

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET -15 SEPTEMBER 2016****ENTERPRISE TELFORD - SKILLS FOR GROWTH****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT****LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR GILLIAN REYNOLDS****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 In January 2014 Cabinet launched the Job Box which focussed on addressing unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment in the Borough. Following the dramatic reduction in youth unemployment achieved by the Jobs Box after only 12 months, the wider Skills to Employment Programme was launched in September 2015. This extended the focus on tackling youth unemployment to inspiring and preparing young people from school age for the world of work and strengthening engagement with the borough's schools.
- 1.2 The first initiatives under the Programme, Life Ready Work Ready and Job Box have shown significant success. As a result of the LRWR programme the Borough was selected as one of the first areas to benefit from investment from the national Careers & Enterprise Programme which will shortly see 20 local schools and colleges working with a volunteer business advisor drawn from local industry. Advisors will work strategically with the schools senior leadership team to develop a programme of activity tailored to that school's needs and engage children in real employment opportunities. In October the Borough will also host the first TeenTech event in the region. Sponsored by local and national business this will involve 280 local children exploring hands on, opportunities in engineering and other STEM careers. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the achievements to date and Appendix 2 sets out some of the next steps to grow the positive impact.
- 1.3 The Council's Job Box initiative has been recognised by Ofsted as an example of good practice and a number of other Local Authority areas have benefited from best practice visits and are replicating elements of the initiative.
- 1.4 The Council's recently published Economic Development Strategy, Enterprise Telford: Driving Growth and Prosperity, recognises the need to further align the skills of our workforce to business needs and opportunities, now and in the future.
- 1.5 Consultation with businesses across all sectors at a local, regional and national level, highlights that the skills gap is one of the most significant issues affecting business performance, with skills gaps at all levels but particularly at a higher level with businesses across all sectors identifying a shortage of technological, managerial and professional skills.
- 1.6 In response to this clear message from business, the Council will shortly launch a third initiative under the Skills to Employment Programme – Enterprise Telford Skills for Growth. The initiative will create a streamlined, single programme and point of access for businesses

to information and individually tailored packages of support that will help them to address their skills gaps, develop their own workforce growth strategies and to address their management and leadership challenges. Delivery will be through the Telford Growth Hub enabling business to benefit from the wider, tailored support packages provided by the Council Growth Hub Team and partners including Wolverhampton University.

- 1.7 The Skills to Employment Programme links closely to the Council’s Strengthening Families agenda supporting families and young people across the Borough to access the right opportunities for them and prepare for the world of work. Skills for Growth will include a focus on ‘Well Work’ and how addressing health and wellbeing in the workplace can support a more resilient workforce and increase productivity.
- 1.8 The investment that the Council has made in supporting the development of the skills of our local residents directly impacts on the growth and prosperity of our local businesses, enabling business to grow resulting in more job opportunities and career progression for local people. This investment needs to start early to ensure that our young people are leaving education equipped with all the skills they need and that businesses are asking for.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1 That cabinet notes the progress made to date against the Skills to Employment Programmes.
2.2 That Cabinet approves the launch of Enterprise Telford - Skills for Growth and delegates responsibility to the Assistant Director, Business, Development & Employment in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for the development and launch of the initiative

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the health and well being of our communities and address health inequalities • Protect and create jobs as part of a “business supporting, business winning council” • Improve local people’s prospects through education and skills training • Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults • Put our children and young people first
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a borough wide impact supporting people into employment and encouraging businesses to work closely with schools and colleges.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Funding has been committed to the end of the 17/18 financial year as part of the Youth Unemployment Initiative. There are no proposed changes to funding.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes/No	One off funding of £1,304,730 over two years was identified to deliver the Skills to Employment Programme starting in 2014, with an additional one off amount of £500,000 approved from the 14/15 outturn position to

