

ITEM NO: 6a Appendix 2

Report of the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel

Inquiry into the number of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Southampton

June 2009



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Executive Summary

1. The Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel has undertaken this inquiry to address the issue of a higher than national average number of young people (16 – 18 years) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Southampton.
2. Reducing young people who are NEET is a strategic objective of the Southampton Partnership and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Stretch Target.1.
3. Ofsted's annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Southampton City Council, 2008, graded services at 'adequate', grade 2. (Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale 4: outstanding/excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate).
4. Nearly one third, (31%) of the city's 11 year olds do not reach the national standards in English and Maths and the majority (85.2%) of our 16 year olds on free school meals do not achieve 5 A* - Cs including English and Maths (England 78.9%) – a clear link to poverty and deprivation.
5. In November 2005 the average rate of young people NEET for England was 7.7% and 6.1% in the South East region. In contrast Southampton's average NEET rate at that time was 10.4%.
6. In April 2008 the Children's Services and Learning Directorate took over the responsibility of the then Connexion team for reducing the number of NEETs.
7. The Terms of Reference for this inquiry were agreed as:
 - To identify the number of young people who are NEET in Southampton and analyse trend information.
 - To identify the causes/reasons for the high level of NEET within Southampton and the impact of NEET on the economy of the city.
 - To review the action being taken to reduce NEET levels by Southampton City Council and partners.
 - To compare the performance and methods of Southampton with other local authority areas and identify successful strategies.
 - To highlight examples of good practice.
 - To develop ideas for strategies that may help to reduce the number of young people NEET in Southampton.
8. The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) is committed to reducing the number of young people NEET and has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET by 2% points, from 9.6% in 2004 (baseline) to 7.6% by 2010.
9. The latest DCSF figures show that 189,500 16- 18-year-olds were NEET at the end of 2007, a reduction from 210,000 (10.4 %) at the end of 2006.
10. Nationally, NEETs are a priority as the UK competes in a global market and too many young people opt out of learning at 16 years of age without the necessary skills and standards of educational attainment needed to gain successful

employment. At this time, during a global economic recession, reducing NEETs represents a considerable challenge.

11. The Government has introduced a raft of measures and legislation to keep young people in learning, improve attainment and skills, and this includes improved tracking of young people, improved offer of vocational training and flexible learning provision, information advice and guidance. The DCSF have published a 'tool kit' and guidelines to support local authorities to improve performance.
12. Further, legislation has been introduced to raise the participation in learning age to 17 by 2013 with an increase to age 18 years by 2015.
13. Locally, work is being undertaken by the City Council and partners to support young people who are NEET or likely to become NEET. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets have been set at 8% for 09/10 with a stretch of 7.6%. The target for 2010/11 is set at 7.1%. Currently Southampton's out turn figure (National Indicator 117) stands at 9.4% (March 2009).
14. Actions to achieve these targets are detailed in local strategies including the Children and Young People's Plan, the Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) and the newly published 14-19 Learning, Skills and Employability Strategy 2009-12.
15. Southampton's EDAP takes account of and builds on the City of Southampton Strategy's aims and objectives re innovation, increasing skills and employment. The Plan links in the LAA and Partnership Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) targets.
16. Compared to statistical neighbours Southampton's performance is modest and more could be done to capitalise on the City's assets. Staff within the City Council's Economic Development Team are sharing good practice with Coventry and Bristol.
17. Education and training is at the heart of improving economic performance. Raising aspirations needs to be a priority and providing quality information, advice and guidance to young people, parents and guardians is essential.
18. The public sector represents 32% of the City's economy. The number of jobs in Southampton has been estimated at 120,000 and was likely to fall by approximately 3 – 4,000 during the current down turn. Prior to the downturn, an estimated 9 – 10,000 new jobs were forecast.
19. Six wards in Southampton have recorded NEETs of over 10%. The highest of these are Swaythling -13.6% and Bargate - 13.0% (Nov. 2008). Interestingly the Scrutiny Panel noted that the city's two universities are located in these two areas.
20. The Scrutiny Panel consulted young people and this was facilitated by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Youth Options, Young People and Community Support and Southampton City College. Evidence was received from key witnesses representing a wide variety of organisations, as well as information from comparator local authorities (Coventry and Derby) to explore best practice with the view to making improvements locally.

21. Key findings:

- Establishing a strategic lead across directorates and organisations is vital as the issues facing NEETs are so diverse; e.g. unemployment, low income, depression and poor mental health.
- Strengthening partnerships and identifying and building on good practice is essential in order to improve performance and reduce duplication of effort, implement sustainable action and reduce NEETs long term.
- Young people who become known, as NEETs are not an homogenous group. A minority of young people from all walks of life spend varying amounts of time as NEET.
- A targeted effort to address a systemic problem with sustained funding is required.
- Prevention and early intervention is essential. Vulnerable young people need to be identified as early as possible, *prior* to leaving school. It was found that young people at 14 years of age are particularly at risk. They may face difficulties at home, lack confidence, motivation, get involved in risk-taking behaviour, and be absent from school.
- A positive approach to supporting parents and releasing the capacity of trained practitioners within SCC could be a cost effective way of reducing NEETs. Redesigning systems and moving away from a 'child centred' approach ('Think Family') aims to improve early intervention.
- Improving educational attainment, information, advice and guidance is vital to improving life chances and assisting young people into employment. Evidence from Wheetshaeaf Trust, Southampton highlights that an in depth study of young people currently attending the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme revealed that 94% had difficulty with literacy and numeracy.
- For those who experience disability, have special educational needs or are the victims of bullying it was found that remaining engaged with education was difficult and underachievement common.
- Improved data sharing with learning providers would facilitate communication with young people locally and marketing and promoting choices to them.

22. Key Recommendations:

- Strategic Planning: The NEET Action Plan needs to be updated or aligned with the detail of the Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP), which also aims to reduce NEETs, supported by a Cabinet Sub Group of the three relevant Portfolio holders (Children's Services, Economic Development and Young People and Skills). NB Following the completion of the Inquiry meetings, information was provided to indicate that during the period of the inquiry the NEET Action Plan had been updated and fully integrated within the 14-19 Strategy which has also been cross referenced with the EDAP. The strategy is now known as the 14-19 Learning, Skills and Employability Strategy 2009-2012.
- Economic Development takes a strategic lead for the overall responsibility of coordinating effort working closely with the Cabinet sub group. Other recommendations relating to coordination, achievement, support to young people, intervention, use of data and informal education appear in more detail in the body of the report.
- An audit of finance including external funding and personnel involved takes place, as there is concern re duplication of effort to reduce NEETs. (The Scrutiny Panel remains unclear as to how many agencies and staff are involved in reducing the number of NEETs).

- Review partnership bodies to ensure educational establishments are engaged and represented appropriately.
- Develop and improve existing peer mentoring and adult mentoring schemes; focussing on one to one support for vulnerable young people in partnership with all relevant sectors.
- Ensure that quality of information advice and guidance is monitored and support external providers.
- Schools to be encouraged to involve vulnerable young people in implementing the anti-bullying strategies as outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan. Investigate and adopt best practice already operating in schools.
- Schools share good practice re staff training and a flexible curriculum. As a matter of routine schools should involve the young person's parents and family at every available opportunity.
- Where practicable, capture data re 'long term NEETs' and focus resources on this group and on teenage parents.
- It is acknowledged by the Scrutiny Panel that Solent Skills Quest do provide a mentoring training programme to young people, in partnership with local businesses. The City Council should support this programme by taking a keen interest and lead on supporting the development and promotion of this scheme to ensure it is sufficiently resourced and addressing the NEETs issue.
- The capacity of trained employees within partner organisations should be released (internally and externally) to support parents of young people who are vulnerable to becoming NEET or have already reached that status, into education, employment and/or training.
- Personal development/training opportunities should be offered to employees in order to increase the provision of cost effective, one to one support and mentoring to all vulnerable young people.
- Young people who are NEET are referred or actively encouraged to access one to one life coaching style support that will help them for example, make long term plans, take responsibility for their choices and recognise that a job can lead to a career.
- Children's Services and Learning investigate and identify a strategy for dealing with any low uptake of support on offer through the 14-19 Partnership.
- Through the BSF programme - Children's Services and Learning review options for the co-location of services to provide young people with local support in community hubs
- Ensure that the City Council continues to work in partnership with the SCPCT and Southampton Solent University on the 'Skills Development Zone' and develop opportunities for apprenticeships, work experience and placements internally and in partner organisations.
- Consultation takes place to monitor the impact of the closure of the Connexions High Street branch.
- Children's Services and Learning develop a robust method of identifying potential NEET young people at an early age and make this information available to schools and practitioners.
- Ensure those from low income families are aware of the financial incentives to stay on at college.

- Children's Services and Learning should involve young people in decision making regarding services that affect their quality of life; e.g. access to support, information advice and guidance, and that the practice of consultation be embedded across SCC and other organisations through the 14-19 partnership.
- Southampton City Council's on line 'Area Prospectus' for 14-19 year olds be updated and improved. Promote the web site as an interactive tool e.g. for use between care leavers and their personal advisors to assist with a Pathway Plan. Focus on easy access to vocational training and opportunities for placements within SCC in particular link up with housing advice.
- Children Services and Learning develop a referral system offering a tiered level of support and promote this to practitioners. Ensure support is available to all vulnerable learners on a one to one basis, especially during transitional stages.
- Children's Services and Learning monitor young people with special educational needs to improve;
 - Educational achievement
 - Quality of support provided
 - Emotional health and wellbeing
- Children's Services and Learning ensure relevant CCIS information is shared with schools and colleges across the City to enable proactive, direct targeting and marketing to engage young people through personalised invitations in catchment areas with one to one support relevant to the interests of the young person.
- A greater emphasis should be placed on achievements through informal education

Section 1 Introduction

1. This inquiry was undertaken by the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel, membership included; Councillor Michael Ball (Chair), Councillor Sarah Bogle (Vice Chair), Councillor Parvin Damani, Councillor David Fuller, Councillor Edward Osmond, Councillor Steve Sollitt and Councillor Andrew Wells.

Purpose of the inquiry:

2. The purpose of the inquiry was to identify the reasons behind the high number of young people in Southampton who are NEET and make recommendations to improve performance in reducing the level of NEETs across the city.
3. NEET is a shorthand term for describing young people between the ages of 16 to 18 years who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. The Scrutiny Panel consulted young people and found that in Southampton, young people who are NEET do not conform to the stereotype of young people who *will not* engage. Rather, they are more likely to be young people who are vulnerable due to many diverse reasons and may not have received the appropriate support needed to *help them stay engaged*.
4. The inquiry found that nationally, a number of risk factors make it more likely that young people may become NEET; e.g. BME (Black, Minority or Ethnic), leaving care, teenage parents, learning difficulties and or disability. It is important to highlight that the largest ethnic group in Southampton who are NEET is recorded as white young women.

Terms of Reference:

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 - To review the action being taken to reduce NEET levels by Southampton City Council and partners.
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 - To develop ideas for strategies that may help to reduce the number of young people NEET in Southampton.

Inquiry Methodology:

6. Consultation was undertaken with a variety of key stakeholders, and the Scrutiny Panel considered a considerable amount of information, which is available on request. Many witnesses attended the Panel meetings to provide the necessary evidence to inform the Scrutiny Panel's inquiry.
7. The inquiry examined national and local policy, literature reviews, local consultations and papers from experts. It considered submissions from the private sector and other representatives of organisations that could not attend the meetings. The Panel interviewed witnesses from Southampton City Council services, other statutory agencies, local and national charities providing services to support NEETs as well as experts from learning providers and comparator authorities (Derby and Coventry).

Members held informal meetings with young people, facilitated by No Limits, Southampton City College, Youth Options and the City Council's Young People and Community Support Division,

Scope:

8. The Terms of Reference of this inquiry had a focus on exploring why young people aged 16 – 18 years become NEET. At an early stage in the inquiry members became aware that the causes and consequences of becoming NEET were extremely diverse. Evidence received regarding prevention/intervention was significant and a focus on action pre-16 was also therefore relevant to informing the Scrutiny Panel.
9. The Scrutiny Panel would not have had the time to focus in depth on individual factors and the corresponding policy areas that contribute towards young people becoming disengaged. E.g. nationally and locally (with some variation), these are:
 - Teenage pregnancy/parents
 - Young carers
 - BME
 - Young people leaving care
 - Workless households
 - Drug and alcohol misuse
 - Illness
 - Poor diet
 - Support at school
 - Relationships with parents/carers, teachers and peers
 - Special educational needs
 - Educational attainment
 - Offending behaviour
 - Truancy and absence – see note below.

However, relevant evidence has informed the report and helped to shape the context locally and nationally.

NB: At the outset of this inquiry the Scrutiny Panel were informed that, a parallel inquiry conducted by the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel was investigating the possible links between crime and disorder and absence from school. Therefore, although it is recognised that absence from school has a direct impact on levels of attainment and is a factor that is recognised as contributing to NEETs, this was not a focus for the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel. Specific recommendations from the Safer Communities Panel report (June 2009) have therefore been considered independently of the NEET inquiry and will be available from the Performance and Scrutiny Officer, Southampton City Council.

The economic impact of NEETs:

10. Information was gathered from Southampton City Council, the CBI, the Prince's Trust and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Costs obtained are illustrated within the body of the report. However, the Scrutiny Panel acknowledge that more work would need to be done locally to get a full picture of the costs associated with long-term unemployment, and links to youth crime, underachievement and other significant factors that impact on the economy.

Section 2 Setting the context – National

11. Nationally evidence shows that young people spending time as NEET 'is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression and poor mental health'¹. In 2006 the number of young people who were NEET nationally stood at 206,000 and this reduced to 189,000 in 2007. The overall figure remains stubbornly high at around 1 in 10². It is estimated that around 1% of 16 – 18 year olds are "long term NEET". 'Previously the target baseline was presented as 10% but due to a change in reporting in 2007 NEET figures are now reported to one decimal place. The baseline is 9.6% to one decimal place and thus the 2010 target for a 2 percentage point reduction is 7.6%'. (See Appendix 5).
12. The group of young people who are NEET is not homogenous. Nationally, it is known that:
- "The NEET group is getting older – around half of those NEET are of academic age 18, compared with 40% 5 years ago.
 - The gender gap is widening – 16 year old boys are now more than twice as likely to be NEET as 16 year old girls.
 - A higher proportion of young people are inactive and are not looking for work or learning.
 - 39% of those with no GCSEs are NEET at 16 compared to 2% of 16 year olds who attained 5 or more A* - C GCSE. (Known as Level 2 qualifications – See Appendix 1; National Qualifications Framework).
 - Persistent absentees are 7 times more likely to be NEET at age 16
 - Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are twice as likely to be NEET as those without
 - An estimated 20,000 teenage mothers are NEET."¹

National Policy on NEETs

13. Central Government has introduced various policy measures as part of its national strategy to reduce NEETs. These include:
- **A robust tracking system** (CCIS – Client Caseload Information System) that identifies those young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so. It is intended that the information gathered by the CCIS is shared with schools to improve support available to young people at 16 years which will help them make decisions that are right for them. Data is gathered at three survey points 16, 17 and 18. Young people are largely recorded as being from two groups; those 'available' for work e.g. underachievers and those 'unavailable' e.g. teenage parents and those in custody.
 - **Suitable learning provision** in every part of the country is available to improve choice and engagement. The 'September Guarantee' for 16 and 17 year olds will ensure a place in learning to facilitate the transition phase from secondary education to further education. The national qualifications framework is being reformed to address young peoples' needs and will include the introduction of a Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) and apprenticeships.

