

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET - 11 DECEMBER 2014****CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REPORT: REVIEW OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT****LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR SHAUN DAVIES****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

This report provides a response to a series of recommendations made by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee in relation to addressing youth unemployment. In summary, nine of the thirteen recommendations have been wholly accepted with the remaining four being partially accepted.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet note the recommendations made by the Children & Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Committee along with the responses included at Appendix 1 of this report.

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<p>Providing a programme of support to help our young people into training or employment directly contributes to the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting our children and young people first • Creating jobs as part of a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' • Improving local people's prospects through education and skills training <p>The recommendations made by the CYP Scrutiny Committee will further strengthen this work and support the above priorities.</p>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	There is borough wide impact with a specific focus on 16-24 year olds, education providers and businesses.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Additional funding to tackle youth unemployment was secured in April 2014 and supports a two year programme of activity. The recommendations made by the CYP Scrutiny Committee, where accepted, will be implemented as soon as possible to support the delivery of the programme.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	Any financial implications arising from adopting the recommendations as detailed within this report and at Appendix 1 will be contained within the approved £1.3 million budget for Youth Unemployment.

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council's statutory duty to provide education and/or training currently extends to 16-19 year olds, however the Council can rely upon section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which allows the authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to its statutory functions to extend the current and any future schemes to cover 20-24 year olds. The exercise of the power will also be subject to express statutory restraints such as the public sector equality duty, procurement and state aid rules.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	None
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	There is a borough wide impact however impact is greatest in those wards where there are the highest concentration of youth unemployment including Cuckoo Oak, Woodside, Malinslee, Haygate, Brookside and Donnington.

4.0 INFORMATION

4.1 Background

In January 2014, Cabinet approved a £1.3m programme of support aimed at reducing youth unemployment in the Telford & Wrekin area over a two year period. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee subsequently identified this as a work stream that justified in depth review due to the concerns that the rate of youth unemployment in Telford & Wrekin was significantly higher than regional and national averages. The committee was concerned about how this could affect the life chances of so many young people in the borough and the implications of the loss of so much potential on the prosperity of the borough as a whole. An early report by officers, to the scrutiny committee, provided contextual information on the work to date to tackle the levels of youth unemployment. The committee agreed to three key lines of enquiry:

1. To investigate what barriers exist locally for young people (aged 16-24) to getting into work.
2. To examine whether all agencies are playing their part in supporting young people into work.
3. To investigate whether there are any gaps and/or overlaps in current provision.

Members took evidence from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, senior council officers, principals and officers from further education (FE) providers, Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme prime contractors and providers, the Marches LEP Skills Champion, Chair of Telford Business Board and some of the Council's apprentices who had experienced unemployment. Members also visited a number of Job Junctions to see them in action and hear the views of staff and customers.

4.2 Response to Recommendations of the Scrutiny Report

Members of the Scrutiny Committee commended the work undertaken to date to tackle youth unemployment but also identified a number of recommendations which they believed would further strengthen this work, as summarised in Appendix 1. Many of the recommendations are already in the process of being implemented under the Youth

Unemployment programme and as a result considerable positive progress has already been made over the past nine months:

