes of Southwark Works

The key elements that have been key to SW's success are as follows:

- a) **Southwark Works as a brand:** The brand has been very successful in attracting workless residents who are put off by the JCP brand (i.e. fear of benefits being removed).
- b) **Filling the gap in provision for those most in need:** Southwark Works aims to fill the gap in current service provision. For example, it works to remove some of the barriers to work that can't be done so by JCP, such as assistance with rent arrears.
- c) **Innovation:** Examples of innovation include:
 - the targeting of clients who are hard-to-reach and far from the labour market;
 - the use of a variety of outreach locations and techniques in order to access clients at their point of need;
 - the provision of financial support to assist with travel costs and childcare;

- the client-focused, tailored one-to-one approach;
- the fact there is no time boundaries and clients receive support over a long period if necessary; and
- SW's role in the wider employment support network of networks (i.e. the SW programme doesn't operate in isolation but as part of a wider information and referral network).

d) **Multi-agency approach:** A partnership approach has been an important element in ensuring SW's successful innovation and flexibility. Key partners to get on board include JCP, Learning & Skills Council (LSC), London Development Agency (LDA) and Government Office for London (GoL). If building partnerships is a challenge, take advantage of senior management and Councillors to foster the partnerships.

Challenges

The key challenges experienced by the SW programme have been developing strong and lasting partnerships, costs and duplication. SW is a high cost programme. It is estimated that the cost is approximately £6286 per employment outcome, which is significantly higher than the mainstream provision. Furthermore, although SW aims to fill gaps in provision, the launch of similar employment support initiatives can remove the need for certain elements of SW to continue.

Background to Southwark Works

The need for SW was identified in 2003 when the Council undertook a mapping exercise to develop its employment strategy. The Council mapped all of the providers operating within the borough to determine who they were, what they were doing and who they were working with. They discovered that almost all of these providers were duplicating each other in some way. The Council then consulted with these providers to develop its strategy to achieve focus, and SW was developed.

Southwark Council is now onto its second iteration of its employment strategy (2006), which has a detailed action plan with short, medium and long term objectives. These objectives are linked to its Local Area Agreement (LAA) target on reducing the number of benefit claimants, for which JCP has taken the strategic lead.

Funding for Southwark Works

Funding has been sourced from the following streams:

- Department of Work and Pensions (Working Neighbourhoods Fund)
- Learning and Skills Council
- Jobcentre Plus
- London Development Agency
- European Social Fund
- Southwark s106 Strategy

Section 106 agreements

Southwark Council has led its successful SW programme in conjunction with a strong s106 strategy to develop local training and employment opportunities. The Council uses planning obligations in its s106 agreements to secure contributions towards the provision of local training and employment initiatives, amongst other key areas such as affordable housing and community facilities. See the pages at the end of this Appendix for the

formulas that Southwark Council uses for its s106 agreements to negotiate its local training and employment initiatives.

Recommendations 26-28

26 That the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance should report annually to Cabinet on the successes and achievements of the Council's Procurement Team in promoting the development and supply of jobs and training opportunities for local people

27 That the Economic Development Team should lobby central and regional government to request that their commissioning approaches do not discriminate against local providers.

28 The Council should look at best practice examples, such as Greenwich and Brent Councils, for exploiting procurement processes to develop employment and skills opportunities.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Theme 4 – Worklessness and Child Poverty

The official definition of child poverty is when children are living in families where the total income is less than 60% of median income. In the main these are households where both or the only parent is out of work and as such child poverty is a key consideration in the development of worklessness strategies and activities. Government has also developed a national indicator to reduce the proportion of children living in workless households, to be delivered via Local area Agreements³.

London has the highest rate of family unemployment in the country, both for lone parents and couple families. Key factors in parental unemployment are the lack of affordable childcare and the lack of flexible and good quality part-time work opportunities. These are additional to the wider reasons for unemployment such as skills (including language skills) needs, disability or a history of offending. However, there are also a significant proportion of families in poverty due to low-income employment with little opportunity to progress in work, again for the factors given for unemployment. Recent studies have found that a positive change in income can have a marked effect on a range of outcomes for children in low-income families⁴.

The Government has pledged to eradicate child poverty by 2020, and to halve the rate by 2010. This target has been particularly challenging, especially in London, and in March 2008 efforts for the next decade were renewed through the report *“Ending Child poverty: everybody’s business”* which sets out the impact on not only children but whole communities and the economic and social prosperity of society⁵. The introduction of a bill to end child poverty by 2020 was announced in the Queen’s speech 2008 and a panel of experts will report in the spring to launch consultation.

Government efforts to reduce child poverty to date have focused on reforms to the benefits and tax systems. The major sources of support for unemployed or low income parents are as follows:

- Working tax credits and child tax credits have been introduced to provide financial support to households in work on low incomes
- Access to affordable childcare has been increased with every 3-4 year old entitled to 12.5 hours of registered childcare per week for up to 38 weeks of the year
- New Deal for Lone Parents – an initiative via Jobcentre Plus – has provided intensive support packages for unemployed lone parents and worked to encourage more employers to recruit lone parents
- From October 2008 lone parents with children over the age of 12 have been transferred from income support to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and expected to find work (prior to this they were only required to find work once their

³ National Indicator 116 – Reduce the proportion of children in poverty

⁴ Capital Gains - London Child Poverty Commission report Feb 08 p14

⁵ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/bud_bud08_child.htm

youngest child was 16). In 2009 this will be reduced to 10 years and in 2010 7 years. In December 08 proposals were also announced for lone parents to start preparing for work once their child is one year old.

- The government also considers its wider measures to tackle unemployment and poverty as having an impact on low-income parents, including the introduction of the minimum wage, and improving basic skills levels.

In London an additional Child Poverty Pledge has been developed to which local authorities have been asked to sign up. Ealing Council has opted not to sign up as it is considered to add little value to the work already underway, although the Pledge's recommended activities have informed internal consultation of Ealing Council services, led by the Economic Development Team. To support the Pledge a target for London was introduced in November 08 to increase parental employment in London by 2013. The target is supported by London Councils and the London Mayor, as well as government.