¹ Reducing the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET: The Strategy – DCSF. 2008

² One in Ten – Key messages from policy, research and practice about young people who are NEET, by Jo Tunnard, with Tim Barnes and Steve Flood. 2008

- **The new Diplomas** to be introduced in 2013 will entitle young people to study along a more vocational pathway through practical experience alongside classroom work and obtain one of a choice of 14 subject areas. (Details are attached at Appendix 6).
- **Quality information, advice and guidance** that is accessible to all young people to ensure they get the support they need. This includes providing young people and practitioners with information on education, training options, apprenticeships, as well as up-to-date information on careers, accessible through the new 14-19 on-line prospectus, Connexions, youth support services.
- A new emphasis on **rights and responsibilities and incentives** that enables young people to stay engaged or re-engage in learning. The Education Maintenance Allowance is available to those families on low incomes, and has been made available to help support access to learning post 16. Young carers can also access financial support for childcare - Care to Learn (C2L). An agreed and achieved 'Activity Agreement' will also attract an allowance to aid reintegration in to learning. Job Seekers Allowance is available to young people once they reach 18 although it is accessible to 16 and 17 year olds who experience hardship e.g. as a result of a disability or offending behaviour. As from April 2009, a fast track to intensive support under New Deal will be implemented for young people who have spent a length of time NEET in excess of 26 weeks.

14. The inquiry was informed that the Education and Skills Act 2008 is the framework that legislates that by 2013 all 17 year olds and in 2015 all 18 year olds will be required to participate in education, employment or training. Within this legislation, a legal duty for learning providers to notify the Connexions service as soon as a young person leaves learning will also be formalised to identify those in need of support and re-engage as soon as possible.

15. The Scrutiny Panel noted that by this time (2015) the status of NEETs will no longer refer to those aged 16 – 18 years but may be used to describe the age group post 18 years. As the requirement for 16 – 18 years olds to stay on in learning is embedded, the issue at that age is likely to become one of absence for this age group.

Partnership work

16. In recognition of the fact that the NEET problem cannot be tackled by one agency alone, the Education and Skills Bill 2008 proposed that local authorities take on the lead on reducing NEETs, integrating the Connexions Service and working through Children's Trusts, 14-19 partnerships and with employers Job Centre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council. 'Ministers agreed that the Connexions brand is a valuable asset and should not be lost. The brand will, therefore, be retained by organisations receiving the Connexions grant to deliver services.'³

³ Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Guidance for Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and Connexions providers working together to support young people NEET in their local area.

Economic impact

17. In order to compete in a global economy, it is vital that the UK has a highly skilled workforce and addresses the impact of those young people who are NEET. The impact of this group on the economy is significant and long term. E.g. For the items where costs could be identified, the average per capita total present value costs over a lifetime are £45,000 resource costs and £52,000 public finance costs.⁴

The Prince's Trust

18. **Nathalie Reid, Head of Funding Development** advised the Scrutiny Panel on the national perspective of the cost of social exclusion. The Cost of Exclusion report illustrates the cost of youth unemployment, the cost of youth crime and the cost of educational underachievement. It states that there is a strong relationship with educational underachievement and crime e.g.; 'Reducing youth unemployment by one percentage point could save over £2 Million in terms of youth crime avoided'. The 'productivity loss to the economy as a result of youth unemployment is estimated at £10 million every day; and this is without taking into account people who are classified as 'inactive' for other reasons'⁵

19. The CBI have also produced an in depth study examining the costs to the UK economy. Job Seekers Allowance data (Feb. 2008) suggests that the cost for 18 – 24 year olds is £11.4M per week.⁶

National Targets

20. The DCSF's Public Service Agreement target (PSA) is to 'reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET by 2% points by 2010 (from the 2004 baseline of 10%), and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a PSA to increase the overall employment rate³.

³ Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Guidance for Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and Connexions providers working together to support young people NEET in their local area.

⁴ Estimating the cost of being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' At Age 16-18. Research Brief No: 346 – June 2002

⁵ The Cost of Exclusion, Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK. The Prince's Trust, 2007.

⁶ Towards a NEET solution, tackling underachievement in young people. CBI, 2008.

Section 3 NEETs in Southampton

Causes and Consequences of becoming NEET:

21. Over a period of eight meetings members of the Scrutiny Panel were informed that young people who are likely to become NEET are those who, from an early age, experience deprivation, multigenerational unemployment, low levels of support and nurturing, family difficulties, disability and/or special educational needs. These multiple layers of deprivation can then be the manifestation of:

- A lack of confidence – vulnerability to becoming a victim of bullying
- Low aspirations – likelihood of underachievement at school
- Increased risk taking – leading to teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness and offending behaviour
- Lower mobility – reduced access to the labour market

22. Significant effort to target vulnerable young people and intervene at an early age is required in order to improve participation in learning and educational achievement before the age of 16 years. It also became apparent that the largest group of young people currently NEET were 17 – 18 years of age. Significant focus also needs to be placed on the long-term effects of government legislation increasing the age of participation in learning. It was noted that the problems associated with entering NEET status do not disappear at the age of 18 years, but rather become a considerable challenge when examining the impact on the local economy.

23. Further, it was noted that inextricably linked to this challenge, the current economic climate coupled with an increased demand in skills requirements, places additional pressures on performance, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Action being taken

24. The Scrutiny Panel received evidence from young people (see consultation below) and witnesses from the following organisations;

- Southampton City Council: Children's Services and Learning, Economic Development, Communities, Health and Care.
- Learning providers: Southampton University, Southampton Solent University, Southampton City College, Tauntons College, Itchen College, Bitterne Park Secondary School and Chamberlayne College of the Arts.
- Voluntary Sector: No Limits, Wheatsheaf Trust, Youth Options, City Limits
- Job Centre Plus
- The Prince's Trust

Southampton City Council – Children's Services and Learning

25. The responsibility of NEETs sits within the Children and Young People's Trust for the city. The Head of Young People, from the Children's Services and Learning Directorate has the lead for NEETs in the city. Significant organisational changes have taken place during the last few months to bring together the Young People and Community Support and Connexions functions with the objective of strengthening support to young people.

26. **Clive Webster, Executive Director for Children's Services and Learning** met with the Scrutiny Panel early in the inquiry to provide a strategic overview of the service and outline the current structure of the directorate. He outlined the role of the Children's and Young People's Trust and the importance of working in partnership to develop priorities for the Children and Young Peoples' Plan.

27. The need for strategic planning, improving performance in schools and coordination of services to reduce duplication was emphasised. Concerns re short term funding were also explained.
28. **Councillor Baillie – (now former) Cabinet Member for Children’s Services** emphasised that improved performance in educational attainment is a priority. Quality of teaching staff vital and relevant training and support needed to be in place to drive up performance. The Scrutiny Panel were advised that careers advice in schools needed to improve. The Cabinet Member felt that the economic down turn might well encourage young people to stay in learning.
29. **Alison Alexander, Head of Service Young People and Community Support Children’s Services and Learning** provided an in depth presentation to the Scrutiny Panel at their first meeting. It was useful in helping members to build an understanding of the extent of the problem and what actions were being taken to address the issue.

Staffing and Facilities

30. The Children’s Services and Learning Directorate provide support to young people through the following service areas; Children and Youth Support and 14-19 Learning and Skills (staffing = 152 full time equivalents).
31. From 2008 the Connexions Service was fully integrated into the city council and the Local Authority became responsible for reducing the number of young people NEET. The inquiry was informed that the Connexions brand would be taking a lower profile.
32. The Connexions facility in the centre of Southampton was closed and a new model of working in partnership with No Limits and Job Centre plus was emerging. Members heard that the Connexions facility had previously supported up to 60 – 70 visiting young people per day.
33. A restructure had become necessary to accommodate the integration with Connexions and was reported as near completion. The Scrutiny Panel were advised that the restructure provided cohesion to the Connexions and Youth Service staff. It resulted in large efficiencies in management and support structures which increased capacity in front line services, including six Parenting Officer posts to support family learning.
34. The inquiry heard that within the new structure, staff would be based in No Limits, in close proximity to Job Centre Plus, Bernard Street, providing a useful ‘hub’ for young people seeking support.
35. However, during the inquiry staff moved from No Limits to the YMCA building, Cranbury Terrace, off the Avenue, Southampton. This raised concerns for ease of access for vulnerable young people. It was reported that the reasoning behind this was that improved facilities provided a more confidential environment to facilitate discussions re personal circumstances relating to accessing benefits.
36. Youth Support is now managed and provided on a locality basis in the North and Central area of the city, the West, and the East and South area. Personal Advisors and Youth Support Workers provide expertise in outreach support, information,

advice and guidance. Educational welfare and social care is a high priority. Employees are based at Frobisher House, Tauntons College, and The Eastpoint Centre and from March 2009 a pilot would begin at Shirley Library.

37. Southampton City Council (Safeguarding Division) acts as corporate parent to those young people in care and young offenders. Their progress is tracked on the CCIS data system managed by the Children's Services and Learning Directorate. Caseworkers from the Safeguarding Division are allocated to vulnerable young people who assist their progress back into education employment or training (EET).
38. The Scrutiny Panel heard that staff had been successful in attracting funding with a grant from the European social Fund of £1.2m to address the NEET problem across the 'PUSH' area (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire).
39. Supporting young people who are NEET is achieved directly through the service areas and indirectly by sub contracting to organisations such as SAFE (Southampton Action For Employment), City Limits, Fairbridge and the now merged organisations known as 'Rainer, Crime Concern'.
40. The City Council also works closely with Job Centre Plus and there is a service level agreement to support young people through No Limits. Staff work with the 'V' (volunteering) programme to engage 15 young people with an express route through to apprenticeships.

Policies and Strategies addressing NEETs:

41. The Scrutiny Panel were advised by the Cabinet Member for Young People and Skills that the portfolio priorities addressing young people NEET were teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, reducing first time offending and increasing levels of qualifications by age 19. The following Southampton City Council strategies contribute towards addressing and reducing the NEET figures and were considered as evidence by the inquiry:
 - **NEET Action Plan** – 2007 – 2010. However, the Scrutiny Panel were concerned that the NEET Action Plan was out of date.
 - **Southampton 14 – 19 Strategy** (Draft: March 2007) was available in draft format. Key challenges illustrated within this Strategy are listed as;
 - Raising performance
 - Raising aspirations
 - The curriculum development
 - Support, guidance and Inclusion
 - Improving teaching and learning.
 - **Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP)**. The EDAP provided a broad context on the issues that need to be addressed to support economic growth in Southampton and informed the Scrutiny Panel on the links to Worklessness and reducing NEETs.
 - **Children and Young Peoples' Plan**. The Children and Young People's Plan has priorities to achieve economic well being by ensuring that:
 - Young people have the right skills and qualifications
 - The number of children in poverty is reducing
 - Young people access learning, skills and employment
 - Young people make a positive contribution.

42. Following the completion of the Inquiry meetings, information was provided to indicate that during the period of the inquiry the NEET Action Plan had been updated and fully integrated within the 14-19 Strategy which has also been cross referenced with the EDAP. The strategy is now known as the 14-19 Learning, Skills and Employability Strategy 2009-2012.
43. The Head of Service, Young People and Community Support also advised the Scrutiny Panel that there were plans to deliver a package of services to improve parenting, engagement with services, and aspirations of the whole community. In terms of ensuring the promotion of economic prosperity the Division will also ensure that officer accountability for targeting resources and achieving improvements in population outcomes is improved.

Information Advice and guidance (IAG)

44. Access to information, advice and guidance 'helps young people to become more self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development including learning'.³
45. A new national quality standard is in place to ensure young people can overcome any barriers to their participation in learning or employment. The 'universal offer' for all young people is a 'high quality, comprehensive and impartial information, advice and guidance to help young people make informed choices about their future'. 'Local 14-19 prospectuses are available online in every area'.²
46. However, Southampton City Council's web site was found to be out of date with the latest events for young people to take part in, being over one year old.
47. In Southampton, young people have access to the local Connexions web site, which has good on-line information and telephone numbers. Area teams are promoted and contact details are available. However, it was noted that the Southampton City Web still has the old address of the Connexions facility, which could be confusing for young people and families who wish to access support. The telephone number does however divert to staff based at Frobisher House.
48. Six agencies are also providing the 'Entry to Employment' (E2E) provision. Funded by the Learning and Skills Council, there has been some success in re-engaging young people and supporting them with choices and incentives to participate in education, employment or training.

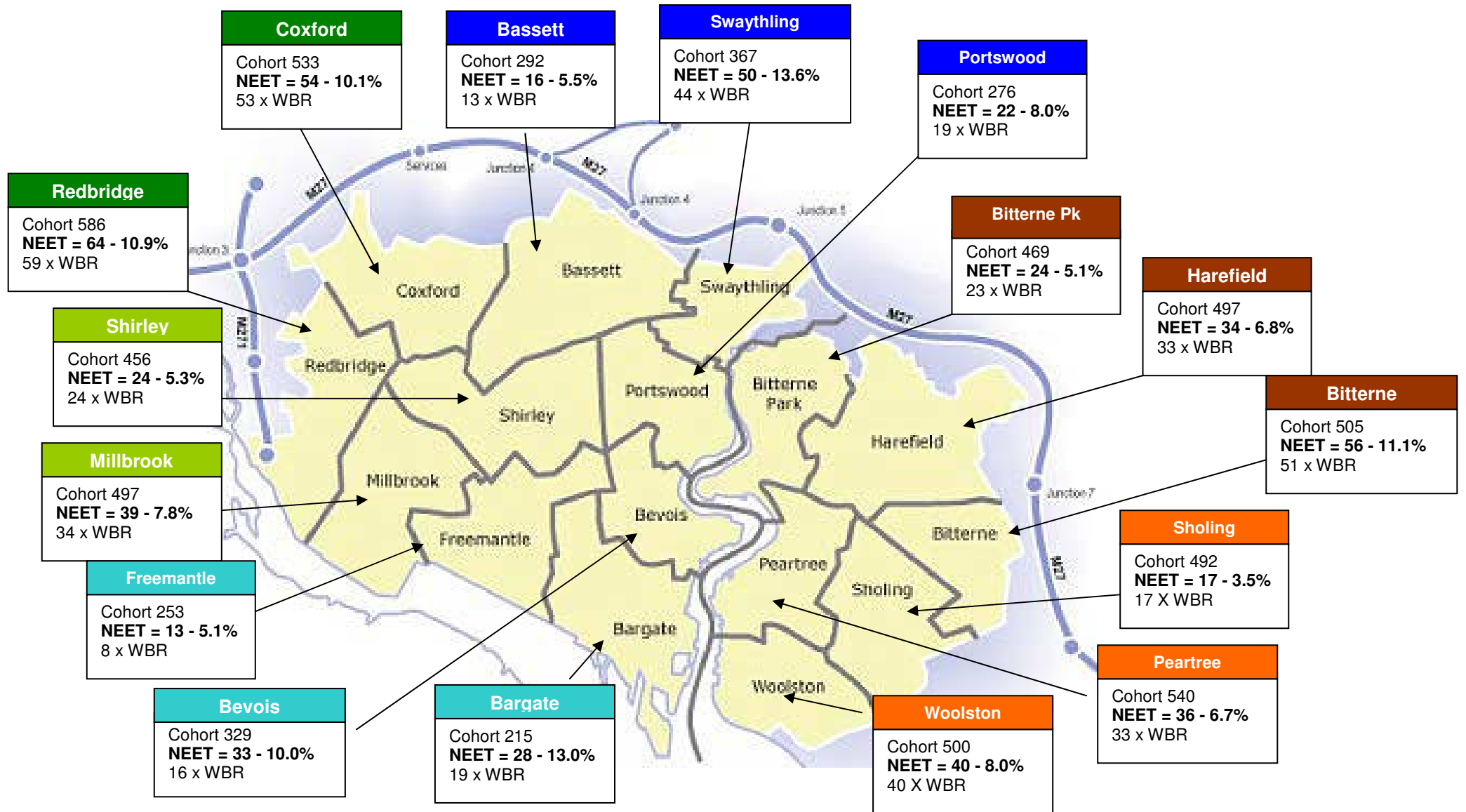
Data and Performance Targets

49. The inquiry was provided with a significant amount of data regarding the NEET group, most of which was illustrated on a ward by ward basis and was helpful to gain an understanding of the scale of the problem.