- Youth unemployment in Telford & Wrekin is decreasing at a greater rate than the regional and national rates – we believe this is a direct result of our intervention as well as our growth agenda.
- 105 work experience placements and 130 apprenticeships posts have been identified across the Council.
- Job Box Mentors have been appointed to work with young people aged 20-24 to provide them with one to one support to get into work, and have so far found employment for 75 people.
- 69 vacancies were filled as a direct result of the Partnership for Jobs event held in March 2014
- Nine additional Job Junctions have been set up in new areas of the borough with the aim of providing greater access for residents who are looking for work. As a result we are seeing record highs in attendance with the number of users to date, already exceeding last year's total. 105 people have been supported into employment through our Job Junctions this year.
- We have developed and launched our Job Box brand to unify our youth unemployment offer and ensure there is a common theme across our promotional media.
- We launched our Job Box website in March 2014 with 27.5% of all people viewing the site being aged between 18 and 24. This figure is improving on a weekly basis.
- We are using our 'Invest in Telford' programme to identify upcoming employment opportunities and relaying them through the various support services of the Job Box.
- We have developed a comprehensive offer to support businesses with their recruitment needs which links closely with our Invest in Telford offer.
- We have developed our Ambassador programme which will facilitate stronger links between businesses and schools to support the promotion of careers and work place learning and will launch this in the New Year.
- We have developed our Apprenticeship Hub programme that will de-risk the appointment of an apprentice for the employer, by Telford & Wrekin Council taking on the responsibility of managing the contract and wages of the apprentice and will launch this in the New Year
- We are developing a scheme to ensure that our young people are "work ready" through a Skills Passport programme, which will be developed alongside business needs.
- We are launching a programme of support, "Young Telford" to help young people to start their own business.
- We also recognise the differences in this group of young people whether that be by geographical location, culture, ethnicity etc and in response have developed a series of Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans for each of our six priority action areas. The plans pull together existing data relating to skills and employment and are shared with the outreach team so that consideration can be given to the types of provision that would make a difference to those in the area. The plan is reviewed every six months.

With considerable positive action already underway, the CYP Scrutiny Committee recommendations are welcomed and provide some valuable new ideas and advice around which we can further develop the service. Each of the recommendations made has been responded to in detail in Appendix 1. In summary, nine of the thirteen recommendations have been wholly accepted with the remaining four being partially

accepted.

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet Report: Tackling Youth Unemployment – Our Commitment (January 2014)

Cabinet Report: Tackling Youth Unemployment – Progress to Date (September 2014)

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children & Young People Scrutiny Report – Review of Youth Unemployment (November 2014)

**Report prepared by Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment,
01952 381192**

Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Report

<p>Scrutiny Committee: Children & Young People</p> <p>Report: Review of Youth Unemployment</p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: Cllr Mike Ion (to May 2014) Cllr Kevin Guy</p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Officer: Stephanie Jones / Fiona Bottrill</p>	<p>Cabinet Member: Cllr Shaun Davies</p> <p>Response prepared by: Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager for Youth Unemployment</p> <p>Date of Cabinet meeting: 11 December 2014</p>
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Scrutiny Recommendation	Response and summary of action being taken to implement, or reason for rejection	Date by which action will be taken	Person responsible for action (name and title)
<p>1. The Council should continue to develop its strategic role in leading the skills agenda across the borough.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council are taking a proactive approach in leading the skills agenda. The Council are represented on the LEP skills board, have excellent working relationships with skills providers and have good links with local businesses, schools and training providers to understand the skills needs of businesses in order to support in the addressing of skills gaps. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Kate Callis – Assistant Director – Development, Business and Employment</p>
<p>2. This role should include developing a longer term (3 years) Skills Strategy for the borough within 6 months which should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide detailed skills needs projections for businesses in the borough linked to employment opportunities in other LEP areas to inform skills planning b) Show how connections between businesses and the education sector (schools, FE and HE) will be developed and strengthened, including exploring sponsorship opportunities. c) Set clear outcomes that will be used to evaluate the success of the strategy and the Council's investment to enable young people to find and remain employed in the long term. 	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each point made by the CYP scrutiny committee is responded to below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is recognised that at a local level more work is needed to understand employers' skills requirements in order to determine a local skills strategy that supports the wider LEP strategy but also acknowledges differences and guides the programme from training providers. In response to this we have established a project team to lead on the development of a skills strategy which will; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture the existing skills requirements of our local businesses both now and in the future • Summarise our strategy for skills development to enable our local economy to grow and expand in the sectors we want 	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>Kate Callis – Assistant Director – Development, Business and Employment</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our position and ability to respond to inward investment enquiries from existing and target sectors. • Position us favourably to access funding opportunities that may flow through the LEP. • Provide a meaningful evidence base to education providers to inform their curriculum development so that it responds to skill requirements. • Enable us to challenge education provision if we believe it is not fulfilling skills requirements • Support careers advisors to provide real time information on the skills requirements of local businesses and therefore existing and future opportunities • Support young people to make informed decisions about their futures based on an up to date picture of the local economy <p>b) An Ambassador programme is currently being developed that will provide a brokerage service and effectively forge greater links between schools and businesses. We will look to widen this opportunity to FE and HE providers.</p> <p>c) Key performance indicators aligned to the relevant pledges are currently being developed</p>		
<p>3. Cabinet should work with the LEP to access funding opportunities to support the development and delivery of the strategy.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With European funding now being allocated through the LEP it is incredibly important that we continue to work closely with the LEP and also ensure that our local priorities are accurately reflected in the wider LEP priorities thus ensuring maximum opportunity for funding. • We already have in place an internal LEP Board to manage the interface with the LEP and skills is to be added to remit of the board to ensure we are maximising opportunities. • The development of a local Skills Strategy will help evidence need and provide support for funding. 	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Sue Marston, Service Delivery Manager – Skills</p>
<p>4. The Council should build links with the two Work Programme prime contractors operating across Telford and Wrekin to explore how provision can</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make contact with and arrange to meet the two Work Programme prime contractors to discuss greater linkages and 	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Sue Marston, Service Delivery</p>