Child poverty in Ealing

As with worklessness, the perception of Ealing as a relatively affluent borough masks the reality of child poverty. The borough's large working age population results in smaller rates of child poverty compared to other London boroughs, despite having higher actual numbers.

- Ealing has the highest number of children in poverty⁶ in West London, and the fifth highest in London. The most recent data from 2007 shows there to be 16,600 children in poverty in Ealing (20% of the 0-15 age population).
- It has the second highest number of lone parents claiming income support in West London, the 13th highest in London.
- It also has one of the highest numbers of IB claimants with dependent children in London.
- 56% of Ealing primary school pupils need ESOL assistance against a 49% average across West London.
- The wards of Northolt Mandeville and Northolt West End are within the top 5 and 10% most deprived in the country in terms of income deprivation affecting children, barriers to housing and services, crime and quality of living environment. In Northolt Mandeville ward 75% of children are income-deprived, likewise in South Acton ward.

Child Poverty is a Local Area Agreement priority for Ealing, with a target to reduce the proportion of children in poverty from 26% to 23.3% by 2010/11. To note, this currently means children in workless households, but government is currently reviewing this definition and may choose to include children in low income working households in future years. Ealing's Sustainable Community Strategy includes an objective to reduce the proportion of children in poverty by 2016 and the forthcoming Worklessness Strategy will set out priorities around reducing child poverty. Through the Every Child Matters framework every local authority has a remit to ensure the well-being of all children, including their economic well-being, via the work of its Children's Trust, which brings together all services for children and young people in the area.

⁶ Using the workless households measure

Child poverty is a cross-cutting issue and there is currently no service with a specific remit for the agenda. However, Children & Families' responsibilities, including delivering support via Children's Centres, has meant that to date much of the work has been focused in the Early Years department.

Ealing has 22 designated Children's Centres with a further 6 in development the full details of which are set out in Theme 2. Of the current Children's Centres, 19 are located in the most deprived areas of the borough, which include the 13 worst lower super output areas to be focused on as part of Ealing's LAA target to reduce worklessness. Part of the remit of Children's Centres is to provide links to Jobcentre Plus, and Ealing was successful in securing £300k from the government's Child Poverty Fund for dedicated Jobcentre Plus advisors based in Limetrees, Dormers Wells and South Acton Children's Centres who, along with outreach workers, will provide intensive support for unemployed parents to access work.

From April 09 for 3 years there will be an investment of £1million going into outreach for all Children's Centres in Ealing which will include employment support. Recruitment of staff will support the employment of local residents. Ealing has also secured £1.4million via DCSF for 2009-11 to pilot free childcare for 2 year olds as per the current 3-4 years scheme.

The Child Poverty Fund is also supporting an Ealing pilot worth £1.2million to offer child development grants as a way of supporting vulnerable families, raising the attainment of children and breaking the cycle of poverty. A Northolt Skills & Employment Group has recently been established focusing on unemployed parents which will support these pilots and will link into the Ealing third-tier Skills & Employment Group referenced below. The Northolt Group will take on a lead role to support the development of similar groups in Acton, Southall and Central Ealing.

A further pilot will place HMRC Advisors in 7 Children's Centres in disadvantaged areas across the borough, including those centres involved in the Work Focussed Services Child Poverty Pilot. Parents and staff will receive advice and support to parents and staff at these centres on how to access the childcare element of Working Families Tax Credit.

The Council aims to tackle child poverty as part of its wider worklessness agenda:

- Lone parents are a target group in employability project commissioning which includes the London Councils ESF Co-financing programme 2009-11.
- Via NRF Transitional Funding Heathrow City Partnership have been commissioned to deliver the Women into Work project which targets women in harder to reach communities.
- Through the third-tier Skills & Employment Group partners have a key objective to improve access to hard to reach residents who are out of work.
- The Council's Jobs Pledge also targets disadvantaged job-seekers, and has already started placing unemployed parents into volunteering placements.

As the Panel heard during an evidence session in November 2008, Ealing CVS has an important role in tackling child poverty which they are keen to develop. In Ealing there are a high number of voluntary sector groups that help to provide childcare and often access

the hard to reach groups not engaging in statutory services. There are a number of estate-based programmes such as the Pre-School Alliance on Windmill Housing Estate and the Hanwell Bunnies project provides employment advice as well as childcare, and employs former parents using the nursery who were out of work. However, the CVS has noted that demand for affordable childcare still outstrips supply.

Key issues

A Child Poverty Task Group was established in summer 2008 to focus on this agenda and has since met twice. It comprises representation from Economic Development, Early Years, Children & Young People, HR, Housing, Policy, Benefits & Customer Services and Community Safety.

An internal mapping exercise has been carried out which has been informed by this task group. Based on a series of recommendations on how local authorities can tackle child poverty produced by London Councils earlier in 2008 (which has also informed the London Child Poverty pledge),⁷ the outcomes of this mapping have been used to identify key issues and potential courses of action specific to Ealing, which are set out below and on which the Panel was asked to make comment. The recommendations which appear below were fully supported by the Panel and accepted. The remaining recommendations required, in some cases, considerable further work and clarification before the Panel could consider them (and in reality the Panel will have delivered its final report before this work can be completed and therefore they are *de facto* rejected). They do not appear in this report.

These examples of good practice and potential actions have been grouped under key service areas with a role in tackling child poverty. However, through the “corporate strategic issues” section it is intended that cross-cutting activities will incorporate other service areas, e.g. community safety or health. For each service area potential actions have been highlighted (in bold) as a priority, either in terms of being important to progressing the agenda, or as a relatively low-cost “quick win”.

Corporate / strategic issues

Although a range of activity appears to be taking place locally, it is currently piecemeal and uncoordinated and leaves significant gaps. As a relatively new target area for local authorities a Council approach which encompasses all services and adds value to any existing contact with low income parents is yet to be developed.

The Child Poverty Task Group has identified the need for services to make stronger links with each other and to have opportunities for joint approaches on specific issues.