² One in Ten – Key messages from policy, research and practice about young people who are NEET, by Jo Tunnard, with Tim Barnes and Steve Flood. 2008, Page 17.

³ Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Guidance for Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and Connexions providers working together to support young people NEET in their local area, Page 9.

16-18 NEET Breakdown (CCIS - November 2008)



50. The main ethnicity of the NEET group in Southampton is 'white British' (WBR); 281 female and 267 males recorded (Nov.2008), against the national trend of boys being the predominant grouping. However, as with the trend nationally young people NEET are at their highest density within the eleven priority neighbourhoods. Demonstrated as a percentage of the local cohort, the Redbridge, Coxford, Swaythling, Bitterne, Bevois and Bargate wards were recorded as 10% or higher. This is clearly illustrated in the ward map above.
51. Statistics are stored on the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS). The system tracks young people from the age of 13 - 18 years (approximately 20,000 young people). The data provided to the Scrutiny Panel was collected in November and December 2008. Throughout the 16 – 18 year age group, all interventions are logged.
52. The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) average the number of young people NEET over a three-month period and figures are adjusted to take into account the likely number of young people who are 'unknown' – it is therefore called the adjusted figure – 9.6%. The main categories of young people who are NEET are recorded as two main groups i.e. those 'available' and those 'not available'. Those 'not available' are then further categorised as in Table 1.

Table 1: Young people NEET in Southampton as at Dec.2008.	16 year	17 years	18 years	
NEET % (DCSF Adjusted figure).				
Available to the Labour Market	135	196	138	
Not available to the labour market:	9	22	62	
Young carers	0	0	0	0
Teenage Parents	3	18	44	65
Illness	4	2	9	15
Pregnancy	2	1	9	12
Religious grounds	0	0	0	0
Unlikely to be economically active	0	0	0	0
Other reason	0	1	0	1

Source: Directorate Children's Services and Learning

53. Data is captured on a daily basis and therefore varies as it's reported, e.g. in November 2008, the 16 – 18 year old cohort equalled 6,727 and those NEET totalled 550. This rose to 562 in December 2008. There tend to be peaks and troughs during the academic year with learning providers advising that there are particular difficulties during the Autumn term when young people, for a variety of reasons, will decide their original course of learning is not the right one for them or they lose their motivation following a lengthy break.
54. Information provided to the Scrutiny Panel showed that since November 2006 good progress has been made to achieve a reduction in the number of 'unknowns'; 607 (Nov. 2006) down to 432 (Nov. 2008), and the Scrutiny Panel were informed that this trend is a necessity in order to ensure that young people are known to service providers and can be re-engaged in learning as soon as possible.

55. Of those 'unavailable' to the labour market teenage parents are the largest group (65). The inquiry was informed that service provision was currently under review.
56. Southampton City Council targets are detailed in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) negotiations. The agreed targets were based on the November 2005 actual figure, which for Southampton was 11%.

Table 2

<u>Year 1 (07/08)</u>	<u>Year 2 (08/09)</u>	<u>Year 3 (09/10)</u>	<u>Year 4 (10/11)</u>
Target: 10%	Target: 9%	Target: 8%	Target: 7.1%
(Stretch) 9.6%	(Stretch 8.6%)	(Stretch 7.6%)	
<u>Actual Performance achieved</u>			
Dec 07 - 10.3%	Nov 08- 9.6%	Mar 09 – 9.4%	

Source: Directorate Children's Services and Learning

57. A 'Performance Reward Grant Allocation of £55,163.58 will be withheld from Central Government if the target of 7.6% is not achieved. Linked to the reward the number of NEETs unknown to the local authority needs to be below 5.5%.⁷

Access to further education:

58. Getting to college does cause a problem for some young people (see 'Consultation'). However, Southampton does have a 'post 16 transport partnership' in place to assist in removing these barriers. The group includes representatives from Southampton City Council, the Learning and Skills Council, and local schools and colleges. Students can access the service through their local colleges to find out if they are eligible for assistance.⁸

Educational Attainment:

59. Bullying is recognised nationally as a significant barrier to educational attainment. In Southampton 63% of children and young people living in priority neighbourhoods believe they have been victims of bullying.⁹
60. Information provided to the Scrutiny Panel highlighted the importance of achievement in school. Should a young person be experiencing difficulties in their personal life then attending and achieving at school represents a considerable challenge and underachievement is seen as a key priority to prevent NEET status.
61. The trend in educational achievement is improving nationally and locally. However, performance is still below the national average in terms of GCSE results. In 2007 61.2% of 16 year olds did **not** achieve 5 A* - Cs (Level 2) including English and Maths. (England 53.2%).⁹
62. Southampton has one of the highest numbers of primary schools which are not achieving the national 65% floor target at Key Stage 2.⁹
63. Nearly one third, 31% of the city's 11 year olds do not reach the national standards in English and Maths.⁹

⁷ Southampton Local Area Agreement, 2007 – 2010.

⁸ Southampton On-Line.

⁹ Young People and Community Support Division, Southampton City Council. February, 2009

64. The majority - 85.2% (212 out of 250) of our 16 year olds on free school meals do not achieve 5 A* - Cs including English and Maths (England 78.9%).⁹
65. Participation rates in further and higher education are lower than the national average – with around 10% (Feb 2008) of the city’s 16 and 17 year olds not in any form of education, employment or training compared to 7.7% in the UK overall.

Southampton City Council – Communities, Health and Care:

Supporting Parents:

66. **Islay Downey, Senior Parenting Practitioner** provided background information about supporting parents in Southampton.
67. The Scrutiny Panel was informed that increased resources within the Safer Communities Team are now enabling a positive parenting approach. Good work does help to support parents of young people when staff link closely with schools and families whose children are at risk of truanting and anti-social behaviour.
68. However, there is room for improvement and it was noted that partnership work could be improved and various initiatives e.g. training staff and releasing capacity that would enable practitioners to work in a preventative way by providing family support, keeping children in school and re-engaging them within a few days of absence, would help to avoid young people becoming NEET.
69. A high proportion of those children whose families need support and are unable to access it, are likely to become or will be known as NEETs. ‘18% of those receiving help are likely to be truanting due to welfare issues, e.g. parents experiencing domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health problems and therefore at risk of neglect’.
70. Panel members were informed that currently many practitioners would have a ‘child centred’ approach when intervention is required. However, it was suggested to members that a protocol that was embedded across the local authority that considered the needs of the entire family would be more successful in reducing NEETs.
71. The inquiry learned that a “Think Family” government funded initiative would aim to address issues for parents at an earlier stage. The project in Southampton aims for early intervention and redesigning of systems to assist in early intervention and prevention.
72. There is a proactive approach working with staff in Adult Services and other agencies. They have a good local knowledge of services, both statutory and voluntary. They will take referrals from GPs and other agencies.
73. The inquiry also heard that there are many parenting practitioners who are already trained across agencies in Southampton but time constraints do not allow for the release of staff to provide the support they could. Evidence supports the theory that intervention reduces conflict within families and children will get back to school and support each other.

Learning providers: Southampton University

74. **Professor Jacky Lumby, School of Education (research expertise in the area of 14 – 19 years)** attended the inquiry and informed members of the Scrutiny Panel that she had been working on a national survey to provide a baseline of evidence. Over 800 young people had been surveyed including 100 disaffected young people, 100 with special educational needs and parents.

75. The survey concluded that:

- 50% of year 11s and year 12s intended to carry on in learning. However, 50% did not feel encouraged to learn more or progress in learning.
- A significant statistical connection between young people staying engaged in learning who felt they had been helped to 'think for themselves'.
- Quality of guidance was a huge influence and made a difference to the young people and their ability to participate and make good choices.
- Security was important to young people.
- 58% of young people thought they were prepared for work.
- An improved relationship between young people and adults is beneficial.
- Some young men cannot bear to sit still in close proximity to each other; it triggers anger. (Wales – policy for a learning coach for each young person.
- Young people had an unrealistic idea of where they want to be.
- There was not a strong 'sense of career' with less than 1% of those surveyed believing they would be unemployed.¹⁰

Southampton Solent University (SSU)

76. **Dr Stephen Lake (Head of Recruitment, Access and Partnerships)**. SSU is especially keen to widen participation from under represented groups into higher education. There was a close working relationship with schools and colleges. A year 7 project enabled children to visit the campus, meet staff and students. Year 10-13 offer includes master classes and taster events. The Scrutiny Panel were informed that SSU felt there was scope to do more in terms of working in partnership and would be keen to have a full role in the 14-19 agenda and representation on the 14-19 Consortium.

Southampton City College

77. **Lindsey Noble, Principal (+ Vice Chair of the 14-19 Consortium) and Helen Mason**. The college has increased its numbers significantly from 850 in 2003/04 to 1554 (16 – 18) year olds now in attendance. The college is funded by the LSC to deliver qualifications.

78. Significant developmental improvements to the site are approaching completion. Improvements to the learning environment were focussed on moving towards workshop and employment style spaces rather than classrooms. It was stated that in 2007/08 there were 793 Level 1 or below starters i.e. less than two grade G's. There is however a good success rate (84%) achieving their level 1.

79. Skillsplus, Technology and Creative Merchandising along with E2E delivery were all stated as initiatives that support and attract vulnerable young people away from becoming NEET.

¹⁰ Gorard, S. Lumby, J. Briggs, A. Morrison, M., Hall, I., Maringe, F., See, B.H. Wright, S. and Shaheen, R with Corcoran, C. Finbar-Fox, J J. & Pring, R. (2009) National Report on the 14-19 Reform Programme: Baseline of evidence 2007 – 2008, Birmingham, University of Birmingham.

80.48% of 16 – 18 year olds are from priority neighbourhoods. Some of these young people need psycho/social intervention and 1:1 coaching. Concerns were expressed that generally colleges do not have the resources to turn around esteem issues.

81. The College hosts inset training days to facilitate an improved understanding for secondary school teachers regarding styles of teaching, resources and facilities available to students wishing to engage in further education. This aims to improve the quality of information, advice and guidance available to young people in school.

Tauntons College

82. **Glenda Gardiner**. The college has an important focus on retention and works hard to maintain relationships with feeder schools. They have hosted visits from teachers from secondary schools to come in to college and meet their students (Redbridge). The college ensures that knowledge about young people who are vulnerable is shared, so relationships can be established that support remaining in learning. A BTec Music course had attracted approximately 80 young people who may have become NEET.

83. An emphasis on 1:1 support was highlighted as essential to young people who experience barriers to participation. A highly effective relationship has been formed with Relate who work in the college on a part time basis.

Itchen College

84. **Tim Proud, Assistant Principal**. Tim advised that entry-level qualifications are not necessarily needed for enrolment. They take students with Level 1, 2 and 3. The college works closely with schools. Examples of good practice include a twilight photography course for teenage mums and the visually impaired, which have been well attended. Information, advice and guidance, with particular emphasis on 1:1 are felt to be very important. The college felt they could do more if they had access to information on the CCIS and would like to personally contact and target young people in their catchment area by focussing on their interests. Early leavers are advised to Connexions. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to keep young people interested. The college would like to work off site more and develop outreach centres to promote the college at secondary schools. Woodlands Community College and Chamberlayne College of the Arts have agreed to work in partnership.

Colleges and universities

85. **Findings:** The learning establishments attended the Scrutiny Panel meeting together and were therefore able to debate good practice in Southampton including issues and concerns. They reached consensus in the following areas:

- 14-19 Strategy, Southampton. Develop clear targets for all with shared objectives and complete. Specific focus should be on early intervention and prevention.
- Reduce competition and blame culture. Share a commitment to resolve problems and celebrate success as a city.
- There is a need to understand the young person's perception of the different cultures in schools and colleges.
- Ensure more effective joined up approach with partners to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency in terms of effort re fund raising and service provision.
- Coordinate efforts and share resources within institutions.

Best practice:

- Peer mentoring schemes (i.e. young people supporting each other) are needed and training schemes could be developed in partnership with other agencies with resources shared city-wide.
- One to one support is vital for a small minority of young people who experience multiple barriers to engagement. A good example of this is the Tauntons College model of working with expertise in the community.
- City College provide training for teachers to raise awareness of different styles of learning and differences in the environment.
- Learn and earn e.g. one day per week in learning + work experience as delivered at Itchen College.

Concerns:

- Too much focus at secondary school level to achieve 5 or more GCSE's. Not enough autonomy or resources to address the issue in schools.
- Difficulties understanding %NEET figure. I.e. Southampton City College substantial increase in attendance from 850 – 1500 in recent years does not seem to have had an effect on the number of NEETs.
- Young people need more support to be 'transported' across organisations more smoothly. There is a need to develop common systems.
- Young people need a better understanding as to how qualifications and learning can lead to employment, independence, relationships etc. There is a need for adult/young person mentoring schemes that could add support needs.

Healthy Schools and Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL):

86. **Kathryn Bevan-Mackie, Advisory Teacher, School Standards Team.** Information was provided to the Scrutiny Panel regarding measures being taken to improve the emotional health and well being of teachers and pupils in Southampton's primary and secondary schools. The primary focus aims to reduce the number of young people dropping out of schools and colleges.

87. The SEAL initiative links closely with the targets re Healthy Schools. Southampton has a total of 81 schools and currently 68% (55 – March 2009) have achieved the Healthy Schools standard. The national target for 2010 stands at 85%. The LAA stretch target has been set at 97%. In order to gain the Healthy Schools Status, schools are required to have measures in place that ensure:

- PSHE: A planned programme of Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE) is delivered by an appropriate team of professionals. Systems for identifying vulnerable young people are in place and that signposting and referrals enables children and young people to access specialist advice on contraception, sexual health and drugs. Also, local data and information should inform activities and support national priorities such as teenage pregnancies and drug/alcohol misuse.
- Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: Children and young people should be consulted and involved in choices and opportunities throughout the school day. Barriers to participation should be removed.
- Emotional Health and Well-being: Vulnerable children, young people and their families should be identified and supported appropriately. The effective use of pastoral support systems, care plans and specialist input needs to be delivered and monitored. In particular, children and young people with specific behavioural, emotional or social difficulties have individualised, planned and structured support.