		<p>support unemployment initiatives. The funding enables this programme to continue until January 2018, the Service area will continue to work with partners to seek to develop a sustainable mode.</p> <p>The Skills for Growth initiative will be delivered by current resources in the Growth Hub team within Inward Investment & Business Support. This team have submitted the Marches LEP Growth Hub bid (referenced in 5.3) which has been approved and is awaiting DCLG funding agreements to be issued, there is a separate SMT report for this. No funding is required from this bid to facilitate the Skills for Growth initiative. (AEM 11/08/16).</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes/No	<p>The previous report of January 2014 highlighted the then extension of the Council's statutory duty to provide education and/or training to 16-19 year olds and the statutory provisions available under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to permit the extension of services to 20 to 24 year olds. The Act allows the authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to its statutory functions The Council can therefore continue to rely upon these provisions to further develop the services as proposed, and in particular to schemes covering individuals over 19 years of age. The exercise of the power in respect of the proposed will continue to be subject to express statutory restraints such as the public sector equality duty, procurement and state aid rules.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>The financial viability and effectiveness of activities will continue to be evaluated and adjustments made to the longer term programme. Funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Skills Funding Agency and Government departments will be pursued. We will also explore opportunities for devolution of responsibility for delivery and funding for, aspects of adult skill provision and performance reward grant recognising the success of local solutions tailored to local needs compared with national programmes.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>The proposals will have a borough wide impact with a targeted approach to those wards where there are the highest concentrations of unemployment including Cuckoo Oak, Woodside, Malinslee, Haygate, Brookside and Donnington</p>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. BACKGROUND

Life Ready Work Ready (LRWR) and the Job Box

- 4.1 In January 2014 Cabinet launched the Job Box Programme with the approval of a 2 year £1.3m programme to tackle youth unemployment, pledging to reduce this in line with national levels. The £1.3m package was supported by funding from the public health grant

and recognised that, while the Council had a delivery role, change required stronger partnership working and commitment by other organisations including education providers and business. In September 2015 a further £500k was approved by cabinet to extend the programme to the 31st March 2018 allowing for work with partners and external funders to become established. Through two initiatives, Life Ready Work Ready and Job Box, the Skills to Employment Programme aims to ensure that every 16-24 year old seeking employment or training is fully supported and to decrease our youth unemployment levels in line with national levels by the end of 2015/16. The benefits of the programme are available to all young people and schools and colleges across the Borough.

- 4.2 Twelve months into the Job Box programme youth unemployment had been reduced by more than 50% with all age unemployment levels falling below national levels and as a result in September 2015 the programme was extended to cover a wider age range including those that were under-employed, over 50's, those facing redundancy and those unemployed for over 6 months.
- 4.3 While still well below 2014 levels recent months have seen a slight upward trend in the figures for youth unemployment. The latest figures from the Annual Population Survey (to December 2015) show that Youth Unemployment now stands at 14.6% which remains below the West Midlands average (15.2%) but above the England average (13.8%). Those registered for employment benefits (Job Seekers Allowance and Universal credit) are however at the lowest levels since the launch of Job Box. At June 2016 this figure was 380 young people.
- 4.4 The Skills to Employment Programme is designed to enable activity to be adjusted with the changing needs of the residents and businesses of Telford. Since the rise in youth unemployment the initiatives have been re-focussing on young people, with Job Box Mentors increasing their caseload of under 25 and a refresh of the website.
- 4.5 Appendix 1 provides an update on progress to date against the pledges made in January 2014 and Skills to Employment projects agreed in 2015.

The Skills Challenge

- 4.6 Telford businesses, across all sectors but particularly in the manufacturing sector, need to meet the twin challenges of an ageing workforce and changes in the kinds of skills they need. In common with businesses across the UK, our businesses need to address the current productivity gap, which is in part a result of low workforce skills. Technology is driving change and by 2030 our manufacturers will need fewer manual workers and more people with broader skills across IT, design, data analytics and customer service and there will be increasing competition for workers with higher level technological, managerial and professional skills across all sectors.
- 4.7 These challenges have been highlighted by businesses at a local, regional and national level. Locally through the Telford Business Board, business surveys and focus groups the challenges across the manufacturing, automotive, professional services, construction and care sectors have been identified. Detailed statistics based on local, regional and national data sources were used to summarise the skills issues and prospects of key sectors within the wider Marches local economy and were presented in a Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Sector Analysis in mid 2015.
- 4.8 In Telford we continue to receive the messages from business that those seeking to enter their workforce often lack key employability skills, that young people are not sufficiently

informed and/or inspired by the opportunities offered by the manufacturing and other key sectors such as construction and that we are failing to retain enough graduates locally.

