

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 1st September 2014 at 6.30pm in Meeting Room 3, Darby House, Telford, TF3 4JA.

PRESENT: Cllrs. K. Guy, J. Pinter, R. Scammell, C. Turley and Co-optees S. Ali, A. Atkinson and S. Rayner.

Attending: Prof. Ian Oakes, Higher Education champion on the Marches and Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton; Cllr. S. Davies, Cabinet Member Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills; K. Callis, Assistant Director Development, Business and Employment; S. Marston, Skill Service Delivery Manager; S. Jones, Scrutiny Officer; F. Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

CYPSC-1 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 29th April 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CYPSC-2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. G. Green, A. Mackenzie and co-optees R. Aveley.

CYPSC-3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-4 THE MARCHES LEP SKILLS PLAN

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members that this was the final meeting in the review of Youth Unemployment before the committee agreed its recommendations.

He welcomed Professor Ian Oakes to the meeting. Prof. Oakes had been invited as the Higher Education Champion on the Marches LEP Board, and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, to present the Marches LEP 2013-2015 Skills Plan with particular reference to Youth Unemployment in Telford and Wrekin.

Prof. Oakes gave a presentation which highlighted the following points:

- The background to the establishment and operation of the Skills Board as a sub-group of the Marches LEP Board and the process for formulating and funding

the development of the Skills Plan. Businesses, HE, FE and LAs are represented on the Skills Board; Sue Marston represents Telford & Wrekin. The Skills Plan is published on the website and is a live document reviewed and updated every 12 months.

- A number of evidence bases had been considered and tested to understand the issues. Evidence showed the nature of employment was changing from operational roles to professional/higher skilled roles and the forecast was for an increased demand for degree level qualifications and decreased need for unqualified workers while the area profile showed there were insufficient people with high qualifications and too many with low qualifications.
- The Marches has a very large number of small businesses - micro and self-employed – and overall Marches businesses train a lower proportion of staff than the national average. Skills gaps had been identified in defence, security, advanced manufacturing and tourism.
- The Skills Plan sets out 4 priorities and sub-actions to address issues identified:
 - Delivering the skills required for business growth
This included developing higher qualifications, improving take-up of training, plugging skills gaps, addressing issues with leadership and management.
 - Supporting enterprise and access to jobs
This included improving transport links to improve access to employment.
 - Realising the potential of young people
Key actions were tackling NEETs, increasing the number of apprenticeships and developing more work experience opportunities for young people.
 - Developing a shared responsibility for skills through effective partnerships
This was about developing a better structure to link the demand side (businesses) with the supply side (providers).
- The Skills Plan was finalised as the last round of EU structural funding was coming to an end and the next round will take effect from 2015. The principle was to put the co-ordination and communication structures in place ready to tackle the issues and to use the Skills Plan to inform the preparation of the ESIF (European Structural and Investment Fund) document by setting out the business case for how £97m notional ERDF and ESF funding would be allocated. EU funds will start to flow from 2015 and the Plan means the LEP is well prepared for how and where the money will be spent.
- The Skills Plan also influenced the Marches Strategic Economic Plan which supported the bid for Local Growth Fund – which Telford and Wrekin did well from - by identifying where money would be spent, so it has already been used to influence strategic priorities to attract funding.
- The Plan covers the Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin authority areas. The skills needs are different in each area.
- In Telford and Wrekin, all age unemployment had peaked in April 2009 but had fallen to 2,600 and % of working age population unemployment had fallen from 4.6% in April 2009 to 2.4% in July 2014 which was good news although the rate was still marginally higher than the national average. There were proportionately more male claimants than women.
- In Telford and Wrekin the youth (18-24) claimant count rate between 2010 and 2014 had peaked in February 2012 at 1,675 and had halved to 775 in July 2014 which was good although the % rate was still higher than the England average.