88. Kathryn, Advisory Teacher, advised that there are five key areas of development that the project focuses on:

- Self awareness
- Managing feelings
- Motivation (high aspirations)
- Empathy
- Social Skills

89. This comprehensive approach underpins effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools.

Bitterne Park Secondary School

90. **Susan Trigger, Principal** provided evidence to the Scrutiny Panel advising that currently there were 1400 on roll at the secondary school, which was largest in the city. Eleven years ago only 38% of pupils were achieving 5 x A* - C's at GCSE level – Level 2. The NEET problem was reported as solved. A flexible curriculum has been developed with a focus on partnership working and whole school performance measures. 74% of the school population now achieve 5 x A* - C's in GCSE. The school has had three 'outstanding' Ofsted reports.

91. The Principal cited the following factors as key to success:

- Establish and promote the ethos of the school at primary feeder schools. Visit Year 6 in September.
- Develop the curriculum as the key driver: Constantly assess what young people say they want to do and respond with diverse offer e.g. qualifications and subject areas, BTec Certificates, NVQ, young apprenticeships; available in Year 10 and 11.
- Promote self-belief
- Engage parents, ensure isolation doesn't become an issue for young people
- Promote in school and community activities
- Young people like routine. External agencies not necessarily an incentive.
- Share data – schools know names behind the figures – follow up.

92. The Scrutiny Panel were advised that further analysis of Connexions data, was needed, e.g. sharing names, identifying why young person may have dropped out; peer pressure, wrong course, lack of support, financing etc.

Chamberlayne College of the Arts

93. **Chris Kellaway, Assistant Head Teacher** advised the panel that the following work is helping to prevent students from becoming NEET;

- ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) Life Skills and ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness are Key Stage 4 curriculum offer to specifically vulnerable young people.
- Partnership work with City College enables young people from Years 10 and 11 to access one half day per week vocational courses.
- Some students have the opportunity to attend skills centres at Thornhill and the Wheatsheaf Trust.
- Partnership work with the Young People and Community Support division allows some young people to develop personal skills and confidence.

- The English department enter students for GCSE in Year 10 so that qualifications are secured prior to other pressures.
- Engagement in learning, various teaching styles and environments on offer helps to motivate young people.

94. Support groups have been established to provide young people with the tools to cope with difficult situations. E.g. Young carers, looked – after and the Bullying Intervention Group (BIG).

95. The school have developed a policy that will be ensuring that all year 11 students have a college place or employment arranged before the end of the school year.

96. An Inclusion Manager is due to be appointed as from the next academic year to co-ordinate the work of all the initiatives to keep young people engaged.

97. A programme of school based learning, work placements and day release to Southampton City College is being developed for a target group of young people. The post-16 course will aim to avoid students from dropping out of college and provide them with the security of being enrolled at City College but based at the Chamberlayne College for the Arts. Students will be entitled to timetable privileges and a non-school uniform status. The 'bridging' courses are also being discussed with Itchen College.

98. Statistics provided to the Scrutiny Panel are illustrated below and demonstrate considerable success in reducing NEETs recently.

Table 3.

NEET rates in Weston (Chamberlayne College for the Arts).			
2004	2006	2007	2008
15.31%	17.93%	11.05%	[5% *]
			* Year 11s.

Source: Chamberlayne College for the Arts.

The illustration shows a decrease in 2007 of nearly 7% compared to a 1% fall for Southampton city-wide.

- The 2008 figure illustrates year 11 leavers and represents a figure of just 8 pupils being 'undecided', 150 (91%) have places at college and the remainder are in training or work.

99. **Findings:** The secondary schools attended the Scrutiny Panel meeting together and were therefore able to debate good practice in Southampton, including issues and concerns. They reached consensus in the following areas:

- Data – need to share and further analyse data to identify reasons for dropping out - colleges require information re the individuals' name to enable support.
- Look at issues of young people becoming NEET earlier than Year 11.
- Prepare children in primary school and raise aspirations. Promote subjects e.g. performing arts and use opportunity to identify vulnerable students.
- Clarify expectations at secondary school. If low aspirations on entry, the role of secondary school to change, e.g. flexible curriculum and a more supportive environment.
- Engage parents. NB Only 30% have experience of higher education.

- Use Head Teachers conference to promote good practice.
- Coordination of a database, data analysis and sharing information with schools and colleges essential to improve e.g. SCC, LSC and Connexions information. Plus information from schools re destinations.
- Improve links with businesses; identify future employers in marine engineering and construction. Work with City College and vocational courses on site in Woolston.
- Involve schools on the Teenage Pregnancy Board.
- Design innovative packages to engage young people with negative attitudes in year 7 and 8 e.g. 'Dream Wall' – a youth charity with excellent success rate.
- Improve teacher support/professional development. The use of an alternative curriculum assists staff re adapting teaching styles. Poor behaviour usually the result of poor teaching and learning. Change environment, target curriculum not behaviour.
- As the national curriculum evolves, ensure time to develop learning skills. Open evenings need to allow 20 – 25 minute appointments to discuss behaviour, performance and plan ahead 6 – 7 years. Invite the colleges present and encourage students to engage.

No Limits:

100. **Annabel Hodgson, Chief Executive Officer** advised members of the Scrutiny Panel that there are three centres that provide similar facilities in Southampton; Shirley High Street on the west side, Portsmouth Road, Sholing on the east and one centrally based in Bernard Street. The registered charity provides information, advice and guidance for young people in line with Every Child Matters. Significant success has been attributed to the services at No Limits in the following areas:

- Support for young people (including NEETs) to make decisions and assist young people out of social exclusion
- Availability of counselling and working in partnership with Child and Adult, Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Informal Learning provision e.g. Duke of Edinburgh

101. Support for young people varies immensely and ranges from shower and launderette facilities for the homeless or those who are 'sofa surfing', to providing information, advice and guidance as an outreach service to schools; three secondary schools currently receive a counselling service - with proposals to extend to eight in the near future. Information advice and guidance is available on all issues faced by young people in fully accessible premises.

102. No Limits work in partnership with other organisations in the city to support service delivery. Considerable effort is made to share information and expertise with the Southampton City Primary Care Trust (SCPCT), CAMHS, Southampton City Council Housing Department, Community Safety and Safeguarding teams in Southampton City Council, the Youth Offending Team and substance misuse services. The charity provides services that support many of the city's priorities and targets e.g. teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

103. Concerns were raised regarding the raised criteria for referrals to CAMHS. Some young people are not now referred but do require a level of support that has in the past been available.

104. In terms of barriers to sustainable service provision; the economic downturn was reported as having an effect on 'giving', short term funding, the time involved to constantly fundraise, and a recent cut from Southampton City Council of £70k was considered to be a significant concern. Members were advised that ideally, to enable strategic planning the service would welcome long term funding of at least five years. No Limits use a 'pyramid criteria tool' to prioritise service delivery within budget parameters.

105. Members were invited to a tour of the facilities in Bernard Street and met with young people. (See Consultation below). The 'drop-in' services provided at No Limits are free to young people and confidential. No appointments are necessary.

106. **Findings:** In order to support reducing NEETs further, suggested improvements to services are as follows:

- Raising awareness amongst teachers and other service providers as to the importance of independent information, advice, guidance and support available
- A consistent approach to counselling throughout all schools
- Prominent displays in schools re information, advice and guidance

And finally

- Focussing on youth homelessness is crucial to supporting young people to re-engage in EET.

107. Concerns regarding the 'cut off' age for services to vulnerable young people were raised. Support during transition through to Adult Services was felt to be ineffective and it was reported that young people find this a particularly difficult time.

City Limits

108. **Amanda Burdfield** advised that the service offered from offices in Shirley High Street were targeted towards clients with severe learning difficulties and/or experienced disability. Clients who are NEET have many complex needs. Historically, one to one support had been provided to young people aged 18 years and over. However, recently the European Social Fund had provided the opportunity to work with young people through the transition stages of 16 – 18 years.

109. Vocational files are developed for each individual with success being attributed to one to one support based on a person-centred approach focussing on what a young person can do rather than what they cannot do. Quality time is provided to support young person on any issues they face and to develop skills for the work place. Employment officers attend placements with the client until they are comfortable and confident in their role.

110. Barriers: The funding structure was cited as the most difficult issue to cope with along with running projects with retrospective funding based on outcomes. Amanda advised that there was no core funding available from 2010. Short-term funding was an issue and concerns were expressed in managing the expectations of young people and their parents during the transition from children's services to adult services. If sufficient support was available it was felt that the young people would remain engaged in education, employment or training.

111. Young people with complex needs face considerable barriers to engagement. For example, self-confidence is a big issue and enrolling at college can be very intimidating without support. It was noted that there are high drop out rates.

Job Centre Plus (JC+)

112. **Bernadette Hagan and Jenny McKenzie** advised the Scrutiny Panel on the remit of JC+. Currently 127 advisors are employed to work with *all* adults and access has increased markedly during the present economic down turn i.e. 3,500 October 2008 – 6,000 January 2009. An extra 50 advisors are due to start in the near future to cope with increasing numbers (50+ professionals).
113. Forty to sixty 16-17 year olds seek support each week and processing this age group requires more intensive support, as many don't usually know what they want to do. Young people at this age have no automatic right to Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).
114. JC+ will carry out a job search for a young person but they do need to meet with Connexions or Youth Support advisors first to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria of 'hardship'. They need to attend fortnightly reviews at the JC+ office. To formalise this work a Local Service Level Agreement exists between JC+ and the Connexions Service.
115. Members were advised that too often young people are spending many weeks NEET and that it would be beneficial for young people if they could access a training offer at varying times of the year rather than just September.

Young People and Community Support

116. **Patricia Dufficy, Youth Support Worker** reported to the Scrutiny Panel on a local initiative ('NEET Conference' that contributed to a reduction of 50% young people becoming NEET at some schools in the South area of the city.
117. Although the reduction at this time could not be entirely credited to the local event, it was felt by those involved to have had a significant impact. The reduction was not sustained locally as following the success of the initiative (see Table 4) the idea was adopted and run as the 'Choices Conference' in the centre of Southampton. The Scrutiny Panel was informed that the citywide event was unlikely to be repeated, as success was questionable.

Table 4

Weston Park	2004	2005
	%	%
Full time education	55.46	62.59
Full time training (non employed)	0.78	1.52
Full time employed	16.40	21.37
Part time activities	1.56	1.52
NEET	22.65	11.45
Unknown	0.78	0.76
Other	2.34	0.76

Source: Connexions data.

118. The initiative was led by the principal of the then Weston Park Boys School, (now Oasis Mayfield Academy), alongside key partners in the locality; the manager of Connexions, the City Council's Youth Service (now - Young People and Community

Support Division) and Neighbourhood Services and most importantly hosted and supported by staff at Itchen College. (See Appendix 10)

119. Scrutiny Panel members took part in a demonstration of the 'interactive tool' that was used to engage with young people prior to the conference. This assisted discussion with vulnerable young people by addressing simple questions that were put to small groups and encouraged them to think about their future e.g.:

- What is important to me in the future?
- How do I get there?
- What prevents progress?

120. The interactive tool/puzzle was used to help young people to prioritise what they felt were the issues. The key elements of success were that a person-centred approach helps young people to build relationships and self-esteem in small groups of 10 – 12 where they felt valued.

121. The success of the event itself was attributable to the following key delivery points: timing, preparatory work, targeting of young people, valuing young people, motivational speaker and an independent facilitator.

122. Members were advised that further improved outcomes could be achieved if the project had run in year 10 rather than year 11.

Wheatsheaf Trust

123. **Jackie Powers, Deputy Chief Executive** provided a written submission to the Scrutiny Panel. Wheatsheaf Trust is a registered charity dedicated to promoting social inclusion for disadvantaged groups through advice and guidance and supporting people to enter training, education or employment. Since 2000 the Trust has delivered these services from facilities based in Bernard Street, Southampton.

124. The basement has workshop facilities for young people to train in brick-laying, carpentry and painting and decorating.

125. Currently three projects are supporting young people:

- NEET support – sub contracted from SCC (funded by the Learning and Skills Council).
- E2E – linked to Southampton City College provision offering 16 hours per week vocational programmes in the construction trades with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Young people receive the Educational Maintenance Allowance and a free weekly bus pass.
- Youth Sector Development Fund – a partnership with Youth Options; working with families on prevention of becoming NEET or offending.

126. The Trust has recently undertaken an in-depth study on those young people attending the E2E programme. 18 young people were interviewed:

- 94% had difficulty with literacy and numeracy
- 44% had literacy levels below level 1 (primary school level).
- 72% were council tenants
- 72% were from split families. } Not necessarily the same sample.
- Family Worklessness not a factor in this particular sample.

A full report is being prepared.

Economic Impact – Southampton

Southampton City Council, Economic Development

127. **Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development**, informed the Scrutiny Panel that he would like to see increased opportunities for worthwhile youth employment but that these were challenging times during the economic down turn. The focus needed to be on protecting those in employment locally and therefore supporting the local economy and supporting young people to stay in education and training. Time and energy needed to be invested into improving opportunities for apprenticeships. The City Council has a duty to lead on advancing the apprenticeship scheme.
128. The negative impact on the economy was reported as a substantial increase in the number of benefit claimants and criminal damage. Breaking the cycle of young offenders was difficult and needed to improve.
129. The Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) highlights the need for across directorate working and a corporate approach. The focus on economic development will be within a new team headed by the newly appointed Assistant Chief Executive.
130. **Jeff Walters, Economic Development Manager** gave evidence to the Scrutiny Panel advising that the EDAP is being taken forward by the Economy and Enterprise Board (E & E Board). The EDAP was submitted as evidence to the inquiry. Concerns were raised that there was no Education representation on the Economy & Enterprise Board. However, the Skills and Employability Board sub group, chaired by Professor Van Gore of Southampton Solent University. Secondary schools also needed to have input.
131. The EDAP takes account of and builds on the City of Southampton Strategy's aims and objectives re innovation, increased skills and employment. The Plan links in the LAA and Partnership Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) targets. Many issues are mirrored in similar urban areas e.g. Gosport, Havant and Eastleigh. The partnership is working together to streamline front line services and take advantage of funding opportunities.
132. The Scrutiny Panel were advised that Southampton's performance compared to statistical neighbours is modest and that more could be done to capitalise on the City's assets and enlarge the 'economic cake'. Economic Development officers are sharing good practice with Coventry and Bristol.
133. Jeff advised members that education and training was at the heart of improving economic performance. Raising aspirations needed to be a priority and providing quality information advice and guidance to parents and guardians was essential.
134. The public sector represents 32% of the City's economy. The number of jobs in Southampton was estimated at 120,000 and was likely to fall by approximately 3-4,000 during the current down turn. There are significant opportunities to work with existing employers and link young people to jobs. Support re business start-ups for young people needed to be improved.
135. Economic Development work in partnership with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Business Link and JC+ to access funding. Engaging businesses needed a 1:1 approach. The Chamber of Commerce was reported as having 12-1500 members,

however, only a small proportion of those will be engaged and actively working with partners to address targets.

136. Prior to the economic downturn estimates of 9-10,000 new jobs were forecast.

137. **Suggested strategies for improvement** – A key focus needs to be placed on reducing barriers facing young people NEET. All partners needed to be pulled together and work towards reducing the number of young people NEET, improve joined up working, in particular with regards to the September guarantee for all 16 year olds.

138. Long-term effort was needed to plan partnership work with Job Centre Plus and the voluntary sector to get 'underneath' persistent high levels of economic inactivity. Some success was reported re the legacy fund from British American Tobacco, which has provided funding to Wearsheaf Trust.