<p>be better joined-up.</p>	<p>opportunities for data sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe that beneficial relationships can also be brokered with the sub contractors to the prime contractors in the Borough. This will ensure that we have a more local approach and are working with the deliverers of the programme. • We will arrange quarterly meetings with sub contractors to share best practice, information and ensure a more joined up approach. 		<p>Manager – Skills</p>
<p>5. Cabinet should challenge the colleges to show how they make decisions about provision and how provision meets the needs businesses and of people across the borough.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is accepted that the Council have a role to play in determining the curriculum of local FE and HE providers. • The development of a Telford & Wrekin Skills Strategy, which is regularly updated and reflective of existing and emerging skills requirements, will support this. • Once developed we will share this intelligence from businesses to support the decision making of FE and HE regarding future provision. • Joint quarterly meetings will be set up with both FE colleges to enable wider discussions around provision of training. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<p>Kate Callis, Assistant Director – Development, Business and Employment</p>
<p>6. Linked to the recommendation above the Council should broker a discussion between the Principals of the FE providers to reconsider the option of a joint delivery model. In the short term, consider setting up a joint working group/link group, made up of staff from both colleges, who could meet periodically to discuss ways forward for more joint working on the subject of youth employment.</p>	<p>Partly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a co-operative Council we are committed to working with and supporting our local FE providers to work co-operatively together to ensure appropriate provision for our young people. • The development of a local Skills Strategy, coupled with joint quarterly meetings will support ongoing and productive relationships. • We also recognise that it is also vital to forge strong relationships with our local schools and academies to tackle youth unemployment at an early stage. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<p>Kate Callis, Assistant Director – Development, Business and Employment</p>
<p>7. The Strategy should make proposals for on-going data-sharing mechanisms with reference to Jobcentre Plus and FE colleges to identify hard-to-reach young people and improve destination tracking.</p>	<p>Partly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sharing was underway between JobCentre Plus (JCP) and the Local Authority, facilitated through a secondment from JCP to the Council, however due to JCP data sharing rule changes, this secondment has ceased and currently we are unable to receive data from JCP, although we will continue to pursue this. • We have a statutory obligation as a local authority to provide 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2015</p>	<p>Sue Marston, Service Delivery Manager – Skills</p>