Men made up 64% of the cohort, and women 36%. The decline was most rapid over the last 12 months, but the rate of decline was slower for young people unemployed for 6 months or more so there were proportionately more long-term unemployed young people in July 2014 than there were in July 2011.

- NEETs were a real problem in Telford and Wrekin, with the rate substantially higher than the regional average and above the rates in the other Marches authority areas. The Telford and Wrekin NEET (16-18) population was estimated to have risen from 420 to 490 between 2012 and 2013.
- In March 2014 proportionately fewer 16-17 year olds in Telford and Wrekin were engaged in education or training than in England as a whole, but more were undertaking work-based learning outside an apprenticeship than the England average.
- In terms of employing young people, 20% of businesses in Telford and Wrekin had an apprentice in 2013; 25% said they would be interested in getting involved but there are a lot of small businesses who don't have the capacity to spend time working out how to provide an apprenticeship opportunity.
- 16 year old school leavers were less attractive first time entrants than 17 or 18 year old school or college leavers or graduates because they are less well prepared for work and this was reflected in the higher number of 18+ apprenticeships than 16+.
- In conclusion, there were 4 key challenges for Telford and Wrekin:
 - Longer term unemployed entering or re-entering the labour market
 - Two thirds of the long-term unemployed are young men unemployed 6 months or more
 - Proportionately fewer young people in full-time education, training or apprenticeships
 - 16 year olds are less well prepared for work.
- These issues will form part of the Skills Plan going forward. The LEP would be in receipt of substantial structural funds by late 2014-early 2015 and would work with the various partners to work up the actions in the Skills Action Plan in preparation.

Following the presentation members asked a number of questions:

- The Chair checked whether all the figures used were from the claimant count and Prof. Oakes confirmed they were from the month of August.
- Cllr. Turley asked about the implications of an "Out" vote in the eventuality of a referendum on EU membership. Prof. Oakes said if it happened it would be implemented over a long enough period of time such that it would not affect the forthcoming round of structural funding.
- The Chair asked whether the Skill Plan identified the need for a more direct connection between businesses and FE providers and whether the connections were strong enough. Prof. Oakes said there were connections but they were probably not strong enough. They wanted to avoid the scenario of training people for jobs that don't exist and part of the Plan is to develop a mechanism between businesses and FE providers so a pipeline can be developed for the future. For example JLR had invested heavily in i54 and expected a supply of

young people with the right skills but they needed to influence schools and colleges to develop the skills in advance and the model is not developed well enough at present. Businesses are keen to engage with schools, but the links are not good enough yet, and similarly schools want to engage with businesses to understand them and their needs. This is something the LEP will look into and there are a number of actions in the Action Plan.

- Mr. Austin said he was alarmed by the fact that the rate of people with a degree qualification in the LEP area was only half the national rate and felt this went to an issue with the aspirations of young people. He asked what the data was for Telford and Wrekin and whether they had thought about how to improve the aspirations of young people. Prof. Oakes said he did not have Telford and Wrekin figures to hand, but they had done initial work on identifying skills needs and one of the issues was that companies were importing people with higher skills to work in Telford during the week who went home at the weekend – the issue was attracting and retaining graduates who wanted to live in the borough. Graduates look for a certain lifestyle – social opportunities, entertainment and suitable housing – and at that time Telford did not have this sort of offer. Prof. Oakes said he was pleased that Telford & Wrekin has done so much to develop the town centre and housing offer and this would start to address the issue. Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire and Herefordshire are predominantly rural areas so they tend to attract older graduates in their 30s and 40s who want to settle down, but young graduates in their 20s want more of a city lifestyle. There needs to be a coherent strategy to ensure HE students study at home and are retained into their 20s and 30s.
- Cllr. Turley said he thought student loan repayments would mitigate against students affording houses and Prof. Oakes said that graduates do not start repaying student loans until they are earning over the threshold when they would impact on their ability to fund other elements of their lifestyle.
- The Chair asked whether the Cabinet member or officers present had any questions or wished to comment on any points. The Skills Manager said they had not waited until the next round of ESF funding but had already started a lot of initiatives to build up the evidence base to be able to tap into EU funding when it comes through. The Assistant Director concurred with Prof. Oakes comments about the need to develop labour market intelligence and brokerage. She said they already have high level intelligence but need to drill down to understand business needs better especially the small micro companies and there is more to do to look at trends. Cllr. Davies said that the Council shares all its information and data with the colleges but agreed there is an issue with the lead-in time. TCAT and New College had worked as quickly as possible for JLR but bureaucracy had got in the way. The Skills Manager said that the monthly economic profile was also shared with schools.
- The Chair asked Prof. Oakes if he felt there were any useful recommendations that scrutiny could make. Prof. Oakes said he felt that what worked best is having specific interventions to address local issues rather than having a generalist approach. He recognised that authorities want to work with local