Wearsheaf Trust

139. The Wearsheaf Trust offered the following comments on the impact of supporting young people into employment, education and training:

- It is significantly more costly to support young adults as additional, intense, one to one resources are required for those with such low levels of ability i.e. Level one which is a standard reached by most primary school children. Earlier intervention is needed to help rectify these issues. Apprenticeships are not an option as training would be too difficult.
- National data indicates that on average, it costs £2-3,000 to get someone back into employment. However, typically, clients at Wearsheaf Trust are young men under 24 years of age (previously NEET) with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Extensive support to up-skill is required for this group and costs are estimated at £11,000 per individual.

Skills Development Zone – Southampton Solent University and Southampton City Primary Care Trust.

140. **Anita Esser and Louise Bates** informed the Scrutiny Panel about the partnership initiative with Southampton City Council. A 'skills pledge' had been signed by the Chief Executives of SCPCT, Southampton University Hospitals Trust (SUHT), SCC, Southampton City College and Southampton Solent University to increase the skills and employability focus within the City.

141. Apprenticeship schemes in addition to those already operating were planned with a specific focus on the public sector. Young people would need Level 2 qualifications to join the scheme and the programme would provide individuals with a two-month contract as well as on the job training, a workbook and support from mentors.

142. Currently 3 x 15 separate 'pathways' have been developed to allow apprentices to gain experience of working across organisations and develop qualifications e.g. NVQ 2 and 3 with the possibility of leading to a foundation degree. Opportunities are available in Administration, Health and social Care and Estate Management. It was reported as essential to explain career opportunities to *all* young people rather than focus on the short-term nature of 'a job'. E.g. Mapping out progression into higher salaried jobs and the advantages of life style choices.

143. Underpinning principles included are guiding the selection process e.g. Southampton City Council has a duty of care, as corporate parent to care leavers. Members were advised that joint work with the Wheatsheaf Trust was taking place to ensure an inclusive policy. The Trust will also be providing training to the work-based facilitators to help retain apprentices.

144. Long-term commitment to recruitment through the apprenticeship scheme will ensure efficiencies are made where limited resources have historically meant short-term solutions i.e. agency recruitment. A commitment nationally to double the number of apprenticeships by 2013 (an intermediate target of 5,000 by March 2010) means that the South Central Health Authority expects to recruit an additional 500 across targeted regeneration areas.

The Prince's Trust

145. The 'The Cost of Exclusion'⁵ report illustrates the cost of youth unemployment, the cost of youth crime and the cost of educational underachievement nationally. A summary was provided as evidence to the Scrutiny Panel.

146. Youth Unemployment:

- Nationally Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) costs the UK taxpayer £20 Million per week.
- The South East unemployment and NEET percentages are generally lower on average; the absolute costs however are higher than most other regions. Youth unemployment stands at around 7%, but costs over £2.1 million in JSA and almost £11 Million in lost productivity.⁵

147. Youth Crime:

- Costs the British economy £1bn a year. Two thirds of young offenders were unemployed at the time of arrest compared to 46% of those aged over 25.
- At least 90% of those leaving prison enter unemployment.
- Prisoners are
 - 13 times more likely to have been in care as a child.
 - 13 times as likely to be unemployed.
 - 10 times as likely to have been a regular truant.⁵

148. Educational Underachievement: Those people most at risk include those

- Who truant
- Who are excluded from school
- With offending behaviour
- With poor literacy or numeracy skills
- With basic skills needs

The costs of educational underachievement are borne to a great extent by the individual. This may in turn lead to unemployment or crime.⁵

149. The UK has between 10% and 25% lower output per hour than France, Germany and the US. Much of this can be accounted for by a poorer level of skills.⁵

150. In England 12.6% of the population aged 16-24 have no qualification, whilst 40% of the UK population do not have at least a Level 2 qualification.⁵

⁵ The Cost of Exclusion, Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK. The Prince's Trust, 2007.

151. Obtaining a Level 1 vocational qualification increases the probability of finding a job by 4% for men and 16% for women. Level 2 and 3 qualifications increase this probability by 10% and 12% respectively for men and 19% for women.

152. Case studies outlining the costs associated to individual NEETs throughout their lifetime and the impact on the community are illustrated at Appendix 8.

153. Suggested Strategies for Reducing the economic impact of young people NEET:

- Keep young people engaged in learning
- Raise young people's aspirations
- Create meaningful links with employers who have vacancies
- Encourage enterprising behaviour.

The Prince's Trust advised that they have programmes and expertise in supporting all the above recommendations.

154. The Trust also recommended 1:1 mentoring, at all levels e.g. young offenders, business programmes and peer mentoring and feedback with those who have made a success from their life choices.

Consultation with young people in Southampton:

155. The inquiry also programmed additional informal meetings with young people away from what was considered to be an unsuitable and intimidating setting within the committee rooms.

156. Most of those young people who were interviewed by the Scrutiny Panel were found to be articulate, cooperative and willing to talk about their personal experiences in a mutually respectful setting.

157. Young people tended to have set ideas as to how they should be respected and felt let down by the system and adult behaviour towards them. E.g. after involvement in the criminal justice system, punishment was perceived to continue through the attitude of front line staff dealing with them. There was a consensus amongst the group that there was no 'second chance' for training or employment and that reverting back to crime was the only option.

158. Issues and concerns affecting their ability to remain in learning, begin employment or seek training were stated as:

- Bullying – had a direct influence on their attendance and levels of confidence.
- Public transport costs – a barrier to accessing learning
- Lack of support for those with special educational needs + hearing impairment
- Young people mentioned that they did not like being in a class-room environment – in particular being placed with those with 'learning difficulties' (3 years younger).
- Confusion where to access support – (Connexions Shop closure mentioned)
- Teachers and staff unable to 'handle' young people
- Peer pressure from those who don't want to be there.
- Absent parents (various reasons)
- Urgency to start earning. However, real challenges to overcome barriers like underachievement, youth crime and lack of experience.
- ISSP – lack of respect and support/planning from staff.

Site visits:

159. Members of the Scrutiny Panel met with young people at Mansel Park Pavilion, Millbrook, and the Eastpoint Centre, Thornhill. They also had the opportunity to accompany a senior youth worker on a walkabout to observe outreach work and visit youth clubs, taking the opportunity to interact with young people and talk to workers managing the following centres: Newtown Youth Centre, St Mary's Youth Club, Northam Youth Club and No Limits.

160. Southampton City College: at the invitation of the Principal, members also met a large group of young people that had managed to remain in learning despite difficult circumstances. Issues the young people had faced prior to engaging were raised as:

- Underachieved at school
- Unable to find employment
- Costs of travel
- Homelessness
- Breakdown of family relationships.
- Bullying and lack of support
- Teachers unwilling/unable to cope with disruptive behaviour

161. Young people attracted to learning with Southampton City College because they liked:

- Non-classroom learning environment
- Positive interaction with staff re signing up
- Praise
- Little bullying – not tolerated
- Bad behaviour = disciplinary hearing
- Practical work based learning/environment

Young offenders:

162. The Scrutiny Panel met young offenders working with Youth Options, who were frustrated by feelings of being trapped in a cycle of offending. The City's CYPP highlights dedicated Personal Advisors for young offenders. The evidence presented by the young people referred to excellent standards of support from Youth Options once per week, which they looked forward to. However, the requirement to report to the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (above Wheatsheaf Trust daily from 11 – 3.00 p.m.) was described in negative terms. It was reported that there is no structured support, too much waiting around, and a culture of all parties being disrespectful towards each other.

The Youth Options NEET survey:

163. 100 young people surveyed; 91% of whom were white British. As mirrored in the Scrutiny Panel's inquiry the incidences of homelessness was raised as a significant issue by No Limits and young people in the survey; 22% identifying themselves as homeless (sofa-surfing). Young people acknowledged that the following issues were barriers to EET:

- Educational underachievement
- Access to employment difficult
- Family breakdown
- Participation in learning boring
- Cost of travel
- Support

- Feelings of isolation and depression
- Alcohol fuelling involvement with the police and YOT

164. Connexions was named as their main source of information.¹¹

165. 'Attending school on part time timetable will have a negative effect on a young person's ability to access employment or training post 16.'²

² One in Ten – Key messages from policy, research and practice about young people who are NEET, by Jo Tunnard, with Tim Barnes and Steve Flood. 2008

¹¹ Youth Options – Solutions for Young People, Southampton City NEET Survey, February, 2009.

Section 4 Learning with others

Comparing Performance and methods of Southampton with comparator Local Authorities (Statistical Neighbours)

166. Information was analysed from the Learning and Skills Council and the DCSF, Local Area Information Tool (LAIT) to compare data with statistical neighbours. National indicators that report on factors that contribute towards a younger person becoming NEET were compared. E.g.

- NI 117 – % of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. (NEETs).
- NI 106 – young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education
- % of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A* - C English and Maths (Level 2 attainment. For further information see Appendices 2 and 4).

167. Derby and Coventry were interviewed by telephone and their evidence was submitted to the inquiry.

168. Southampton's position on NEETs within the grouping of comparator authorities is shown in Table 5, page 37.

169. The Scrutiny Panel was informed that Derby and Coventry are performing well in terms of reducing the number of NEETs and those young people who are 'unknown'. The Panel also learned that the majority of the schools in Derby and Coventry have sixth forms and following later evidence, it was concluded that this could be seen as an advantage in terms of 16 year olds remaining in learning. However, in common with learning providers in Southampton a high drop out rate still occurs at 17 years due to limited 'offer' and young people not being content with their choice of study area.

Coventry

170. Coventry work on the following premiss:

- Young people feel the strongest influences in their lives are first and foremost; parents and friends followed by teachers and then advisors from the Connexions and Youth Services. Therefore an emphasis is placed on delivering services that engage parents in a constructive way through family learning.
- Preventative work and early intervention brings about the best results and value for money.

Successful strategies

171. Pre 16

- Work place training and college (one day per week): Provides the incentive to stay in learning. If not attending work, they risk losing placement. Young apprenticeships also play a part.
- Truancy/exclusions: Successful preventative work carried out in schools at KS4 and reactive work by Connexions focussing on the last 3%. Series of initiatives for managed moves.
- Pre-16 curriculum: Successful European funding e.g. Community Theatre.
- Teenage pregnancy: Figures are high, however, increased numbers of mums engaged in learning. Provision includes 'Care to Learn' + 'Busy mummy' accessed through distance learning i.e. studying at home. Take up 'quite exciting'. Currently 80 taking part.

Table 5:

	National	Coventry	Derby	Plymouth	Bristol	Salford	Sheffield	Southampton	Peterborough	Telford & Wrekin	Portsmouth	Kinston upon Hull
Cohort	1709331	11394	9274	9609	12507	8899	16704	6727	6454	5954	4297	11415
EET	1513819	10186	8153	8823	10991	7865	14679	5713	5675	4732	3633	9594
Actual NEET	105199	748	590	708	871	684	1338	550	578	506	395	1073
Adjusted NEET	111686	748	610	713	921	691	1372	605	591	558	407	1162
NEET %	6.7%	6.8%	6.8%	7.5%	7.6%	8.0%	8.5%	9.2%	9.4%	9.8%	9.9%	10.5%
In Learning %	78.1%	80.4%	76.1%	78.4%	78.4%	76.5%	75.9%	73.5%	77.0%	71.7%	68.5%	76.3%
Unknown %	5.1%	3.2%	4.0%	0.7%	4.9%	3.6%	3.8%	6.4%	2.8%	11.9%	6.0%	6.3%

Table 5: Southampton's position on NEETs within the grouping of comparator authorities:

172. Post 16

- **September guarantee:** Successfully re-engaging young people - a major contribution to success. (Invented by Coventry and implemented very effectively). Currently sharing best practice with Scotland.
- **Pupil Referral Unit (PRU):** Extended, organised and commissioned services.
- **Common Assessment Framework (CAF):** Identify young people in year 11 and make sure every single young person receives an assessment. Support offered with making applications and follow up. Most effective in preventing young people reaching NEET status and good value for money compared to the cost of tracking later.

173. Additional strategies

- **Supporting young people: Connexions** - Looking at developing an independent facility that will lead on the 16 – 19 services. E.g. Staff from LA, LSC and Connexions.
- **Whitefriars** - Innovative community project working in partnership with the Whitefriars Social Landlord to reduce anti-social behaviour and support young people into EET. Illustrated at Appendix 9.
- **Full time advisors in every school** - monitoring pupils in Year 11. By Christmas vulnerable cohort identified engagement re youth crime etc. Advisors begin working with other agencies keeping young people occupied 100% of the time and during summer holidays.
- **Partnership working** - Four 'federations' formed to enhance post 16 offer. Sharing programmes and focussing on retention for at least one year.
- **Monthly meetings with the LSC** - Agenda = breakdown of NEETs categories and what opportunities are available and ways to unblock.
- **Federations** – work with schools, training providers, Connexions and colleges. Connexions providing data - agencies recognise that they cannot do it on their own. Work together to enrich provision and improve choices. Coordinator for each federation working half a week.
- **14–25 partnership** - 'synonymous' with the Economic Well-being partnership linked to the City partnership and has its own action plan.
- **Working with schools and colleges** - to improve provision rather than provide services from the LA.
- **Transport** - Schools and colleges offer support through taxis and minibuses. LA provides subsidised bus passes. However, under threat – but working to keep in place.
- **Comments on future strategies**
- **Diplomas** - will focus on outcomes; young people will choose study area and have greater ownership.

Derby:

174. Successful Strategies:

- **Connexions** – drop in facility in the town centre that is well used.
- **'The Space'** – information and advice project run by the youth service.
- **Personal Advisors** in schools.
- **Extensive work on tracking** – **CCSI** as well as a database for predicting those who are likely to become NEET. To be made available to schools and affect early intervention.
- **September Guarantee** has helped to reduce the number of 16 year old not transferring to 6th form. The focus is on learning routes for all. Particular

attention paid to young people reaching 17 years of age as the drop out tends to be higher.

- **Skill Shortages** in specific professions are identified and addressed with e-learning.
- **Neighbourhood Agenda in the City:** A multi agency approach in localities works well as the reasons for becoming NEET are hugely diverse. Integrated teams work across five localities; including EWOs, Social Services, the Police and Youth Offending teams.

175. The Scrutiny Panel were also provided with many examples of best practice within the 1 in 10 book provided by the Head of Children's Services and Learning.

Section 5. Conclusions

1. **Overview** – circumstances throughout childhood will determine a young person's vulnerability to becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Practitioners at all levels of engagement need to be able to understand the causes and consequences of a young person's life experiences, in order that they can promote better life chances and intervene successfully. Those practitioners that do have a good understanding and support young people in a positive way can make a significant input to improving outcomes.
2. **Indicators of NEET occurrence** - the NEET group is not homogenous, although it is clear that factors such as deprivation, multigenerational unemployment, levels of support available to the individual, family difficulties, disability and/or special educational needs are all likely to be common causes that are manifested by:
 - Lack of confidence – vulnerability to becoming a victim of bullying
 - Lack of suitable role models – to offer guidance and mentor
 - Low aspirations – likelihood of underachievement at school
 - Increased risk taking – leading to teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness and offending behaviour
 - Lower mobility – reduced access to the labour market
 - All the above can increase the probability of the individual being absent from education, employment and training opportunities; resulting in social exclusion and NEET status.
3. Being NEET is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression, and poor physical health.
4. **Compulsory education leaving age** - the age for compulsory learning will increase to 18 years in 2015; the issue for the 16 – 18 year old age group will then become one of absence rather than 'NEET'. The Scrutiny Panel found that the scope of the current definition of 'NEET' would need to widen to focus on economic impact and wider service implications.
5. **Prevention is better than cure** – the focus in the past has been on academic achievement. It is now becoming more widely accepted, that focusing solely on hard outcomes can be counter-productive. Pastoral care is now seen to be key to support vulnerable young people. Timely intervention at school before disengagement and disaffection set in can have a positive impact on NEET numbers.
6. **One to one support and mentoring** – key witnesses provided a common thread of evidence to the Scrutiny Panel that vulnerable young people excel with the appropriate information, advice and guidance. Specifically one to one support in the form of life coaching, careers advice, mentoring, counselling was considered to have particular value. Solent Skills Quest has a business brokerage team as well as other initiatives that provide this type of support to young people.