⁷ <http://www.londonCouncils.gov.uk/children/childpoverty/ourwork.htm>

Recommendation 29

29 That the Economic Development Team improves data sharing between all local agencies engaging with families in poverty to identify families who are workless or employed on low incomes in order to signpost them to appropriate support, such as training or employment support, financial & debt advice or childcare support.

Employment & training opportunities

Out of work lone parents have been a recognised target group for a considerable number of years in terms of Jobcentre Plus priorities and external funding for employability programmes. However, there is a growing recognition that if there is to be a more significant impact on child poverty more programmes need to target unemployed couple families as well as families who are employed in low paid, low level jobs with little chance of progression due to skills needs and other factors.

A number of low income parents will also be facing additional barriers to employment which require specialised support, such as disabilities or health conditions, English language and skills needs or a history of offending. The “Ending Child Poverty” report notes that a third of all ethnic minority families live in poverty⁸.

Recommendations 30-31

30 That via local commissioning and funding by the Council and external fundraising, the Council and local partners should develop intensive employment support for parents with specific barriers e.g. ex-offenders, those with disabilities or mental health needs, lone parents, speakers of other languages, carers.

31 That the Council work with other providers to review the co-ordination of existing ESOL provision, basic skills for jobs across children’s centres, extended schools, the adult learning service, colleges and other local providers.

Early Years provision and family information services

Although there is a wide range of childcare available in Ealing, gaps have been identified in terms of affordability and quality. There is a particular need for better childcare arrangements to allow unemployed parents to access training or job-search activities to build on the progress being made by Children’s Centres.

Many hard to reach families may not be accessing the support that is available to them. This could be due to a reluctance to use statutory services, a lack of understanding or knowledge or language and literacy barriers.

⁸ Ending Child Poverty: Everybody’s Business (March 08) p13

Tackling child poverty as an employer

From discussions with the Council's Jobs Pledge Partnership, workless parents are one of the groups who find it difficult to access employment opportunities at the Council. It is likely that there are also existing employees at the Council who are parents facing poverty. This could be due to the lack of skills needed to progress from low grade employment, or potentially because they are unaware of the benefits or tax credits to which they are entitled. However, the Council is currently facing real challenges in terms of employment opportunities due to organisational restructuring to meet budget cuts. The Panel recognise that this needs to be taken into consideration in terms of what it can offer to job-seekers.

Recommendations 32-36

32 That the Council and other LSP employers including PCT, Police and voluntary services to consider flexible working and employment/work experience opportunities that will enable more parents to access work.

33 That the Council, as an employer, ensure that all employees who have a low level of formal qualifications are given opportunities to gain qualifications via Ealing Skills Pledge.

34 That the Council, as an employer, carry out a campaign to ensure parent employees are taking up all benefits and tax credits entitled to them.

35 That the Council target unemployed parents for volunteering and work opportunities at the Council via the Jobs Pledge.

36 That the Council target young lone parents for volunteering placements with the Council's Children & Families' service via the V programme (starting in March 09).

Increase educational attainment for young people

The Council has a number of targets to increase educational attainment in underachieving groups. Some of these targets are particularly challenging, in particular around the educational attainment of students eligible for free school meals and reducing the number of young offenders in Ealing who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Gaps have been identified in providing work related opportunities for disadvantaged groups, for example care leavers, and engaging employers to offer these opportunities.

Recommendation 37

37 That the Council develop career paths in Children & Families services for disadvantaged young people via volunteering placements provided by the V programme (starting in March 09).

The role of housing and housing providers

As with other workless residents, there are high numbers of families in poverty living in social housing estates. Nearly one fifth (19%) of Ealing's households live in socially rented accommodation and approximately 14,400 households in the social sector in Ealing are also workless.

However, what is not currently known is the number of families in poverty in private sector accommodation. Ealing also has approximately 2000 households in temporary accommodation which may be encountering barriers to employment.

One of the key specific issues for families in social housing is overcrowding due to the need for larger units to be developed (particularly 2-3 bedroom homes), and the Ealing Housing Needs Survey 2005 noted that lone parent households were particularly likely to be overcrowded⁹. Ealing currently has over 7000 overcrowded households. The potential impacts of overcrowding on families include poorer mental and physical health outcomes and lower educational attainment for children¹⁰.

Social housing estates in Ealing – where there are concentrations of worklessness and child poverty – tend to lack local services nearby which could support the employability of parents. This has been particularly noted in Northolt. As a result much employment support is reliant on outreach which is underfunded.

Recommendations 38-41

38 That the Council ensures the needs of families in poverty are considered in the development of the new Ealing Housing Strategy and that housing related child poverty issues are incorporated into the forthcoming Ealing Worklessness Strategy.

39 That the Council through the Ealing Social Housing Pledge¹¹ encourage Housing Providers to develop opportunities for work experience /employment/volunteering to tenants who are parents and out of work.

40 That the Council secure additional commitments from Jobcentre Plus to provide outreach on estate with high parent worklessness.

⁹ London Borough of Ealing, Housing Needs Survey 2005, p11

¹⁰ London Child Poverty Commission <http://213.86.122.139/docs/press-briefing-1702.rtf>

¹¹ Ealing Social Housing Pledge is a set of commitments for housing providers to provide employment opportunities and support to their tenants, linking with the Ealing Skills & Employment group. Ealing Homes and Registered Social Landlords operating in Ealing have signed up to the Pledge in principle.

41 That Housing Regeneration works with regeneration partners to maximise the provision of facilities for helping parents return to work in high and medium intervention estates e.g. community facilities with childcare for training/employment support sessions.

Benefits

As was reported in 'Removing Barriers to Work' theme, unemployed parents can be reluctant to return to work because they fear they will be no better or even worse off in employment than on benefits. Sometimes this can be the case but, as discussed above, they could in fact be unaware of the benefits they will still be entitled to if they take up low paid employment.

Low income families, particularly those who are employed, may be missing out on a range of other benefit entitlements such as housing benefit or Council tax benefit.

Recommendations 42-43

42 That Housing Benefits and Ealing Homes conduct a housing benefits take up campaign targeted at working age parents.

43 That the Council's new housing strategy should include plans for (a) identifying families in private housing in receipt of housing benefit and (b) targeting employment support and outreach to support those living in poverty.