providers and not with organisations outside the region and they have been demonstrating that when there is a specific issue and targeted intervention by a local provider, they have more success.

There were no further questions and the Chair thanked Prof. Oakes for attending the meeting and for his very informative presentation. Prof. Oakes placed on record his thanks to colleagues representing Telford & Wrekin on the Skills Board for their work and support and he left the meeting.

CYPSC-5 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT UPDATE

The Chair reminded members that the committee had requested a report on the latest youth unemployment figures and the costs and outcomes of the Job Junctions and Jobs Fair. The report had been circulated as Appendix C and he invited the Cabinet member and officers to highlight the key points.

Cllr. Davies made some opening remarks:

- He said it was important not to get lost in the numbers and to remember that every one is an individual person with individual needs.
- For the first time there was a Cabinet member and Assistant Director leading on employment and the figures showed that the work had paid dividends. One of the first things he had done was to move the skills team from the education service to economic development to give them a business focus and link the skills agenda to business needs.
- He thanked the scrutiny members for the report on the visits to the Job Junctions and reminded members that they were not the only answer and that other interventions were being developed for young people.

The Skills Manager then presented the key points in the report:

- The overall trend in unemployment was downwards. It was pleasing that the rate was falling more quickly in Telford and Wrekin than in other authority areas and more quickly than the regional and national averages. The latest figures were provided in the report.
- Over 4,000 people had attended the Jobs Fair which all exceeded expectations and there was very positive feedback. The sheer volume made it difficult to capture all the outcomes but of 171 vacancies promoted, 69 were known to have been filled from the Jobs Fair. Other outcomes were still being collected from employers who had attended the fair to promote their vacancies and who were continuing to recruit – Nandos was an example. Some young people had accessed education or training with the providers but data had not been collected. The fair had cost £19k which equated to a net cost of £287 per successful candidate. Lessons had been learnt for future event. Employers had said they

would pay to exhibit next year. Next year there would be a 2 day event, one day focussing on jobs and the other on careers information with Partnership for Careers involving the schools. There would be a competition to encourage young people to gather information about a range of career opportunities and there would be free transport so that no young people were disadvantaged. The Assistant Director said this tied into what Prof. Oakes had said about young people needing to choose careers that there are jobs in. There would also be a smaller recruitment event over 2 days in the shopping centre to promote Christmas retail jobs which could be a good first step onto the career ladder.

There was then a discussion about the Job Junctions:

- Cllr. Davies asked if the members would like to present the findings from the Job Junction visits before moving onto that section of the report. The Chair said that he had visited Woodside and had been very impressed. The staff were very helpful and there had been excellent feedback from other members about staff. Feedback on the venues was good. Some minor issues had been flagged up with tracking and monitoring, signage and there was some feedback from staff that the IT was letting them down but overall members were highly impressed and agreed that the Job Junctions were doing a good job.
- Cllr. Davies said that the number of Job Junction locations had doubled in a short space of time. He receives a monthly report from the Team Leader which flags up any issues. The Job Junctions were a big success because they were in non-traditional places but this had led to some IT problems which they had reacted to tackle quickly and had put contingencies in place in case of problems on the day.
- The Skills Manager said attendance was growing. They had attracted funding from some of the Parish Councils to do extra work. Some of the sessions were run by TCAT and they were trying to iron out any inconsistencies between services but they had less influence over the TCAT sessions. Some of the venues were quieter than others but this would be monitored and reviewed over time so that resources would be targeted at areas of need and demand.
- The Assistant Director said the attendance numbers were impressive and the number and frequency of visits was growing. The re-branding had been successful and it had helped to bring everything under the Job Box banner.
- Cllr. Davies said the Job Junctions had been doing amazing work but had been under the radar and lacking investment so they had invested in them and the investment had been doubled with partner contributions and the feedback was amazing.
- Mr. Atkinson said he thought it was important to look at things from the point of view of the young person because if they are confused they can drop out so we need to make the routes clearer and he congratulated the team on their work.

- Cllr. Scammell suggested that they should consider getting businesses to attend Job Junctions to meet people on the spot and follow through with them. Cllr. Davies said work-based training was already delivered in the Job Junctions. For example in Brookside they had run pre-recruitment training for a cleaning company looking for staff at all levels. The Job Junction staff had identified people who would be suitable and they had been trained up and had a guaranteed interview at the end of the training. 100% of the vacancies had been filled by people on the course. Some people use the Job Junctions to up-skill and they are not quite ready to speak to an employer - feedback is that the Job Junctions are good “incubators” which is welcome - so it could be an issue for customers if employers attended sessions but Cllr. Davies said he took the point. The Skills Manager said they were getting much better at working with employers and bringing things to a local level. If there were problems they would unpick them to see how it could be addressed and she gave an example of how they had worked with a local employer to make a small change to their recruitment process which meant people were able to pass the initial assessment.
- Mr. Atkinson asked if there was an App which may appeal to younger people more and Cllr. Davies said they were developing one. They also had a presence on Facebook and Twitter and traffic on social media and the website was increasing. The Skills Manager said the Job Junctions were not originally set up for young people so they had not promoted them specifically at young people. They had bought into Facebook to increase penetration into the younger age group but it was difficult to get them to come into a service and FutureFocus had found this difficult.
- The Chair asked if the Job Junctions were all branded under the Job Box brand now and Cllr. Davies said the important thing was for them to get on with the job and not to worry too much about the branding but they had been brought under the Job Box umbrella.

The Skills Manager continued the presentation:

- Job Box was the new brand for provision to support young people. Information about the other initiatives to support young people had been included in the report because the Job Junctions could not be considered in isolation.
- FutureFocus is the school careers service for age 13-19. There were about 6,000 young people in the borough. The NEETs are the most difficult group to engage. NEETs are a very diverse group and does not stay static – even if the numbers seem static young people come in and out all the time so for example recently 15 had left the group but another 14 had joined. They are young people with very individual needs. Mr. Atkinson agreed he did not like the term NEET because each young person has a different story – he wanted to know if FutureFocus staff have a caseload of young people who they telephone. The Skills Manager said since First Point had opened in Southwater, FutureFocus arrange to meet young people there and this had made a difference in the number of people turning up for appointments and was proving a successful venue.

- The Job Box Mentors were a new service for NEETs 20-24 to pick up the older age group without other targeted support. The Mentors had received a huge amount of training in guidance and teaching and their caseloads were now 2/3 full and growing quickly. They had already helped 24 people into jobs so were seeing good success. T-shirts had proved successful in making them recognisable so people were approaching them, including employers. They take referrals from Jobcentre Plus because some people need more than the Jobcentre provides.
- Turnaround is run by Telford & Wrekin staff funded with ESF funds through a consortium with other local authorities. Turnaround supports NEETs aged 14-18 (or to 25 with learning disabilities) and provides courses to re-engage them. Funding is awarded depending on how the young person progresses. Some of the courses are run internally and some are contracted out. The internal courses make a surplus which is being developed to enable the courses to run weekly and to offer places to care leavers or other vulnerable groups.
- The EAST team support people with learning disabilities - there are a lot on ESA - to help them into suitable employment for example jobs with repetitive tasks which may be appropriate.
- Education Business Links is a traded service for schools to find and set up work experience placements for pupils. They charge employers pay for the necessary work-place checks. The service operated across Shropshire and has built up a database of employers to work with.