- 4.9 We recognise that the employment and skills system is highly complex with a plethora of different skills and training providers with differing agendas and ongoing changes at a national level e.g. to the apprenticeship system. This is off putting for business to navigate, meaning they may fail to benefit from opportunities to develop and grow their workforce and increase productivity.

5. **INFORMATION**

Enterprise Telford: Skills for Growth

- 5.0 In May 2016 the Council produced its strategy for economic development – Enterprise Telford: Driving Growth and Prosperity. With this strategy the Council made a commitment to improve our skills talent pool and to make it more relevant to business and to deliver a skills brokerage service that will strengthen the links between business and schools and training providers, remove barriers to engagement between businesses and schools and create bespoke solutions for businesses across all sectors to meet business skills and training needs.
- 5.1 The Enterprise Telford Skills for Growth initiative will be delivered through the Growth Hub and will be a one stop shop providing information and introductions to providers and, uniquely, bespoke solutions for business skills and training needs. Skills for Growth will focus on two key strands of activity, informed by local business intelligence:
- i) **Grow Your Own:** this will help businesses to access a range of support that will enable them to effectively manage workforce growth and development and to build the capacity to create a workforce that meets their current and future needs. This strand will include apprenticeship services, finding the right training, working with schools and colleges and understanding future workforce needs. It will also include a recruitment and redundancy service to support businesses during challenging times.
 - ii) **Management and Leadership:** identified by businesses as a key issue, this strand will cover managing people, management for innovation and growth e.g. addressing new markets and technology, well work, leadership skills, growing your own management professionals and high performance working practices.
- 5.2 More detail of the proposed activity under these strands is set out in Appendix 3.
- 5.3 The Skills for Growth initiative will be managed and delivered by the Council's Skills Service Area and the Investment and Business Support Service Growth Hub Team, ensuring delivery is aligned with the wider business support offer available under Enterprise Telford. The Teams will provide signposting and broker links with providers and schools, but will also directly deliver elements of activity.
- 5.4 Funding to deliver elements of activity, specifically growing your own management professionals, leadership and high performance working is being sought through the current European Funding Programme. Telford & Wrekin Council has submitted a Growth Hub bid on behalf of the three local authorities within the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership seeking funding to deliver coaching and mentoring to businesses. That bid has been approved by DCLG and is the subject of a parallel report to Cabinet in September 2016.

- 5.5 Skills for Growth will also link into the councils Well Business programme, which aims to support employers to develop a healthy work environment.
- 5.6 Skills for Growth will sit alongside LRWR and Job Box as part of the Skills to Employment Programme. It will strengthen the links between LRWR and Job Box and business and the Growth Hub. It will also ensure that the delivery of course provision for the unemployed and the promotion of employment/placement opportunities are informed by business through the Telford Business Board Sector Champions and through Growth Hub intelligence. This will help our Strengthening Families programme as we are better able to prepare people for the local jobs available and to increase resilience in the current and future workforce.
- 5.7 The launch of the Skills for Growth initiative and the development of LRWR and the Job Box will be part of the local launch of the Council's business winning and business supporting campaign, Enterprise Telford, which is taking place on the 13th October 2016.
- 5.8 The delivery of Enterprise Telford and the full Skills to Employment programme requires strong partnership with a range of stakeholders including the business community, providers, schools, the University and Marches LEP. The Telford Business Board and Local Strategic Partnership will continue to act as sponsors for the different strands of the programme.

Life Ready Work Ready and Job Box – Next Steps

- 5.9 Appendix 2 introduces the next phase of development for the Life Ready Work Ready and Job Box elements of the Skills to Employment Programme. Job Box focuses on increasing the integration of employment support service offers from other organisations so that the Job Box becomes the main portal for individuals to ALL employment and training support services in the Borough and addressing its sustainability. Over the next few months we will also refresh the Job Box marketing campaign reflecting the need to continue to target and promote the support that is available to local residents, but particularly focussing on NEETS. This will reflect the results from the summer campaign of promotion which includes events, leaflet drops and awareness raising.
- 5.10 As part of LRWR we will continue to maximise opportunities available through the Careers and Enterprise Programme formally linking 20 schools with local business professionals who will work with the senior leadership team and careers leads to bespoke ways for schools and colleges to engage with business and strengthen and improve careers advice and preparedness of young people for local employment opportunities. In parallel we will develop a set of standards to support employers hosting work experience placements to ensure this is a worthwhile experience for students and employers and consistency in the offer and standard of opportunity.
- 5.11 In partnership with local company, Woote, we are also exploring the potential to use Virtual Reality technology in the classroom to raise the profile of apprenticeships in our key sectors.