Finally, Panel members considered in detail whether to recommend the creation of a Child Poverty Co-ordinator but, in discussions with Economic Development and Policy Team colleagues, preferred instead to put forward the following final two recommendations.

Recommendations 44-45

44 That Council officers work with the LSP to develop a more co-ordinated approach towards reducing child poverty, across services and between partners, including developing greater lines of accountability for the delivery of child poverty targets.

45 That the Council, in close consultation with the Council Business and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Panel, reviews delivery against the LAA Child Poverty target when 2008/09 annual data becomes available later this year and considers its approach to child poverty in light of emerging obligations under the Government's proposed Child Poverty Bill and the evolving Children's Trust arrangements.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Conclusions

Ealing has a worklessness rate comparable to other West London boroughs. However, its pockets of deprivation and large population size combine to mean that this borough has the largest number of workless people living in West London. Nearly 20% of all unemployed people in West London live in Ealing (10,000). 22% of all workless people in West London live in Ealing borough (54,000).

Ealing has the third highest rate of overall worklessness in West London at 33%. That equates to over 64,000 Ealing residents out of work. 7% of economically active people in Ealing borough are unemployed and a further 26% of working age people are economically inactive. The Panel has learnt that Ealing has comparable levels of unemployment and economic inactivity to boroughs such as Brent, yet the levels of investment in direct provision and the quality of the infrastructure to address the problem are not comparable.

Standard levels of quality need to be applied to all employment support services to ensure they are best meeting the needs of job seekers and employers. These standards would go beyond meeting hard outputs (such as job outcomes) to measure clients' experiences and what specific value the support adds to the range of provision in the borough. Work already being done to support disadvantaged and vulnerable job seekers through the application and interview process needs to be built upon to get more people into jobs, particularly for disabled people and people with mental health difficulties.

Supporting more employers through the recruitment and interview process would enable them to offer opportunities to vulnerable and disadvantaged job seekers and to ensure that they are able to make reasonable adjustments to employ jobseekers with a particular need e.g. lone parents and disabled people.

Improving the co-ordination of employment support services would mean that job seekers would be less likely to get "stuck" in the system or drop out altogether. Developing consistent client-tracking mechanisms across services would help individuals to be appropriately supported throughout their pathways towards employment. Many employment opportunities in deprived areas involve low-paid, shift work which is often incompatible with affordable childcare. Employers of low-paid work, the Panel learnt, were often the most inflexible in terms of understanding the financial and social limitations of working and raising a child or children.

A significant number of young people in Ealing (aged between 18 and 25) in New Deal are prevented from entering the workplace due to a lack of literacy and numeracy skills; this problem is being compounded by their lack of workplace experience. In this respect, the Panel welcomed the positive outcomes coming from Work Trials and the 96 Ealing employers who are signatories of the Local Employment Partnership and positive about employing job-seekers from priority groups.

Catalyst Housing, in partnership with other agencies including the Council, was providing high-quality programmes such as “Get Learning” and “Moving into Employment for their residents in Ealing. Members of the Panel were particularly impressed with learners on the “Working with Young People” course, all of who demonstrated positive changes in their confidence and motivation – two perennial barriers to work. The key to success in this instance was flexibility and informality; learners could pursue the course in school hours thus obviating the need for childcare arrangements and costs.

When considering employer engagement, the Panel learnt that there was more work to be done in recruiting unemployed people who were considered disabled. In Ealing there are simply not enough local employers willing to undertake work trials with job-seekers; furthermore there is only one disability employment adviser in Ealing, so disabled clients claiming Jobseekers Allowance have to wait up to 4 weeks for an appointment.

It is therefore evident that there are still fundamental barriers being experienced by disabled people, particularly people with learning difficulties and disabilities and mental health difficulties. All of the statutory frontline services working with disabled people are frustrated by the lack of incentives for employers to employ disabled people along with the lack of sustainable funding to establish the necessary networks to support disabled people into employment. These services also want to see the Council and its partners develop ‘in house opportunities’ for disabled people, such as building agreements into contracts with providers and to overcome the barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

Members were impressed with the outcomes achieved by Action Acton, a relatively small, client-facing voluntary sector organisation. The diversity of the work it undertakes with long-term workless people and its efforts in attempting to remove barriers to work impressed the Panel. Of particular interest to members was the work Action Acton undertook with prolific and persistent offenders. In many cases, staff would undertake extreme outreach work such as collecting newly released prisoners from the prison gates and helping them to establish some semblance of normality, which would include facilitating a job search and support. Acton market, too, was highly praised by members as an example of how a relatively low-cost solution to a worklessness issue gave rise to a sense of urban renewal and regeneration – putting the heart back into a community which had suffered neglect and social-order issues for many years. The Panel concluded that the continued work of small-scale but expanding organisations such as Action Acton should be as fully supported by the Council as possible, in both financial and corporate terms.

The Panel concurred with evidence from Council Officers that a fundamental challenge facing Ealing Council was how best to play a leading role in current and future strategic partnerships and joint-working. The Panel acknowledged the fact that the Government is placing increasing pressure on statutory frontline services to actively participate in the worklessness and skills agenda. This recognises the crosscutting relationship between worklessness and other factors affecting people’s life opportunities such as crime and anti-social behaviour, social housing tenure, health, wellbeing and child poverty – the latter linked inextricably to worklessness that it required a theme in its own right in this report. The Panel concluded that there was much to be commended in terms of individual Council service areas and relevant worklessness initiatives.

Many of these statutory services are being proactive in setting up referral arrangements with partners and establishing small-scale initiatives. However, most services are facing a key barrier in that they are not receiving adequate funding for worklessness and skills initiatives and are mostly therefore short-term, ad hoc and unsustainable.

Additionally, where funding does exist for worklessness and skills initiatives, it is often disjointed and therefore activities are not co-ordinated. Added to this is the limited cross-departmental working between Ealing's service departments at both strategic and delivery level (despite there being very good joint working occurring within service departments). Many of the statutory frontline services are now starting to work with Jobcentre Plus, including Children's Centres, Connexions and Learning Curve (Adult Disability Services). However in many areas, services' link with JCP are still developing and face significant challenges. Some frontline services are starting to establish links with private sector employers via the Council's regeneration partners i.e. the Heathrow City Partnership, Action Acton and the Park Royal Partnership. Most of the statutory frontline services have established links with colleges and training providers and the voluntary and community sector, however, these links are very fragmented.