	<p>destination information to central government in relation to every young person in the Borough. This has proven to be problematic in the past due to ineffective data sharing agreements. In response to this we propose to enter into a new memorandum of understanding with the FE colleges, training providers and post 16 schools to ensure senior management buy in to the timely collection and sharing of data.</p>		
<p>8. The Council should prioritise the development of the Apprenticeship Hub as a Pledge and this should include:</p> <p>a) Assigning a named point of contact to each business</p> <p>b) Proactively targeting of the 25% of businesses identified by the LEP as interested but not having time to get involved</p> <p>c) Promote the Hub through business networks including the Telford Business Board, Telford Business Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>d) Note that the Scrutiny Committee would support a bid for funding through the LEP to support this work.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apprenticeship Hub is a priority for the Council as identified in the original list of youth unemployment pledges approved by Cabinet. A process and legal framework has been established and an application is to be made imminently to the National Apprenticeship Service to secure our status as a training provider, albeit we will commission local colleges to provide the taught part of apprenticeships. We have soft market tested the scheme with local businesses and have secured four businesses with whom we will pilot the scheme. We aim to formally launch at the Jobs Fair in March 2015. Each point made by the CYP scrutiny committee is responded to below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Businesses already have a named point of contact through our Business Support Team and they will support this scheme with businesses moving forward. In addition to this we are looking to recruit an officer to oversee and manage the Apprenticeship Hub programme who will be the named representative specifically in relation to this scheme. b) We will target those businesses identified by the LEP but will also use data and intelligence from our own skills survey conducted in 2013 as well as our Business Support Officers to effectively target businesses. c) The Hub will be promoted through our existing channels including those mentioned as well as additional avenues. d) We have already identified the LEP as a possible funding opportunity for the Hub moving forward and will endeavour to secure funding once we have piloted the project. We are also looking at income generation through our charging policy to businesses to support the scheme on an ongoing basis. 	<p>March 2015</p> <p>March 2015 - ongoing</p> <p>March 2015 – ongoing</p> <p>January 2016</p>	<p>Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment</p>
<p>9. The Council should monitor and report on the</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Sue Marston,</p>

<p>progression of care leavers and where appropriate prioritise care leavers for Council apprenticeships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are producing a targeted offer for our care leavers and will be focusing some activity on supporting these young people to access Council apprenticeships should they wish. 		<p>Service Delivery Manager – Skills</p>
<p>10. Efforts should be made to target marketing of the Job Box website to parents so they know how to help their children.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of targeting and engaging with parents is something that we have recognised as an area requiring additional attention. We are currently developing a Parent Strategy which will support our campaign to target parents/carers with information about support available for their children. Following the strategy development we will implement a campaign that will target both parents and carers. 	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment</p>
<p>11. Consider the suggestions put forward by the Council’s apprentices for tackling youth unemployment set out in Appendix 1, noting that Members do not support the principle of offering monetary incentives to engage young people.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>Each of the points raised in Appendix 1 have been responded to below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up Front Wage. This is not something that we would support on the basis it reduces the incentive for the apprentice to perform once in post. Coffee Morning. The suggestion here is for an informal discussion between an employer and members of the public to discuss careers. We are planning to hold a skills/careers event in March 2015 which would support this. Voucher. The suggestion is around an incentive of a voucher to get to interview stage. This is not supported but we recognise that as an organisation we need to commit to providing unsuccessful candidates with useful and constructive feedback to help them with future applications. We will consider incentives/vouchers where appropriate, for example we are trialling an introduction incentive for young people who sign up to our Job Box Mentor service. Job Prospects. We are developing our Apprenticeship Hub which will encourage more employers to take on an apprentice. Free Driving Lessons. As part of an incentive package for Telford & Wrekin Council apprentices we are exploring offering a number of driving lessons when an apprentice achieves a pre determined target in their work. However, incentives will only be considered when an apprentice exceeds minimum expectations. Longer work experience. This is something that we would be willing 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment</p>