6 PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Sector Analysis 2015.

Report prepared by Kim Hodgetts, YU Programme Manager/Careers and Enterprise Cordinator and Sue Marston, Skills Service Delivery Manager, Kathy Mulholland, Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager

Appendix 1 Summary of Achievements

The Youth Unemployment Programme included a series of pledges focussed on three aspects of the Council's role - as an employer, as a service providers and as a facilitator & broker. To date the Youth Unemployment and Skills to Employment programme has achieved:

Our role as an 'Employer'

Driven forward our apprenticeship programme:

- The council continues to support work experience placements, and continues to provide 131 apprenticeship opportunities.
- Since the launch of the Apprenticeship Incentive scheme in Autumn 2015 the scheme has supported 12 local businesses to open up an apprenticeship position for the first time and supported 12 young people into an apprenticeship. The scheme provides a grant of between £1000 and £1500 to small businesses with less than 50 employees to take on an apprentice. This is additional to the national government grant.

Our role as a 'Service Provider'

Beaten targets for engagement:

- 352 unemployed people have entered education or employment, with support from our Job Box mentors.
- 750 people have been supported into employment, education or voluntary work through our 16 Job Junctions
- Attendance levels at job junctions overall remain at numbers seen on previous years.

Grown Brand Recognition:

- Our Job Box "one-stop shop" for employers and Job Seekers averages 600 hits per week and continues to grow. The brand and website is growing in recognition with c.3250 likes to our Facebook page compared to 2500 in September 2015.
- Our Job Box website has undergone a redesign to ensure that it is a one stop shop for employment support at all levels.
- Live employer vacancies are now available on the website with employers now able to upload their vacancies onto the site.
- A calendar is now live on the website with job seekers able to see relevant events taking place across the borough to support them into employment.
- We have received delegations from 2 local authorities who are looking to adopt a similar model of practice based on our Job Box Model.
- Ofsted inspectors earlier this year recognised the Job Box as an area of best practice.

Our role as a 'Facilitator & Broker'

Achieved record attendance at Jobs and Skills Fairs:

- Over the past 2 ½ years of the programme we have engaged with a wide range of people including 11500 who have attended our Jobs and Skills Fairs.
- We have successfully delivered 5 major jobs fair events in the borough; the latest event in March 2016 was a partnership event with the British Army focussing on apprenticeships.

First in the Marches LEP to sign up to national Careers and Enterprise Programme:

- As part of our Life Ready Work Ready programme we were one of the first areas to sign up to the national Careers and Enterprise Programme to create greater links between schools and colleges - 15 of our 20 local secondary schools are now signed up to work with us on the programme which is based on examples of good practice taken from around the world. The CEC's Enterprise Advisor Network is at the heart of the programme – the network will comprise volunteer business leader advisors who will engage with schools to support them develop tailored programmes to increase engagement with business, improve careers advice and the employability of those leaving school.

Successful School Engagement:

- We have supported 3 local secondary schools to take part in the Young Enterprise Programme, one of which reached the regional finals on 21st June 2016.
- We have maintained our FutureFocus traded carers advice service in schools and won additional work in both local colleges supporting with careers advice and work experience.
- We created a single client record management system for identifying young people who are aged 16-20 (aged to 24 with a Learner with learning difficulties or disabilities, LLDD) and we can now track their progress into employment and identify early on those at risk of becoming NEET, allowing us to tailor an appropriate programme of activity.

Appendix 2 Next Steps and New Initiatives

The next few months will see further development continuing the theme of the original pledges and developing this through the strength of new partnerships - and the launch of exciting new LRWR and Job Box initiatives:

Growing Business and School Links – New Website Portal Launch

- At the Enterprise Telford event on the 13th October, we will launch a new website portal that will strengthen the links between business and schools reflecting local, regional and national opportunities for joint activity.
- The website will act as a brokerage service, through which businesses can offer their support to schools and schools can seek business engagement in their careers and enterprise programmes.