Council services, the Panel therefore concludes, need to be committed to the LSP's third tier Skills and Employment Group in order to develop partnerships and joint working arrangements, as well as to link into community-based networks, to maximise outcomes for worklessness and skills.

There is a lot of Government policy driving integrated and targeted support in other arenas, particularly around children, young people and families, whose established partnerships and links are to be used as an opportunity. In addition, there are lots of community hubs located around the borough from which residents are currently able to receive support. Many of these are located within the most deprived areas, which coincide with the worst performing Super Output Areas. Several of the Council's frontline services come into direct contact with residents who are claiming out-of-work benefits on a regular basis. Many services develop a relationship with these residents and there are a lot of small-scale worklessness and skills activities occurring throughout the Council.

The Council's relationship with young people not in employment, education and training via Connexions should grow with the expansion of the Apprenticeship Scheme. The Council has taken a lead here and the Panel would expect the Council's partners to follow its lead. The Council needs to provide intensive support for particular communities who traditionally have been experiencing poor outcomes, including children leaving care, disabled young people, black and minority ethnic communities, migrants, young offenders and Travellers.

The Panel learnt that Ealing has no coherent 'employer offer' which is 'badged' as Ealing and allows easy access for businesses to a range of good quality recruitment, training and business support services which would allow them to fulfil any current or future Section 106 agreements and access job-ready local people, apprentices and so forth. The Panel therefore argue that Ealing should look to Southwark and Haringey Councils to learn how to maximise the funding and employment opportunities provided by strategic procurement and Section 106 agreements (especially with the opportunities afforded by the Building Schools for the Future programme and other large scale corporate procurements).

The challenge for sustainable economic development is to try and use the Council's influence, engagement, and investment to achieve wider impact on the broader economic regeneration agenda and in particular, to change the skills and employment profile of some of Ealing's poorer neighbourhoods and communities where problems have become entrenched. The reward, if the Council takes a strong lead on this issue, will be to achieve longer-term impact on some of Ealing's poorest and most work-deprived neighbourhoods.

In summary, the Panel has learnt that the Council has started to improve the coherence of the local delivery infrastructure. However, how exactly this develops will depend to a great extent on the breadth and scope of the role the Council chooses to play. The Panel fully supports the direction of travel that the Council is taking on worklessness and skills and is complimentary of the drive and vision of the Economic Development and Policy Teams.

Ideally, the Council's aim should be to facilitate the development of a local service provider base which is flexible and responsive; is able to form partnerships easily in response to funding opportunities; is clearly aware of local priorities and is able to address these in project proposals. It also needs the provider base to work much better with front line public services, to be active on Ealing's most deprived estates and to connect effectively with sub-regional and regional delivery structures. If it adopts this vision, worklessness and skills in Ealing will be tackled in a way that says that this Council is serious about getting people into work and out of the benefits trap; that it really is making Ealing 'a better place to live'.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

The following observations, made by the Scrutiny Review Officer, were endorsed by the Panel at its last meeting:

Due to Council Officer staff turnover within the Scrutiny Unit, the evidence-gathering part of the investigation was completed by one officer and the report writing by another. Whilst staff turnover is inevitable within every organisation, it might be argued that the final report is not as strong as it arguably could be due to a degree of knowledge loss. For future Specialist Scrutiny Panel meetings, a dedicated Scrutiny Officer should be present throughout the entire investigation; from scoping to final report writing.

The 'signing off' of the final set of recommendations has been an arduous process for this investigation. Unlike other Scrutiny investigations, the number of recommendations for worklessness has been difficult to contain. A positive reflection on this point has been that Members were very willing to meet again at the end of the process in order to come together as a workshop in order to sharpen and reduce the number of recommendations. Whilst it is important for future investigations Panels are not faced with an unwieldy set of recommendations that can be seen as diluted because of critical mass, it is also positive to reflect that the Panel dealt with this situation on a professional and committed manner.

The final key learning point relates to the 'buy-in' and guidance of Ealing's Economic Development Team and Policy Officer. The subject of worklessness and skills is highly complex and without the guidance from ED and Policy colleagues, it can be argued that the Panel might have struggled to set their own agenda. It is good practice to be guided by 'subject specialists' and this critical friend approach should be used for future Specialist Scrutiny Panel investigations.

At the final Panel meeting, Panel members identified the following learning points:

- it was good to have representatives from outside organisations involved in the work of the panel as it provided different points of views
- the Panel suffered from information overload - it should have developed its conclusions as it progressed rather than leaving all of this work until the end
- there were too many presentations resulting in almost 100 recommendations
- the visits to outside organisations were valuable – it gave Panel members the opportunity to see services and problems first-hand
- a mechanism needs to be set up to ensure that Panel members, particularly the co-optees, are notified of Cabinet's response to the recommendations and of OSC's monitoring (around early 2010) of progress in implementing those recommendations which are accepted by Cabinet

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

The Table below shows the membership and attendance of Panel Members at the meetings during the year.