Economic Impact of NEETs:

7. **NEET Action Plan** – the plan is now several years old, since then there have been significant changes to the structure and nature of youth service provision. It is noted that the new Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) is also focussed on reducing NEETs. Post inquiry, the Scrutiny Panel were informed that the NEET

Action Plan now forms a substantial part of the newly published 14-19 Learning, Skills and Employability Strategy

8. **Barriers to entry into the workplace** – social and emotional skills are as important as technical skills in determining employability and earnings. Opportunities exist to improve basic literacy and numeracy, occupational skills, problem solving, self-management, attitude to work and integrity. However, it was found that for those young people who lack confidence, motivation and mobility, it can be difficult to access help and support.
9. **Impact of the recession** – due to the economic down turn it is clear that local and national employers have reduced the level of recruitment of school leavers, college leavers and graduates. Hence reducing NEETs at this time is significantly more challenging than prior to the recession.
10. **The Business Community in Southampton** – is seen as a key partner in tackling the NEETs issue. Business Southampton and the Southampton & Fareham Chamber of Commerce are organisations that could provide an influential united voice for businesses within the city region. The Business community has a lot to offer in terms of building and improving links between local employers, schools and colleges. Employers are seeking to recruit employees with the basic skills to enter the workplace. Improved links with employers and learning establishments would help to tackle the negative impact of NEETs on the local economy and stimulate growth.
11. **The Prince's Trust** – assist young people with gaining skills for employment. The Trust has become the UK's leading youth charity, offering a range of opportunities including training, personal development, business start up support, mentoring and advice. They are currently experiencing a 50% increase in requests for support. School leavers have expectations to enter into employment with immediate effect, even when educational attainment is poor. The Trust offers key life skills that can help make the individual more employable.

Coordination and Leadership:

12. **Leadership role** – local authorities now have lead responsibility in reducing NEETs. It is acknowledged that Southampton's schools, colleges, local agencies and the voluntary sector with the support of Southampton City Council have been working hard to support young people who have become NEET across the City and take preventive steps to avoid them becoming NEET. However, numbers of NEETs remain stubbornly high.
13. **Partnership working** – many agencies operate autonomously to reduce NEETs in Southampton. A central list of organisations was not available to the Scrutiny Panel. Southampton's Solent University, schools and colleges are keen to share resources, facilities, data, fund raising expertise and good practice. Good progress has been made with developing the Local Area Agreement. However, an underlying competitiveness and blame culture appears to exist. The successful input of partners is not always shared or celebrated.
14. **Funding streams** – many practitioners have been successful in taking advantage of short term funding, introducing initiatives and working with partners to provide a diverse range of support. However, the current method of provision lacks co-

ordination with different agencies competing for the same funds often resulting in a duplication of services offered.

Data:

15. NEETs are a statistical construct – the group changes rapidly. Most young people do not spend long periods of time being NEET. For example an individual may elect to be NEET and take a gap year or are ‘barely NEET’ as they move between opportunities. Attention needs to be focused on young people who are long term and repetitive NEETs.
16. **Tracking NEETs** - progress has been made in Southampton to improve tracking by utilising the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS). The database successfully collects enormous amounts of data on young people, which can be presented in many different formats.
17. **Problems with data** – the Scrutiny Panel found it difficult to interpret and analyse data to get a complete understanding as to the severity of the problem and where efforts should be targeted by ward or area.
18. **Inconsistency with the figures** – it was noted that Southampton City College have increased their numbers over recent years from 850 to 1500, yet there was no measurable impact on the NEET statistics. Many 16 – 18 year olds enrol at City College.
19. **Data points** – caution is required when reviewing figures, as the snapshot can overly influence the assessment of the problem. E.g. at the end of the school year, prior to commencement of college or work, there was a statistical jump in those recorded as NEET.
20. **Data sharing** – it was found that the CCIS data is not adequately shared between schools and colleges to enable targeted marketing and proactive engagement of vulnerable young people.
21. **Data exclusion** – data collection for young people attending school excluded independents, for example King Edwards School, who do not share data with the CCIS. Nationally a third of independent schools do provide data to the Connexions service.

Supporting young people:

22. **Overview** – young people who have failed to achieve at school tend to have low aspirations and/or low motivation and self-esteem. Addressing these issues represents a longer-term challenge of integrating young people into employment, education or training
23. **Intervention** – dealing with difficult behaviour and risk taking is time consuming and requires the patience, understanding and energy of trained practitioners. The inquiry found that a long-term intervention strategy that invests resources to focus on prevention *prior* to school leaving age would offer the best outcomes for young people.

24. Approaches adopted include:

- Targeting key groups – practitioners are able to focus efforts on those individuals at risk of becoming NEET at an early age.
- Multi-agency approach – coordinated effort, in localities works well, by sharing information and taking early intervention.
- One to one support – there is a clear link that individual help has the most positive outcomes for vulnerable young people.
- Family involvement – with the learner and practitioner has positive outcomes.

25. Participative decision-making – a common theme of effective initiatives included engaging young people in decision-making and recognising their achievements. By involving young people in their own personal development planning, they can be enabled to own their problems and be encouraged to be proactive in identifying their support needs and in recognising the distance they have travelled.

26. Access to local services – there are excellent examples of supporting young people through Children’s Services and Learning; in particular the Young People and Community Support Division and other service providers e.g. Youth Options and No Limits.

27. Connexions – it is evident that many young people have used the service to access support; information, advice and guidance. The Scrutiny Panel were concerned that young people were not sufficiently involved in consultation regarding the closure of the Connexions shop in the High Street, the re-location of advisors and discussions regarding the re-branding to ‘Youth Support’.

28. Information – the inquiry has been informed of the importance of accessible, accurate information for young people and improved choice. The on-line Area Prospectus for 14 – 19 year olds will help young people to become more informed about the choices available to them. However, the Southampton web site was found to be out of date. There appear to be no links to vacancies for local apprenticeships (link takes browser to national site) and no links to work-based learning opportunities locally.

29. Mentoring – can have a transforming effect on a young person’s life. The panel in particular learnt of how individuals had turned their lives around and were now telling their stories to current NEET individuals and inspiring them to re-engage.

Education:

30. Bullying – the Scrutiny Panel received evidence that the Children and Young people’s plan has identified that all schools should have an anti-bullying policy and anti-bullying coordinators in place by 2010. The inquiry found from inquiries with young people that this was a significant problem that affected confidence, absence from school and levels of attainment.

31. Educational attainment – improved standards are vital in order that young people in Southampton are able to reach their potential and access opportunities to improve their life chances.

32. Parental Support – significant resources have been put in place through the schools and colleges over recent years to engage with and support parents. Theories of positive engagement support this ethos; young people gain confidence and widen

their aspirations, conflict within families is reduced and parents will support each other.

33. **Engagement with parents** – it was noted that engaging with parents was problematic and that there may be a need to address behaviour and/or absence of the parent – hence the punitive route may become necessary.
34. **Resources** – there are concerns that the levels of staffing e.g. Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) may well be inadequate and that fully trained family practitioners throughout a variety of services are unable to be released to support families as and when required. The Safer Communities Inquiry Panel who looked into the link between absence from school and crime, June 2009, raised this same concern.
35. **Environment** – the surroundings within which young people engage in learning can have a significant impact on achievement. The perception given was that a smaller, safer area would nurture respect and improve relationships that support learning. The inquiry observed that Southampton's City College are introducing learning spaces that mirror a work place environment rather than a school classroom environment, which many young people were said to prefer.
36. **Special Educational Needs** – resources have been made available to Southampton City Council from the 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' government fund. But in response to this issue the inquiry found that young people, who experience disability and/or have special educational needs (SEN), do not appear to be getting sufficient support in order to reach their potential.
37. **Social Exclusion** – the Scrutiny Panel found that a paradox exists in terms of supporting NEETs. There are opportunities for young people to widen their horizons, build confidence and develop social skills by participating in school outings/field trips. However, NEET young people are usually from low-income families and may be excluded from field trips due to financial difficulties, staff/pupil ratios, or punishment. However, these young people then feel discriminated against and experience anger as a result of exclusion and miss out on opportunities open to others.

Best Practice:

38. **Comparators** – the Scrutiny Panel received information from two comparator local authorities, Coventry and Derby who have lower levels of NEETs, as well as evidence from local schools, colleges and the Young People and Community Support Division.

39. Findings

- **'Unknown' NEETs category** – both comparator local authorities had lower levels of young people that were not being tracked. It was evident that considerable efforts had been made to maintain contact with young people.
- **6th forms** – both comparator local authorities were both found to have 6th forms attached to their secondary schools. It was acknowledged that this would assist in keeping levels of statistics for NEETs low.
- **September guarantee** – Coventry in particular cited the guarantee as the major initiative that ensured young people continued in education and training. However, Coventry, Derby and Southampton's City College reported a high drop out rate at 17 years, due to unsatisfactory choices and difficulties in moving across the system.

- **National Curriculum** – the inquiry found that locally and nationally a flexible approach with provision of alternative vocational choices, in a more informal environment supports engagement.
- **One to One Support** – evidence from local practitioners and national research informed the inquiry that providing individualised 1:1 support locally helped to reduce numbers of young people becoming NEET and was cost effective in the long term.

Section 6. Recommendations

Due to the complexity of this inquiry the Scrutiny Panel has themed their recommendations e.g. 'partnership working', 'strategic leadership and organisational change', etc. In order to address some of the systemic problems that relate closely to NEETs the Scrutiny Panel would like to be informed by the executive as to how the recommendations will be followed up and monitored – e.g. the production of an action plan with time scales and officers responsible. At point 6 an additional recommendation has been inserted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at the 9th July meeting.

Partnership working:

1. Ensure that Southampton Solent University and Southampton University are represented and fully engaged on the 14 – 19 Partnership.
2. Review membership of the Economy and Enterprise Board and ensure appropriate representation from learning providers in the city.

Strategic leadership and Organisational change:

3. Ensure that Portfolio holders for Children's Services and Safeguarding, Economic Development, and Young People and Skills form a sub group of Cabinet to track progress and ensure NEET actions and targets are met with the expectation that the Economic Development Cabinet member will take the lead.
4. Economic Development takes a strategic lead for the coordination of effort in reducing NEETs; working closely with the Cabinet sub group and Children's Services and Learning. This strategic lead will need to ensure the barriers to accessing education, employment and training are integrated with the priorities and targets around worklessness, educational achievement, quality information and advice and the local economic impact. Through partnership working agencies need to understand and act on these priorities in a coordinated manner efficiently and effectively in order to meet the Local Area Agreement targets.
5. The strategic lead raises the profile of the issue of NEETs within the City Council and externally to ensure that;
 - The 14-19 Learning, Skills and Employability Strategy 2009-2012 and the fully integrated NEET Action Plan is regularly monitored, reviewed and continues to be cross referenced with the EDAP.
 - An audit of finance including external funding and personnel involved takes place, as there is concern re duplication of effort to reduce NEETs. (The Scrutiny Panel remains unclear as to how many agencies and staff are involved in reducing the number of NEETs).
 - The true cost of NEETs is identified locally and funds are pooled to facilitate joint working that has a focus on long-term spend to save outcomes.
 - The business community and learning providers work together to develop a clear understanding of employers' needs and cascade that information through established partnerships and networks, ensuring appropriate representation.
 - A list is developed of organisations tackling NEETs and young adults with contact details. List to be maintained by SCC and distributed to all stakeholders for ease of communication; work together on fundraising bids, share expertise and resources, reduce duplication, improve signposting to

- young people and share good practice in delivering initiatives that support young people locally.
- Establish medium term budget plans with a view to providing clear funding signals to voluntary groups and agencies and to help overcome the short-term nature of service provision.
6. “That Cabinet explore the possibilities of using the funding from the ‘Future Job Fund’ to develop an apprenticeship scheme for the Council that would be specifically tailored for groups that are likely to be Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)”

Prevention and retention:

7. It is acknowledged by the Scrutiny Panel that Solent Skills Quest do provide a mentoring training programme to young people, in partnership with local businesses. The City Council should support this programme by taking a keen interest and lead on supporting the development and promotion of this scheme to ensure it is sufficiently resourced and addressing the NEETs issue.
- The capacity of employees within partner organisations should be released to support young people who are vulnerable to becoming NEET or have already reached that status, into education, employment and/or training.
 - Personal development/training opportunities should be offered to employees in order to increase the provision of cost effective, one to one support and mentoring to all vulnerable young people.
8. Young people who are NEET are referred or actively encouraged to access one to one life coaching style support that will help them for example, make long term plans, take responsibility for their choices and recognise that a job can lead to a career.
9. Children’s Services and Learning investigate and identify a strategy for dealing with any low uptake of support on offer through the 14-19 Partnership.
10. Through the BSF programme - Children’s Services and Learning review options for the co-location of services to provide young people with local support in community hubs
11. Ensure that the City Council continues to work in partnership with the SCPCT and Southampton Solent University on the ‘Skills Development Zone’ and develop opportunities for work experience and placements internally and in partner organisations.
12. Consultation takes place to monitor the impact of the closure of the Connexions High Street branch.
13. Children’s Services and Learning develop a robust method of identifying potential NEET young people at an early age and make this information available to schools and practitioners.
14. Ensure those from low income families are aware of the financial incentives to stay on at college.

15. Ensure that young people and families who do not now meet the CAMHS raised criteria for referral are signposted and able to access alternative support.

Process change:

16. Children's Services and Learning should involve young people in decision making regarding services that affect their quality of life; e.g. access to support, information advice and guidance, and that the practice of consultation be embedded across SCC and other organisations through the 14-19 partnership.
17. Southampton City Council's on line 'Area Prospectus' for 14-19 year olds be updated and improved. Promote the web site as an interactive tool e.g. for use between care leavers and their personal advisors to assist with a Pathway Plan. Focus on easy access to vocational training and opportunities for placements within SCC in particular link up with housing advice.
18. Children Services and Learning develop a referral system offering a tiered level of support and promote this to practitioners. Ensure support is available to all vulnerable learners on a one to one basis, especially during transitional stages.
19. Children's Services and Learning monitor young people with special educational needs to improve;
- Educational achievement
 - Quality of support provided
 - Emotional health and wellbeing
20. Children's Services and Learning ensure relevant CCIS information is shared with schools and colleges across the City to enable proactive, direct targeting and marketing to engage young people through personalised invitations in catchment areas with one to one support relevant to the interests of the young person.
21. A greater emphasis should be placed on achievements through informal education e.g.:
- Develop and implement a higher profile for the recognition and celebration of the achievements of volunteers and vulnerable learners e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Data:

22. Children's Services and Learning explore the possibility and potential of incorporating figures from all schools; to include independents to improve the accuracy and interpretation of data in correlation with local populations.
23. Where practicable, capture data re 'long term NEETs' and focus resources on this group and on teenage parents – see best practice.