Promoting Enterprise in Schools – Increasing Business Sponsorship

- Following the success of the 3 schools sponsored in 2015/16 with one of the schools, Holy Trinity, winning the overall Shropshire prize and going on to the regional finals, we are looking at how we can support more schools through business sponsorship, attracted through LRWR, so that more students and schools can benefit going forward.

Promoting Work Readiness – Developing Workplace Skills

- In October 2015 we launched the Navigate system which enables students to develop core workplace skills, aligning the new Ofsted common inspection framework prior to their work experience placements. This has been offered to all schools in the Telford and Shropshire area who trade with our Education Business Links provision.
- Feedback has been positive in terms of its use and what the system offers but schools felt they needed more time to get used to the system so that they can provide greater support to their students. The system will continue to be used for the coming academic year.

Promoting Work Readiness – Improving Work Experience Standards

- In response to comments from business we will be developing a set of work experience standards to support our employers when hosting a work experience placement. This will ensure that it is a worthwhile experience for students and for the employer and that there is a consistent standard across the borough.

Improving Careers and Enterprise Guidance

- We will develop a profile of local labour market information in an accessible, attractive format that can be used in schools as part of their careers guidance provision.
- We are exploring the use of Virtual Reality technology with a local company to raise the profile of apprenticeships in our key sectors in a dynamic format that will appeal to young people and reflect the tech changes in schools and business.
- We will continue to develop the Careers and Enterprise Company Advisor Network with the aim of our Co-ordinator working with all of our 20 secondary schools and FE colleges in Telford.
- We are strengthening our work to prevent NEETS by moving resources to deal with early drop out in the first term of post 16 learning and revisiting our data and tracking processes with a strong focus on 16 and 17 year olds in line with new statutory reporting changes.

Spotlight on STEM – Careers Events

- In October 2016 we will be hosting Teen Tech at Enginuity. Teen Tech will be an opportunity for 280 Telford students to explore a wide variety of STEM careers from local and national employers through a series of hands on activities. The event is being sponsored by local businesses.
- The local chambers of commerce have also secured funding through the Careers and Enterprise Company to deliver a series of careers events to schools. We will be working with them on the delivery of these events targeting schools that have the most difficult transitions post 16 and also from the evidence gathered through the Enterprise Adviser model.

Focus on Youth Unemployment

- Since the previous cabinet report in September 2015 we have seen a slight increase in our Youth Unemployment figures. Nationally there have also been increases in Youth Unemployment. However coupled with this we have seen a decrease in unemployment as a whole. The increase in youth unemployment indicates that this is no short term fix. We will re launch our offer and engagement activities to those over 18 from our known NEET cohort.
- The Job Box model allows for delivery to be adjusted to respond to changes in local need.
With funding from the original programme available until March 2017 the focus will be on targeting intervention including addressing NEETS and considering how initiatives can be continued ongoing we will be looking to external funding sources and opportunities to maintain activity such as those presented by the Careers and Enterprise Company. We are currently preparing a mentoring bid in conjunction with Shropshire Council.

Job Junctions & Mentors

- With the recent increase in the youth unemployment the Job Box mentors will be shifting their focus back to the 20 – 24 year olds in line with current service demands.
- Job Junctions have been maintained in all areas of high local unemployment these will be reviewed ongoing to ensure they remain viable and aligned to the local unemployment picture.

Events

- Following our successful events in 2014/15 we will seek sponsorship to deliver more jobs and careers related events. As with our September 2016 events focussing on the retail and care sectors, we will continue to target key employment sectors and those that struggle to recruit.

External Investment & Income Generation

- We will continue to seek business sponsorship and external investment to support activities, particularly for sector events
- We will be looking at opportunities to generate income through the website, including advertising and sponsorship of web pages
- We will continue to look for external funding sources and opportunities to support our skills to employment programme.
- We will also continue to work closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company and the funding programmes they commission. We will work to ensure that these programmes are linked to the needs in the area and will also develop and build relationships with organisations that are awarded funding to deliver the programmes locally.