Membership and Attendance at Panel Meetings

Name	Total Possible	Actual Attendance	Apologies Received
<u><i>Councillors</i></u>			
Cllr John Cowing	5	5	
Cllr Joanna Dabrowska	5	5	
Cllr Phillipa Greenhead	5	4	1
Cllr Rajinder Mann (Chairman)	5	5	
Cllr Clifford Pile	5	5	
Cllr Harvey Rose	5	5	
Cllr Brian Reeves	5	5	
Cllr Manjit Singh	5	4	
Cllr Edmond Yeo (Vice Chairman)	5	5	
<u><i>Co-optees</i></u>			
John Blackmore			
<i>Director, Action Acton</i>	5	4	1
Fyscene Shields			
<i>Catalyst Community Housing</i>			
Sylvia Francis	5	5	
<i>Third Age Foundation/West London Working</i>			
	5	4	1
<u><i>Substitutes</i></u>			
<u>There have been no substitute Members.</u>			

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Sub-national Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) –
CLG and BERR consultation on taking forward the SNR:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/citiesandregions/implementingsnr/>

‘Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post-16’ DfES (2007):

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/educationandskills/docs/Raising%20Expectations.pdf>

‘Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work’ DIUS/DWP
(2007):

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/7381-TSO-Skills.pdf>

‘Work Skills’ (DIUS):

<http://publications.dius.gov.uk/workskills/>

Hills Report: ‘Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England’
CLG (2007):

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/strategiesandreviews/hillsreport/>

‘Social Housing and Worklessness: key policy messages’ DWP (2008):

www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep482.pdf

USEFUL WEBSITES

Partnership for Ealing’s Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area
Agreement:

<http://www.ealing.gov.uk/services/Council/lsp/>

West London Alliance:

<http://www.westlondonalliance.org/>

West London Working:

<http://www.westlondonworking.org.uk/>

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR):

www.berr.gov.uk

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

www.dcsf.gov.uk

Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS):

www.dius.gov.uk

Job Centre Plus (JCP):

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html>

Learning and Skills Council (LSC):
www.lsc.gov.uk

London Development Agency (LDA):
<http://www.lda.gov.uk/>

London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB):
<http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb/>

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP):
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/>

RECOMMENDATIONS, SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS AND CABINET RESPONSE

Key to officer responses : IH = Imogen Hughes, Economic Development Officer (Employment & Skills Partnerships); AB = Alex Banner, Head of Policy and Strategy, Housing; SG = Simon George, Director of Corporate Finance and Audit; LL = Laura Langstaff, Head of Strategic Procurement; EPW = Emma Peglar-Willis, Interim Adult Learning Manager; MB = Matthew Booth, Head of Policy; SL = Sue Littleson, Head of People and Organisational Development; JR = Jean Rolfe, Early Years Childcare and Play; AS = Andrew Scully, Head of Recruitment, Retention and Reward; RW = Ros Wells, Pay & Reward Consultant

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
1	That the Council should better publicise the available information and guidance on childcare provision in order to remove barriers to work for all interested parties, particularly for lone parents, holding all the information in one place and involving partners in the community as well as Council officers	<p>Activities of Family Information Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased information points in Children Centres and Schools • Offer training to 30 new outreach officers in Children Centres on the service FIS offers • FIS to build on existing relationships with partners that operate from the Children Centres, i.e. Jobcentre plus & lone parent advisors, Health Visitors & nursery staff. • Increase outreach events; e.g. baby clinics, community events, and team meetings. • Ensuring that all FIS information is clear, easy to understand, good format, accurate and up-to-date and easily accessible • Developing a new Childcare Search Page on the Council website with up-to-date information of services for families, parents and carers in the borough • Training - Options and Choices for Lone parents, helping them back into work. Joint 	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
		<p>working with JCP/FIS/ recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for childcare providers – Helping parents to afford childcare (JR) <p>Adult Learning has secured 10k, plus 15 days consultancy to support loan parents into employment and develop brokerage pathways. What seems to be lacking for all advisers and brokers (whether they are JCP, 1stSteps, Health care, Benefits advisors etc) is lack of knowledge in areas other than their own. In addition, educational and job support advisors find it hard to track and support learners through different providers as they follow their individual pathways.</p> <p>A website linking Health information, Schools info, Provider Info, Courses, Employment Routes, Childcare Resources, Benefits support etc, etc, almost a "DirectGov.com" for Ealing, could be accessed by the public and professionals and could also be used to support and track individual learning and Employment plans, through a one-stop-shop. Building on and adding value for the Council to the Children's Centres HUB's, The Customer Service Centre and the Libraries particularly in terms of accessibility to information</p>	

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
		<p>and support both for the public and professionals. It would help either meet or support many of the scrutiny recommendations, by either fulfilling them, or providing additional value towards meeting them.</p> <p>The Children's Centres Pilot is currently mapping provision, and the steering group are very interested in taking this website idea forward. They have also found, as was raised by scrutiny, access to information is a real issue. In addition, the library is interested in hosting it. Hammersmith and Fulham College already have a lot of experience in the use of e-learning opportunities and are wanting to share this good practice. So an e-learning portal for learners to keep their work as they go between advisors could be an additional use. (EPW)</p>	
2	<p>That the Council and its partners should take innovative approaches to engaging families in order to build a "learning culture" that overcomes intergenerational barriers to work.</p>	<p>In the short term will use existing resources / projects to implement and seek to secure external funding. (IH)</p> <p>Adult Learning is very successful in family learning with a lot of feedback from schools as to the effect it has had on changing attitudes – more funding is always an issue (EPW)</p>	<p>Accepted, subject to clarification on resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.</p>