Best Practice:

24. As a matter of routine involve the young person's parents and family at every available opportunity. E.g. Bitterne Park Secondary School.
25. Schools share good practice re staff training and a flexible curriculum prior to the 'September Guarantee' E.g.: Bitterne Park staff training programme:
- Inset days to begin or improve flexible learning and improve offer for vulnerable learners.

- Allow a focus on English and Maths and vocational studies either within school or at a local college. Offer courses at an appropriate level for the individual. “Make it fun” and help it fit individual requirements.
26. Continue to deliver and raise the profile of the Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme prioritising those at risk of social exclusion and becoming NEET. Celebrate achievement.
 27. Share the good practice within schools that have a strong ethos of pastoral care. Embed that ethos across all schools using clear procedures and case studies to promote understanding.
 28. Investigate the possibility of replicating the local NEET Conference that became the citywide ‘Choices’ conference. Engage schools and colleges re delivery in Year 10.
 29. Investigate and replicate the successful engagement of teenage parents into distance learning provision (Coventry) ‘Care to Learn’ and ‘Busy Mummy’.
 30. Investigate the feasibility of contacting the Prince’s Trust and other similar organisations, review their programmes to develop key skills, confidence and motivation, enabling young people to move into work, education or training. Establish whether such schemes could be set-up locally to help tackle the NEET problem.

Safe Environment

31. Schools to be encouraged to involve vulnerable young people in implementing the anti-bullying strategies as outlined in the Children and Young People’s Plan. Investigate and adopt best practice already operating in schools e.g. Chamberlayne Park College for the Arts should be shared. Ensure the approach is being used across all schools and is approved and robustly monitored by young people in partnership with service providers.
32. Implement a consistent approach to supporting teachers and other practitioners with regards to dealing with difficult behaviour, ensuring resources are sufficient. See Bournemouth Good Practice Appendix 7.
33. Children’s Services and Learning should develop a protocol to identify *reasons* for absence from school with a robustly monitored referral system to re-engage the young person in education as soon as possible. Review budgets and priorities to ensure sufficient support is available from Education Welfare Officers when home school relationships are at risk. (For further information re absence from school see the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel report re Potential Links Between Crime and Disorder and Absence from School, June 2009 – Recommendation 1.).
34. Children’s Services and Learning should work in partnership with the Youth Offending Team to investigate the quality of supervision, information, advice and guidance on offer to young offenders through the ISSP (Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (Wheatsheaf Trust Building) to ensure the safety of all parties and positive outcomes.

Acknowledgements

Members of the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel would like to thank all those who have assisted with the development of this review. In particular the young people from youth clubs in the centre of Southampton, and those attending No Limits, Youth Options and Southampton City College who took time out of their day to help raise awareness and inform members of the inquiry as to the personal issues that affected their life chances.

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Glossary

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families – Central Government.

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions.

E2E - Entry to Employment – Central Government initiative.

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training.

S106 – Section 106 – Definition (I & DeA)

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement.

These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.

The scope of such agreements is laid out in the government's Circular 05/2005. Matters agreed as part of a S106 must be:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- reasonable in all other respects.

A council's approach to securing benefits through the S106 process should be grounded in evidence-based policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: National Qualifications Framework

Source: <http://www.connexions-direct.com/itsyourchoice/researchYourIdeas/qualifications/NationalQualificationsFramework/>

Also: for local interpretation, see Southampton City College – Guide for School Leavers 2009-2010 p 14.

Entry Level Qualifications

- These are called [Entry Level Certificates](#).
- They develop basic knowledge, understanding and skills in a particular subject or area.
- They build confidence and help people to prepare for further learning, work and independent living.

Level 1 Qualifications

- These include [National Vocational Qualifications](#) at Level 1, [GCSEs](#) achieved at grades D-G, the Foundation [Diploma](#), and [vocationally-related qualifications](#) such as BTEC Introductory Certificates and Diplomas, and City & Guilds Foundation Awards.
- These qualifications improve basic knowledge, understanding and skills in a subject, a specific work area or a broad economic sector.
- They help people to use their learning in everyday situations and tasks.
- They help people to prepare for other Level 1 qualifications and for qualifications at Levels 2 and 3.

Level 2 Qualifications

- These include [National Vocational Qualifications](#) at Level 2, [GCSEs](#) achieved at grades A*-C, the Higher [Diploma](#), and [vocationally-related qualifications](#), such as the BTEC First Diploma, and City & Guilds Intermediate Awards.
- These qualifications build knowledge, understanding and skills in a subject, a specific work area or a broad economic sector.
- They enable people to use their learning in a wide range of tasks.
- They help people to prepare for other Level 2 qualifications and for qualifications at Level 3.
- **Most employers use this level as their minimum entry requirement.**

Level 3 Qualifications

- These include [National Vocational Qualifications](#) at Level 3, [A/AS Levels](#), the Advanced and Progression [Diplomas](#), the [International Baccalaureate](#), and [vocationally-related qualifications](#) such as the BTEC National Award, and City & Guilds Advanced Awards.
- These qualifications develop detailed knowledge, understanding and skills in a subject, a specific work area or a broad economic sector.
- They help people to use their learning in a wide range of tasks and situations.

- They help people to prepare for other Level 3 qualifications and for qualifications at Level 4.
- **Universities expect most applicants to be qualified to this level.**
- **Employers will increasingly look for applicants who are qualified to at least this level.**

Qualifications at Levels 4 to 8

- These include [National Vocational Qualifications](#) at Levels 4 and 5, and [higher education qualifications](#) such as Foundation degrees, honours degrees, Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, specialist professional qualifications and postgraduate qualifications.
- These qualifications involve in-depth learning about a specific occupational role or area of study.
- They help people to become specialists in their area of learning or work.

Appendix 2

Appendix 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT INQUIRY PLAN

INQUIRY INTO THE NUMBER OF 16-18 YEAR OLDS NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING IN SOUTHAMPTON

Project Brief

1. Purpose of the Inquiry

The number of 16-18 year olds 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) in Southampton is above national and regional averages. The high number of people NEET has a detrimental impact on the individuals, society and the economic well-being of the city reducing competitiveness as being NEET between the ages of 16-18 is a major predictor of later unemployment and low income.

This inquiry will seek to identify the reasons behind the high number of young people NEET within Southampton and make recommendations to improve performance across the city.

2. Terms of Reference

- To identify the number of young people NEET in Southampton and analyse trend information
- To identify the causes / reasons for the high level of NEET within Southampton and the impact of NEET on the economy of the city
- To review the action being taken to reduce NEET levels by Southampton City Council and partners
- To compare the performance and methods of Southampton with other local authority areas and identify successful strategies
- To highlight examples of good practice
- To develop ideas for strategies that may help to reduce the number of young people NEET in Southampton

3. Inquiry Methodology

Extensive consultation will be undertaken with a variety of key stakeholders. Consultees may include:

- Cabinet Member for Economic Development
- Cabinet Member for Young People and Skills
- Children's Services and Learning Directorate
- Neighbourhoods Directorate
- Environment Directorate
- Communities, Health and Care Directorate
- The Learning and Skills Council
- Employment and Skills Board
- S.I.T.E.S
- Schools

- Colleges
- Training providers
- Groups of young people NEET, including care leavers
- Youth Offending Team
- Local employers (including the Council)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business Southampton
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Jobcentre Plus
- South East England Development Agency
- Voluntary sector
- Other local authorities

4. Outline Consultation Plan

- Prepare a plan including a balance of written and oral views of those groups and individuals outlined above
- Develop further understanding by members of the Scrutiny Panel through a series of interviews with expert witnesses

5. Outline Project Plan

Meeting 1: 28th January.

Background and introduction to the issues

Meeting 2 and 3: 26th February/3rd March

- Why has Southampton got high levels of NEET and what action is being taken to address the higher level of young people NEET?

~~Meeting 4: w/b 17th March – Cancelled to enable site visits to go ahead.~~

- Discussion with young people from Southampton who are NEET.

Meeting 4: 31st March – CR3

- Schools and Colleges – discussion re raising aspirations etc.

Meeting 5: 15th April - Council Chamber

- What impact does the level of young people NEET have on the city economy

Meeting 6: 29th April – CR3

- Good practice?
 - Site visit and / or presentation from another local authority

Meeting 7: 5th/6th May.

- Strategies for improvement

Informal meeting to discuss the draft report and recommendations

Meeting 8: 3rd June - Overview

- Agree recommendations

Appendix 3 - Key organisations that provided evidence

Southampton City Council		
Cabinet Member for Children's Services (now former)	Councillor Baillie	
Cabinet Member for Economic Development	Councillor Smith	
Cabinet Member for Young People and Skills	Councillor Matthews	
Children's Services and Learning:	Clive Webster Alison Alexander Kevin Allan Kathryn Bevan-Mackie Patricia Dufficy Denise Edghill Simon Whitmore	
Communities, Health and Care	Islay Downey	
Economic Development	Jeff Walters	
No Limits	Annabel Hodgson	
City Limits	Amanda Burdfield	
Job Centre Plus	Bernadette Hagan Jenny McKenzie	
Youth Options	Young people and Debbie Burns	
Southampton Solent University	Dr Stephen Lake Louise Bates	
Southampton City Primary Care Trust	Anita Esser	
Southampton University	Professor Jacky Lumby	
Tauntons College	Glenda Gardiner	
Itchen College	Tim Proud	
Southampton City College	Lindsey Noble Helen Mason	
Derby City Council	Graeme Ferguson	
Coventry City Council	Keith Batty	
The Prince's Trust	Nathalie Reid	
Bitterne Park School	Susan Trigger	
Chamberlayne College for the Arts	Chris Kellaway	
Written evidence was also supplied by:		
Wheatsheaf Trust	Jackie Powers	
Business Southampton	Sally Lynskey	
SEEDA	Julia Pearson	
Solent Skills Quest	Angela Wright	

Appendix 4

Performance Indicators likely to affect NEET figures - comparison with statistical neighbours

Information sourced from LAIT and LSC.

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Coventry</u>			<u>n/k</u>	<u>Derby</u>			<u>n/k</u>	<u>Southampton</u>			<u>n/k</u>
	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>		<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>		<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	
n/k = not known												
NI 17 NEETs(LAIT) - 08 (LSC)	8.7	6.8	6.5	3.00%	8.4	7.9	7.0	6.10%	9.4	10.4	9.6	5.60%
NI 106 - yp from low income backgrounds progressing to HE			18.55				19.60				16.66	
			<u>Nat.ave</u>				<u>Nat.ave</u>				<u>Nat.ave</u>	
% of pupils achieving GCSE 5 + A* - C English and Maths			41.5	47.3			49.3	47.3			42	47.3
NI 74 - Achievement at level 5 or above English and Maths KS3			62	67			67	67			61	67
			<u>2006/07</u>	<u>Nat.ave</u>			<u>2006/07</u>	<u>Nat.ave</u>			<u>2006/07</u>	<u>Nat.ave</u>
Secondary School - permanent exclusions - % of school population			0.06	0.22			0.54	0.22		trend >	0.27	0.22
NI 87 - Secondary School persistent			6.2	5.58			6.22	5.58			8.43	5.58

absence.

	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>
NI 111 1st time entrants to the Youth Justice System - NB actual numbers varies. population	623	682	760	702	474	586	462	559	484	473	547	527
			2008	Nat.ave			2008	Nat.ave			2008	Nat.ave
% of children bullied			53.9	48			50.9	48			50.8	48
NI 115 - Substance Misuse			9.6				9.3				9.7	
		2001	2008	-		2001	2008	-		2001	2008	-
Looked after rate - per 10,000 of the population.		68	79			81	77		trend <	86	63	
	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>	<u>04/05</u>	<u>05/06</u>	<u>06/07</u>	<u>07/08</u>
NI 57 - Sporting opportunities % participating	47	42	54	70	55	62	77	81	31	57	69	78
				Nat.ave				Nat.ave				Nat.ave
NI 50 Emotional Health of Children - % who are positive			62.7	63.3			62.8	63.3			59.2	63.3

NI 51 - Improving Emotional Health and well being and child and adolescent health services - figures are 'scores'	12	11.35		14	11.35		15	11.35	
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>		<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	
NI 56 - % of children in Year 6 obese -	19.4	18.77		19.31	16		16.88	18.62	
	<u>2001</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Nat.Ave</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Nat.Ave</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Nat.Ave</u>
NI 12 U 18 conception rates per 1000 girls (15 - 17)	57.78	59.5	41.68	46.39	55.2	41.68	65.59	49	41.68

Appendix 5 - NEET Statistics - Quarterly Brief

This note sets out the definitive available statistics on young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and young people Not in Education and Training (NET).

The data presented covers England and is on an academic age basis.

The DCSF PSA target to reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET by 2% points, from 9.6%¹ in 2004 to 7.6% by 2010, is measured using data published annually in the Statistical First Release (SFR) 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England'. This is the definitive source for NEET and NET figures. However, these data are only available annually, and cannot be disaggregated at local authority level. We can use information from the Labour Force survey (LFS) and Client Caseload Information system (CCIS) maintained by the Connexions Service to monitor NEET at a more detailed level.

Analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) allows less robust in-year estimates to be made of the annual SFR measures.

Connexions Service administrative data (CCIS) allows measurement at local level and more detailed breakdowns of the NEET group to be made. However CCIS uses different definitions and relates only to those young people whose status is known to Connexions so is not directly comparable with LFS or SFR measures.

The 5 data series presented are:

- a. NEET SFR series (latest data end 2007)
- b. NEET quarterly LFS series (latest data Quarter 4 2008)
- c. CCIS data at regional level (latest data Nov 07 – Jan 08 average)
- d. NET SFR series (latest data end 2007)
- e. NET quarterly LFS series (latest data Quarter 4 2008)

Note that other data series exist, such as the Not in Full-time education, not in employment series from the LFS, but they should not be used as NEET series.

Section 1. Trends focuses on the key trends in the NEET and NET data series

Section 2. Segmentation splits down the NEET group into identifiable groups.

Section 3. Methodology and Notes explains the methodology used to derive the different series, and gives guidance on their usage.

Section 4. Tables contains two tables showing numbers and percentages for the key data series on NET and NEET.

¹ Previously the target baseline was presented as 10% but due to a change in reporting in 2007 NEET figures are now reported to one decimal place. The baseline is 9.6% to one decimal place and thus the 2010 target for a 2 percentage point reduction is 7.6%.

Appendix 6

September Guarantee

The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007. It will be extended to 17-year-olds in 2008 to give those who enrol on one-year or short courses, or who leave the activity they chose when leaving school, further opportunities to engage in learning.

This is an important element of the Department's strategies for reducing the proportion of young people who are NEET; increasing participation and attainment at age 19.

Further information on the September Guarantee is also available on the [DCSF 14–19 website](#).

What is the Diploma?

The Diploma is a new qualification that combines theoretical study with practical experience and is part of the 14 to 19 reform programme being rolled out over the next five years.

The reform programme is designed to educate young people for the fast changing world they are growing up in; it offers exciting choices and opportunities to equip young people for adult life and to help them enjoy a brighter future.