	<p>to explore with local schools but the decision would ultimately rest with the schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are looking to engage further with the apprentice forum to help develop ideas around incentives and progression opportunities for apprentices as well as raise the profile of apprentices and apprenticeships. 		
<p>12. The Council should review performance of the Job Junctions and develop proposals to secure future funding, potentially through the LEP, to support the development of the service. This should be reported back to the committee in 12 months.</p> <p>Members ask that the following suggestions are considered :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Put systems in place to monitor performance in terms of job outcomes to evidence the added value of Job Junctions in helping people into work to support future funding bids. Explore New College as a partner in the Job Junctions for delivery, referrals and links with the hard-to-reach project Members felt the Job Junctions could be delivering wider benefits such as social contacts or improvements to mental health. There should be referral mechanisms with wider council services and partners, particularly GPs. The referral mechanisms between FutureFocus / Turnaround and Job Junctions should be strengthened so young people continue to access help and do not fall through the net Develop a customer feedback form to identify any gaps in provision to inform the development of provision and courses. Consider providing a telephone for customer 	<p>Partly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the programme we have processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of the pledges and ultimately determine the opportunities for future funding. The Job Junctions will form part of this review. <p>Each point has been responded to below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Systems are in place to monitor Job Junction outcomes and these are reported monthly. New College do not have any outreach workers / workers that work in the community so this was not explored with them previously. However, we will explore this with New College. We have previously completed an internal marketing campaign to showcase what the Job Box has to offer. We will develop a marketing programme and associated material to raise greater awareness amongst partners and potential referral agencies of the support that the Job Box has to offer. We will also continue to promote to our wider council services. The new data system we are adopting will allow us to hold more detailed client information and will support us in making the relevant links at the relevant times. A customer feedback form is currently in development and will be implemented imminently. Providing a telephone is difficult as the venues used are not all Council owned venues. We will do some work to understand how often the use of a telephone is requested during sessions and if necessary will explore the purchase of mobile phones for this use. 10 new laptops have been ordered to use across the Job Junctions. We will work with TCAT to explore options for relocating the Newport Job Junction. New external signage has been ordered to promote the Job 	<p>January 2016 – in line with timescales for the wider project.</p> <p>February 2015</p> <p>December 2014</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>December 2014 January 2015</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment</p>

<p>use with appropriate safeguards.</p> <p>g) Consider increasing the number of computers in Sutton Hill to 16</p> <p>h) Consider more central venues for the Newport Job Junction including the option of using the library</p> <p>i) Improve internal and external signage</p> <p>j) Consult young people on how they want to be engaged and develop a strategy which supports their greater engagement with the Job Junctions</p> <p>k) Information from the database of young unemployed people should be shared with staff in Job Junctions so they are able to target support.</p> <p>l) Consider the benefits of bringing employers and recruitment agencies into the Job Junctions to deliver sessions about what employers are looking for and to encourage employers to see the Job Junctions as a positive recruitment channel. Consider the potential to develop as an income generation service.</p>	<p>Junctions.</p> <p>j) We will produce a consultation form for Young People we are engaged with to get their feedback. We will also look to further promote the benefits of attending a Job Junction through existing mechanisms such as our Facebook feed as well as our in development “News” feed on the website.</p> <p>k) Job Junction staff already have access to information we hold about young unemployed people.</p> <p>l) Employers and recruitment agencies do attend Job Junctions as and when they have a recruitment need and we work hard to develop community learning courses in line with users needs as well as emerging opportunities with local businesses. This is not something we would be looking at in order to generate an income.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>January 2015</p>	
<p>13. Cabinet to note that the committee will monitor the implementation of the recommendations in this report accepted by Cabinet and delivery of the Pledges at a future meeting.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that monitoring the success of our interventions is critical in order to determine value for money. We already have a framework in place to monitor performance against each of the pledges and we will be providing regular feedback as to the progress of the delivery of the pledges and their outcomes, along with the implementation of these recommendations. We will also look to produce and provide evidence of potential sustainability of each element of the programme going forward. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment</p>