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
3	That the Council should identify those Lower Super-Output Areas in Ealing where literacy, numeracy and ICT support skill levels are low and take steps to ensure all workless residents are able to access this teaching support.	Unlikely this data would be available and up to date unless Adult Learning can advise otherwise. However, we could use the lower super output areas with the highest rates of worklessness as a starting point (IH) 2001 census data (obviously quite old now) at both ward and Super Output Area is available for qualification levels, though not specific to Literacy / Numeracy or ICT, however, it can be used as a good indicator. (EPW)	Accepted
4	That the Council does more to engage and support employers to participate in employment and skills initiatives, such as work trials and apprenticeship schemes, and to take on job seekers from in disadvantaged groups in the Ealing labour market.	FT staff resource required £38k pa. (IH)	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.
5	That Worklessness Partnerships, in particular Ealing Skills and Employment Group and any area based worklessness partnerships, need to be further developed to establish a robust employment and training support infrastructure across the entire geographical spread of the borough.	No resources required (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
6	<p>The Council needs to identify how to “provide” more literacy and numeracy support in order to remove barriers to work for all ethnic groups, including for White British and those who speak English as a first language.</p>	<p>LSC 1st Steps funding (Lit / Num / ESOL) has been held at the same level as last year for Adult Learning, this is probably the same for most providers. More funding appears to be needed, but there are many providers and many opportunities for bids. The council needs to consider</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How best to support partnerships in applying for additional funding (bid writers?) 2) Many Ealing residents will not be eligible for government funding at all 3) ESOL learners are not necessarily eligible for fee remission. <p>Council needs to take the lead in mapping ESOL provision again and consider using new commissioning responsibility as an opportunity to ensure funding is used most appropriately across the borough in relation to need (EPW).</p>	Accepted
7	<p>That all frontline housing officers be trained to develop the skills in order to be able to signpost clients to relevant employment and skills support agencies.</p>	<p>The Housing Advice service currently offers a wide range of signposting skills. This service is being reviewed as part of the Homelessness strategy 2009-14. The action plan notes that Current Advice services will be broadened and reshaped to include info on income mortgage advice, employment and skills training in line with worklessness proposals. (AB) See Rec 1 (EPW)</p>	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
8	That Economic Development undertake high level negotiations with Jobcentre Plus in order to attain more flexibility in targeting provision for worklessness at priority neighbourhoods, in order for the Council and its partners to address NI 153.	No resources required. (IH)	Accepted
9	That in order to continue the process of improving the local delivery infrastructure one full-time fundraising officer be recruited on behalf of the Skills and Employment Group to concentrate solely on employment and skills funding.	Funding needed for FT staff member £45kpa. (IH)	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.
10	That Economic Development carry out or commission a mapping exercise to identify the various employment and skills support service providers operating within Ealing in order to establish gaps in provision	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
11	That Economic Development carry out or commission a further mapping exercise to identify how many people in the borough do not have a level 2 qualification and to identify the number of Ealing residents whose level of English is below Level 1.	Resources required. Estimate £15-20k but recommend checking this figure with Emma. (IH) 2001 census data at both ward and Super Output Area is available for qualification levels, though not specific to Literacy / Numeracy or ICT, however, it can be used as a good indicator. (EPW)	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.
12	That the Economic Development Team should take the lead on developing a Data Sharing Protocol starting with a feasibility study and with a view to rolling out a full model late in 2009. This work should be reported to and guided by the LSP Third Tier Skills and Employment Group.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
13	That Economic Development set up an employer engagement group to develop a strategy and a more co-ordinated approach. This would help develop a more co-ordinated employer offer for the borough, building on what already exists. This improved co-ordination will be underpinned by local commissioning.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
14	That Economic Development manage and develop the Jobs Pledge programme and roll it out across the Local Strategic Partnership.	No additional resources required in the short term. (IH)	Accepted
15	That the Council gives consideration to making the resources available for the Economic Development Team to take a strategic lead on negotiating local employment and skills opportunities within s106 agreements.	FT staff member required £45K pa. (IH)	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.
16	That the Strategic Procurement team work with service areas when planning new procurement activity to explore opportunities for developing local labour clauses, providing options for recruitment brokerage, apprenticeships, voluntary work placements and work trials. To be explored on a case-by-case basis and with support from Economic Development.		Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
17	That Strategic Procurement should check the social responsibility history of all tenders at the pre-qualification stage of the procurement process. Strategic Procurement should also encourage local businesses and services to apply when inviting tenders.	<p>Further clarification needed on the areas that would be checked under 'social responsibility history'. If this is to be explored there would need to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on how this would operate and the specific areas for review. • Understanding of how this would operate. • Agreement on the scope, size and type of contracts to which this would apply. <p>Funding for additional resource, either within the Strategic Procurement team or within Economic Development department required. (IH/LL)</p>	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.
18	That Corporate Board periodically review the process for setting departmental targets for Apprenticeships and volunteering placements.	No resources required. (IH)	Accepted
19	That the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Transport should submit an annual report to Cabinet setting out the local labour market picture and any amendments to policy and procedure relating to skills and employment in Ealing.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
20	That the Council should engage with all service providers (to include the voluntary sector) at the initial planning stage on any strategic activity relating to worklessness and skills, primarily via the LSP Skills & Employment Group.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
21	That the Council further strengthen links with the JCP, LSC, LDA and GoL with regards to funding for worklessness and skills initiatives and on the LAA targets for reducing benefits claimants.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
22	The Council should consider how the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative and Area Based Grant might be used to support the employment and skills agenda and relevant Local Area Agreement targets and the voluntary sector.	<p>Members agree the use of LABGI funds via both the “Closing” and Budget cabinet reports. LABGI is not a ring-fenced grant. (SG)</p> <p>Members consider ABG every year through the budget-setting process and will consider spend of ABG at the same time as they will consider spend in every other area. (MB)</p>	Not applicable - Member decision
23	That the Council should work where appropriate with adjacent boroughs via West London Working on the borough’s emerging Worklessness and Skills Strategy.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
24	That the Council should improve its partnership working with Information, Advice and Guidance agencies.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
25	That the Council should use appropriate opportunities to lobby central and regional government to direct appropriate resources into the borough, reflecting the scale of the worklessness challenge in Ealing . The Council should also ensure that it is well positioned to access whatever replaces Local Development Agency Area Programme Funds.	No additional resources required (IH)	Accepted
26	That the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance should report annually to Cabinet on the successes and achievements of the Council's Procurement Team in promoting the development and supply of jobs and training opportunities for local people	There is already a bi-annual Cabinet report from the Strategic Procurement team on the recent and upcoming contract activities. It is suggested that information regarding supply of jobs and training opportunities for local people through procurement activities be included in this bi-annual review. (LL)	Accepted as per officer comments
27	That the Economic Development Team should lobby central and regional government to request that their commissioning approaches do not discriminate against local providers.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
28	The Council should look at best practice examples, such as Greenwich and Brent Councils, for exploiting procurement processes to develop employment and skills opportunities.	No additional resources required (IH) This will be explored as part of the wider work of the Strategic Procurement team and will need to be supported by resource from the Economic Development team. (LL)	Accepted
29	That the Economic Development Team improves data sharing between all local agencies engaging with families in poverty to identify families who are workless or employed on low incomes in order to signpost them appropriate support, such as training or employment support, financial & debt advice or childcare support.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
30	That via local commissioning, funding by the Council and external fundraising, the Council and local partners should develop intensive employment support for parents with specific barriers e.g. ex-offenders, those with disabilities or mental health needs, lone parents, speakers of other languages, carers.	To be implemented in additional funding (internal and external) secured for employment and skills. (IH)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
31	That the Council work with other providers to review the co-ordination of existing ESOL provision, basic skills and skills for jobs across children's centres, extended schools, the adult learning service, colleges and other local providers.	No additional resources required. (IH) Council needs to take the lead using new commissioning responsibility to ensure funds are used strategically and are directed by learner need and provider success, not by which providers shout loudest. (EPW)	Accepted
32	That the Council and other LSP employers including PCT, Police and voluntary services to consider flexible working and employment/work experience opportunities that will enable more parents to access work.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
33	That the Council, as an employer, ensure that all employees who have a low level of formal qualifications are given opportunities to gain qualifications via Ealing Skills Pledge.	This is picked up in the roll - out of the Skills Pledge to departments; a joint project between Economic Regeneration team and Core HR. This targets all employees with a low level of formal qualifications, which implicitly includes parents. Going forward, the advertising will more strongly encourage parents to apply and seek to be 'family friendly' in it's arrangements. (SL)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
34	<p>That the Council, as an employer, carry out a campaign to ensure parent employees are taking up all benefits and tax credits entitled to them.</p>	<p>Confirm any resource requirements with Housing Benefits/HR (IH)</p> <p>We can promote through intranet and Frank This should be at no cost. (TW)</p> <p>HR does not have the technical or professional expertise to advise on benefits or tax credits issues nor should they for fear of getting things wrong and creating liabilities for the Council. If Tony Walker in Housing Benefits is saying that Housing Benefits can do this with the capacity and resources they have then fine and they will need to deliver on this objective. (AS)</p> <p><i>Further comments on tax credits for working parents from HR (AS/RW):</i></p> <p>This is provided by the Children's Information Service. It is part of the reason why we have them alongside Accor Services when they come to Just Deli. Of course they also provide help and information to find childcare support within the borough i.e. Childminders and Nurseries etc. Charles B does from time to time take out an advertisement regarding the services provided in "Around Ealing" etc.</p>	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
		<p>The Council provides a Childcare Voucher scheme through a salary sacrifice scheme which allows employees to purchase childcare vouchers (free from Income Tax Contributions) to pay for their childcare requirements.</p> <p>The Council also has an employee assistance programme run by a company called Care First. Care First provide advice on benefits to employees of the Council.</p>	
35	That the Council target unemployed parents for volunteering and work opportunities at the Council via the Jobs Pledge.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
36	That the Council target young lone parents for volunteering placements with the Council's Children & Families' service via the V programme (starting in March 09).	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
37	That the Council develop career paths in Children & Families services for disadvantaged young people via volunteering placements provided by the V programme (starting in March 09).	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted
38	That the Council ensures the needs of families in poverty are considered in the development of the new Ealing Housing Strategy and that housing related child poverty issues are incorporated into the forthcoming Ealing Worklessness Strategy.	<p>Ealing's new Housing strategy will be informed by our recently commissioned housing market assessment which details poverty and income data for the borough. (AB)</p> <p>Accepted – no resources required (IH)</p>	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
39	That the Council through the Ealing Social Housing Pledge ¹² encourage Housing Providers to develop opportunities for work experience /employment/volunteering to tenants who are parents and out of work.	Suggest that this is amended to read: That the Council secures commitments through Ealing Social Housing Pledge ¹³ for Housing Providers to develop opportunities, as employers and through employment & training projects, for tenants who are parents and out of work. (IH) The current Pledge is being piloted and once an assessment has been undertaken of this we would look to expand this to other registered providers. (AB)	Amended as per officer comments
40	That the Council secure additional commitments from Jobcentre Plus to provide outreach on estate with high parent worklessness	Would look to Jobcentre Plus to provide any required resources. (IH)	Accepted subject to clarification on the resource implications. Appropriate funding to be identified within the normal budget process and a further report to be brought to Cabinet.