GCSEs and A Levels are also being updated and the number of Apprenticeships is being increased. Taken together, these changes will mean that all young people can choose a qualification which suits their interests and learning style.

The introduction of the Diploma is part of this national programme.

Diplomas will cover 17 subjects, or lines of learning, and will be available in areas across the country by 2011.

All Diplomas will require students to achieve a minimum standard in English, mathematics and ICT, complete a project and do a minimum of 10 days' work experience.

The Diploma will provide students with an integrated programme of study made up of different courses and awards. Foundation and Higher Diploma students can go on to study for the next level of Diploma, take a different type of qualification such as a GCSE, A Level or Apprenticeship, or go on to a job with training.

An Advanced Diploma can lead on to university or into a career. The Diploma will help students make decisions about their future direction without closing down options.

Key features

The Diploma provides young people with:

- a combination of the essential knowledge and skills that employers and universities look for, including teamwork, self-management and critical thinking skills.
- opportunities to experience different styles of learning in different environments such as school, college and the workplace, with an emphasis on practical activities and an integrated curriculum;
- opportunities to experience work in one of the UK's main employment sectors;
- flexibility and choice with options to pursue their interests, whether this is further study or a job;
- an insight into what work is really like without committing them to a career in a particular area;
- a high-quality qualification that will be valued by industry and higher education.

Appendix 7 – Good Practice - Bournemouth

Targeted youth support

Integrated support for vulnerable young people –
Emerging practice

Three pronged approach cuts NEET by 25 per cent in one year

Area: Bournemouth Borough Council, unitary authority, South West England, population approx 160,000

“The ongoing high level focus on reducing the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) gave us the clout we needed to get all partners on board and start to make a real difference. We have really helped some young people get the motivation and self respect needed to do something with their lives” – **Simon Thomas, Area Manager, Connexions, Bournemouth**
– June 2008

Challenges

- High levels of young people NEET
- Young people who are NEET being referred into the borough to take advantage of area's housing provision
- Limited local options for post 16 learning provision

Key Actions

- Following council's annual performance assessment in June 2007, three pronged attack launched to tackle NEET involving Connexions, young people and partnerships – NEET becomes a Local Area Agreement target
- Connexions - Personal Advisers (PA) re-deployed two teams
- Community and education to increase focus/accountability
- All staff received Leading Empowered Organisations (LEO) intensive training – provides clarity and fosters responsibility
- PAs allocated to specific multi-agency locality team (three in Bournemouth) – given considerable autonomy and support
- Young people – allocated own PA responsible for building a clear picture of qualifications, goals and work readiness
- A bespoke plan/EXCELER8 signed contract – young person signs up to a programme of group activities/one to one work
- Links with Jobcentre Plus to tie in contracts with benefits
- Launch Motiv8 – intensive three day self awareness/ motivation training in partnership with training providers – involves young people who were NEET as peer motivators
- Engage providers e.g. Learning and Skills Council to identify provision gaps, shape commissioning and remove barriers
- Partners – April 08 multi-agency event attended by senior managers with DCSF key note speech - partnership strategy launched – reducing NEET becomes a key target for all
- Locality partnership events to evolve local strategy

Key Implementation Tips

- Get your Director of Children's Services involved at the outset – they give you the added clout you need
- Constantly push and reiterate the target at every meeting, always keep it on the agenda and make sure all partners know their role and take responsibility for it.
- Give practitioners ownership and accountability – but ensure they know what is expected of them through clear targets and help them with appropriate support.
- Get young people who have been NEET involved – their stories are the most powerful communication tools
- Provide a mix of practical help and where possible link up the young people with the training providers.

Impact

The intensive triple approach has had a remarkable impact on Bournemouth's NEET figures. Between June '07 and June '08, the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has fallen from 6.9 (243 young people) to 5.4 (185 young people) and the percentage of young people whose education, employment or training (EET) status is not known has also fallen from 6.9 to 5.5. Between December 1st and May 31st alone, 623 young people who were NEET were supported into EET. The percentage of 16 – 18 year olds in learning has remained the same, mainly due to limited post 16 learning options. Of the remaining 185 young people who are NEET, the majority are not, according to their PAs, ready for work. To understand why and to try and resolve this, research into the cultural and social issues and barriers to EET has been commissioned. This information will feed into multi agency teams and will inform Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) where appropriate and the deployment of targeted youth support services to help address issues holistically. For the young people helped, the work has made a real difference giving them the motivation and self-respect to become and hopefully stay in EET.

To find out more, contact

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For more emerging practice case studies log onto:

www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/tysemergingpractice

NEET fact

CASE STUDY 1: LISA NEET

The early years

Lisa Neet has one of the worst possible starts to life. When she was seven her father died and she was brought up by foster parents. She had a stormy relationship with her mother, and her mother's boyfriend, and attempted suicide age 15. Before leaving school without qualifications she was already smoking and drinking regularly and was arrested for shoplifting. At 16 she moved in to a council flat with a boyfriend but became alcoholic and was treated for depression. At 17 she dropped out of a hairdresser training course and fell pregnant.

The government officially declares Lisa a Neet.

Cost to the state: £2,446

19-35 years

Lisa's life starts to improve although she is still drinking and smoking. She has a second child age 20 and is now costing the state a small fortune in benefits. When she reaches 26 Lisa splits up with her boyfriend. She becomes heavily depressed and drinks more and her children barely attend school.

Cost to the state: £144,140

Midlife and beyond

The children are now teenagers and Lisa is soon to be a grandmother. She has started doing some part-time work but is 'stressed'. In her forties she finds a new boyfriend, her health improves and this is as good as it gets for Lisa. By the time she hits 60, she is alone and suffering from a range of chronic health conditions. She dies at the age of 77, a great-great grandmother.

Cost to the state: £167,801

TOTAL COST: £314,387

CASE STUDY 2: ADAM NEET

The early years

Adam Neet grew up with his mother and stepfather but left home at 14. After being expelled from school for fighting, he ended up in care before becoming homeless. By the age of 16 he has started smoking cannabis, drinking and has been arrested for shoplifting. However, Adam is bright and was briefly in the top set at school. At 17 he moves from a hostel to a council flat and becomes a dad. However, his life goes seriously off the rails as he begins experimenting with harder drugs and is arrested for involvement in an armed robbery.

Cost to the state: £16,660

19-35 years

After coming out of prison, Adam moves in with his girlfriend and they have another baby. He does some training and finds a job but finds it 'difficult' and walks out, returning to petty crime. When he is 26, Adam leaves his girlfriend and moves in with another woman. They have two children. He starts working sporadically and no longer breaks the law.

Cost to the state: £146,228

Mid-life and beyond

In his late thirties, Adam finds a full-time job, his health is good and he is finally giving something back. But within a few years he is back to part-time work, his health is deteriorating and he is made redundant at 55. His health then deteriorates quickly and he dies in his early seventies.

Cost to the state: £144,696

TOTAL COST: £307,584

Note: Costs to the state are over and above those of a normal, non-Neet, individual. The case studies are fictitious but based on real examples and provided by the Department for Education and Skills. The additional costs include a range of benefits worth about £100 a week, an estimate of the amount of lost tax, the cost of providing extra health and medical services, and the costs associated with their criminal activity. It is considered a conservative estimate as the wider impact of their behaviour and poor health has not been quantified

Appendix 9 – Good Practice cited by Coventry City Council



Youth Development Programmes

In partnership with the Coventry-Warwickshire Construction Employment Unit and Connexions, the Agency is the delivery partner for a 3-year LSC Co-Financed youth contract, with the Agency delivering entry-level construction skills to 104 disadvantaged and excluded youths from its customised construction training centre at Torrington Avenue, South Coventry.

In July 2008, the Agency was additionally awarded a 3-year Entry to Employment (E2E) NVQ Level 1 LSC training contract, providing a further 300 places on the Agency's youth training programmes.

These programmes build on the experience gained through previous Agency-managed Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes, where pre-Apprenticeship programmes were provided for local disadvantaged youths, resulting in 10 young people gaining apprenticeships and employment with national contractors. The Agency also manages recently re-introduced Apprentice programmes for 'HomeWorks', Whitefriars Housing Group's director labour organisation.

For further information and employer partnering opportunities to support and benefit from Agency youth programmes, contact:

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In partnership with



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Appendix 10 – Good Practice – NEET/Choices Conference, Southampton.

Reducing NEETs – Case Study

**NEET Conference
22nd April 2005**

Background

- Consultation with community groups and service providers in the South Neighbourhoods partnership area had identified that educational attainment and skills for employment were a priority to improve quality of life in the neighbourhood.
- Southampton City Council's Community Strategy consultation and performance indicators had also identified that reducing NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training – 16-18 year olds) was a city wide priority.
- A working group was formed 'Educational Attainment and Skills for Employment (South Neighbourhoods Partnership). The Connexions service gave a presentation re issues, needs of young people and targets. Key stakeholders were invited and debated what could be done to support the above priorities and improve performance indicators. In attendance: Itchen College, local Councillors, Weston Park Boys School, Young People and Community Support, Sholing Tech College, Weston Shore Community Room, Woolston Lang College, HR – Southampton City Council, City College, Ridgeway House, Economic Development – SCC, Training Initiatives SCC, SVS and local community representatives.
- It was agreed that a smaller group would work together to design and implement an event that would specifically target young people who were likely to be NEET once leaving year 11 at secondary schools in the area.

Purpose

- To work together in partnership sharing resources to support young people in the locality into EET.
- To improve the following outcomes for young people:
 - Raise motivation by valuing young people in a positive relaxed environment
 - Improve confidence
 - Widen horizons
 - Promote local opportunities for training, employment and further education – e.g. Itchen College and City College
 - Promote a sense of responsibility
 - Provide quality information, advice and guidance

Key Partners

Those involved had been identified as having key responsibilities in the locality for 16 – 18 year olds and were keen to work in partnership to improve LPSA targets and performance. A small working group was formed to discuss plans for an event;

- Lead - Head of Weston Park Boys School.
- Key partners, Connexions Manager, Young People and Community Support Area Manager, Deputy Head Itchen College, Neighbourhood Coordinator.
- Independent facilitator with youth work and life coaching background.

Method

- Key partners were involved in planning the event. The following decisions were made and considered **key** to delivering a successful programme:
 - Timing was crucial – April before year 11s left secondary school
 - Preparatory group work prior to the event was carried out by the The then Youth Service (now Young People and Community Support) in all the local secondary schools to help prepare young people to actively participate. (See Appendix 1)
 - Secondary Head Teachers responsible for targeting their young people NEET
 - Valuing young people on arrival – providing a quality and professionally delivered programme;
 - tiered seating
 - refreshments and lunch
 - 1:1 advice and guidance – adjoining class rooms
 - Careers advice – adjoining class rooms
 - Exhibits around the hall from Colleges, Young People and Community Support, careers advice etc.
 - Presentations from Colleges to illustrate offer.
 - Motivational speaker (PowerPoint presentation) from the Richard Rogers Partnership (Architects for the Woolston Riverside) – professional architect who had grown up in the area. Specific brief to ‘wow’ the young people and talk about his experience growing up in the area, moving away to study, financial difficulties leading to success.

Delivery

All partners felt that the environment would help to raise expectations re good behaviour as well as supporting young people to feel valued.

An entrepreneur with a background in youth work, life coaching and experience in working with businesses developing skills and team work was engaged as an independent facilitator. As a member of the planning group, advised on planning the programme with specific advice to ensure young people were busily engaged throughout the day.

Young people were encouraged to listen to a variety of short professional presentations (as above) and then in turn seek advice from exhibitors in the hall and have 1:1’s with advisors in classrooms.

An incentive was designed – a card was provided to the young delegates which when stamped/signed by exhibitors and advisors entitled them to a free lunch. This was to encourage the young people to gather information and talk to exhibitors and later move through the college to the dining hall and so build confidence.

Costings:

This was kept to a minimum as the good will of the schools and colleges supported the event. A budget of **£1,000** was allocated to Weston Park Boys School by the South Neighbourhoods Partnership.

Catering: lunch and refreshments Provided by Itchen College on site.	£318.05
Independent Facilitator	£250
Key Note speaker	No charge
Transportation costs – hire of minibuses	£431.95 approx

Conclusions

The working group met on the 13th June to feed back to the wider community and stakeholders. Four secondary schools were invited to take part in the event and participated to a greater or lesser degree. The most significant group that took part were from Weston Park Boys School. Approximately 75 young people were in attendance.

The following tables show percentage rate decrease as recorded by Connexions in September of 2005.

<u>Weston Park</u>		
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	%	%
Full Time Education	55.46%	62.59%
Full Time Training (non employed)	0.78%	1.52%
Full Time Employment	16.40%	21.37%
Part time Activities	1.56%	1.52%
NEET	22.65%	11.45%
Unknown	0.78%	0.76%
Other	2.34%	0.76%
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	Number	Number
Full Time Education	71	82
Full Time Training (non employed)	1	2
Full Time Employment	21	28
Part time Activities	2	2
NEET	29	15
Unknown	1	1
Other	3	1
Survey Total	128	131

<u>Chamberlayne Park</u>		
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	%	%
Full Time Education	61.72%	67.29%
Full Time Training (non employed)	1.91%	2.84%
Full Time Employment	17.22%	10.90%
Part time Activities	1.91%	0.47%
NEET	15.31%	14.21%
Unknown	0.95%	3.31%
Other	0.95%	0.94%
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	Number	Number

Full Time Education	129	142
Full Time Training (non employed)	4	6
Full Time Employment	36	23
Part time Activities	4	1
NEET	32	30
Unknown	2	7
Other	2	2
Survey Total	209	211

<u>Sholing</u>		
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	%	%
Full Time Education	77.31%	80.19%
Full Time Training (non employed)	0.46%	1.48%
Full Time Employment	9.25%	11.38%
Part time Activities	4.62%	0.99%
NEET	8.33%	5.44%
Unknown	0.00%	0.00%
Other	0.00%	0.49%
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	Number	Number
Full Time Education	167	162
Full Time Training (non employed)	1	3
Full Time Employment	20	23
Part time Activities	10	2
NEET	18	11
Unknown	0	0
Other	0	1
Survey Total	216	202

<u>Woolston</u>		
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
	%	%
Full Time Education	68.87%	67.12%
Full Time Training (non employed)	1.32%	0.68%
Full Time Employment	13.90%	15.06%
Part time Activities	1.98%	2.05%
NEET	11.92%	10.27%
Unknown	1.32%	2.73%
Other	0.66%	2.05%
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>

	Number	Number
Full Time Education	104	98
Full Time Training (non employed)	2	1
Full Time Employment	21	22
Part time Activities	3	3
NEET	18	15
Unknown	2	4
Other	1	3
Survey Total	151	146

Itchen College - 12 enrolments

City College - 15 enrolments

Connexions reported that the event had worked well with the 'big hit' style approach. A useful template to use in future but ideally need more time to organise.

Young People and Community Support - staff went into schools prior to event and worked with Connexions Pas. Groups worked well with the interactive tool which young people used to identify and explore barriers to engagement.

Other –

- Engage young people in year 9 and/or 10 could be even more successful.
- An independent facilitator worked well.

Keys to success –

- Goodwill
- Partnership working
- Vision
- Delivered locally
- Identified barriers with young people prior to event.
- Fun
- Incentives
- Positive experience
- Personal responsibility encouraged