¹² Ealing Social Housing Pledge is a set of commitments for housing providers to provide employment opportunities and support to their tenants, linking with the Ealing Skills & Employment group. Ealing Homes and Registered Social Landlords operating in Ealing have signed up to the Pledge in principle.

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Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
41	That Housing Regeneration works with regeneration partners to maximise the provision of facilities for helping parents return to work in high and medium intervention estates e.g. community facilities with childcare for training/employment support sessions.	The tender briefs for developer/ RSL partners seek to maximise these opportunities for each high intervention estate. Ealing Homes would be involved from a housing management perspective. (AB)	Accepted with additional comment on EH
42	That Housing Benefits and Ealing Homes conduct a housing benefits take up campaign targeted at working age parents.	<p>HB and EH will work on developing a protocol for sharing information on benefit claimants. Ealing Homes has a yearly residents conference/fun day. We are developing a proposal with Ealing Homes to hold a stall for Housing advice this would include benefit advice and other income and employment. Ealing Homes would be involved from a Housing management perspective. (AB)</p> <p>Benefits would recommend a targeted mailshot to all households across the borough not currently claiming Housing Benefit. This would be a rolling programme, and would commence in wards with high indices of child poverty. This would require additional funding of approximately £55k. (TW)</p>	Accepted with additional comment
43	That the Council's new housing strategy should include plans for (a) identifying families in private housing in receipt of housing benefit and (b) targeting employment support and outreach to support those living in poverty.	As above, we are working with HB to develop an info sharing protocol. (AB)	Accepted

Ref	PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	SERVICE OFFICER COMMENTS	CABINET RESPONSE 23.6.09
44	That Council officers work with the LSP to develop a more co-ordinated approach towards reducing child poverty, across services and between partners, including developing greater lines of accountability for the delivery of child poverty targets.	No additional resources required in the short term. (IH)	Accepted
45	That the Council, in close consultation with the Council Business and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Panel, reviews delivery against the LAA Child Poverty target when 2008/09 annual data becomes available later this year and considers its approach to child poverty in light of emerging obligations under the Government's proposed Child Poverty Bill and the evolving Children's Trust arrangements.	No additional resources required. (IH)	Accepted