The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and their excellent work and there was further discussion on a number of points:

- The Chair said when had visited Woodside Job Junction a member of staff had said the Job Box Mentors' caseload was under capacity and he asked whether they could be used to help track Job Junction customers while their caseload built up. The Skills Manager said that business support staff do the tracking work and the Job Box Mentors need to concentrate on their caseloads and doing their job. Visitors to the Job Junctions have to be monitored to draw down the programme funding,
- Cllr. Davies made the point that there had been a lot of migration from JSA to ESA and a lot of the data used was based on the JSA claimant count which had shown an improvement and it was important not to be fooled by the statistics that things were getting better.
- Cllr. Davies said that the £1.4m investment made by the Council into tackling youth unemployment would come to an end, and as the government continues to cut local authority funding they needed to make the case to government that the investment was saving the government money and that the Council was not benefitting from any national funding. Jobcentre Plus and other contracted

providers benefit from DWP funding but the Council does not. He also said some of the Youth Unemployment pledges were slipping but they would all be delivered as soon as possible and if they weren't he would come back to the committee to explain why.

The Chair invited closing comments from the Cabinet member and officers and the Skills Manager said that members should read the case studies highlighted in the report because they give a flavour of the different kind of issues they are dealing with and the successes they have had. She emphasised the point that one size does not fit all and it is really important to understand what goes on under the data. The Assistant Director said the data has to be based on the number of visits and not the number of individuals as this is what is needed to plan resources, but the important thing was to look at the detail underneath the data.

The Chair thanked Cllr. Davies and the officers again and said he looked forward to presenting the committee's findings and recommendations to them and they left the meeting.

The Chair updated members about a meeting he had had with Paul Hinkins who chaired the Telford Business Board and was on the LEP Board and a number of other business boards and a Governor of TCAT. Mr Hinkins had provided a business view of the youth unemployment issues. He had raised issues about the connection between businesses and FE colleges, public sector agencies are poor at identifying and understanding business needs, the lack of awareness by SMEs and micro businesses about grants available to support training opportunities such as apprenticeships and the need for a brokerage service and these points could inform the scrutiny recommendations.

CYPSC-6 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

The Chair reminded members that the Dashboard had been circulated for information for members to raise any questions. Mr. Rayner said he had noted that the usage of agency social workers and the vacancy rate for social workers were behind target. He wanted to know why and whether it means the strategies put in place were not working and whether they were being reviewed.

It was agreed that a written response would be requested from the service and circulated to members for consideration.

CYPSC-7 CHAIR'S UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair said that the meeting concluded the review of Youth Unemployment and the committee now needed to consider the evidence and formulate recommendations. A date was agreed for a working group meeting to start drafting recommendations.

The Chair advised members that the secondment of the Scrutiny Officer from 22nd September until Jun would affect scrutiny resources and may impact on the agreed

schedule of work. The next meeting was scheduled for November to look at School Improvement and scope the review of health improvements for children and young people but there may be some slippage. The Scrutiny Group Specialist informed members that the Scrutiny management Board would be deciding the priorities across the committees at the meeting on 19th September and if members had strong feelings about what should be prioritised they should make this clear to the chair. Mr. Rayner said a priority was the work on school improvement and that he would like the unvalidated results presented in November. The Scrutiny Officer assured Mr. Rayner that the AD had confirmed the unvalidated results could be reported to the committee in November along with the other reports requested at or after the meeting on 29th April on School Improvement.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

Chairman:.....

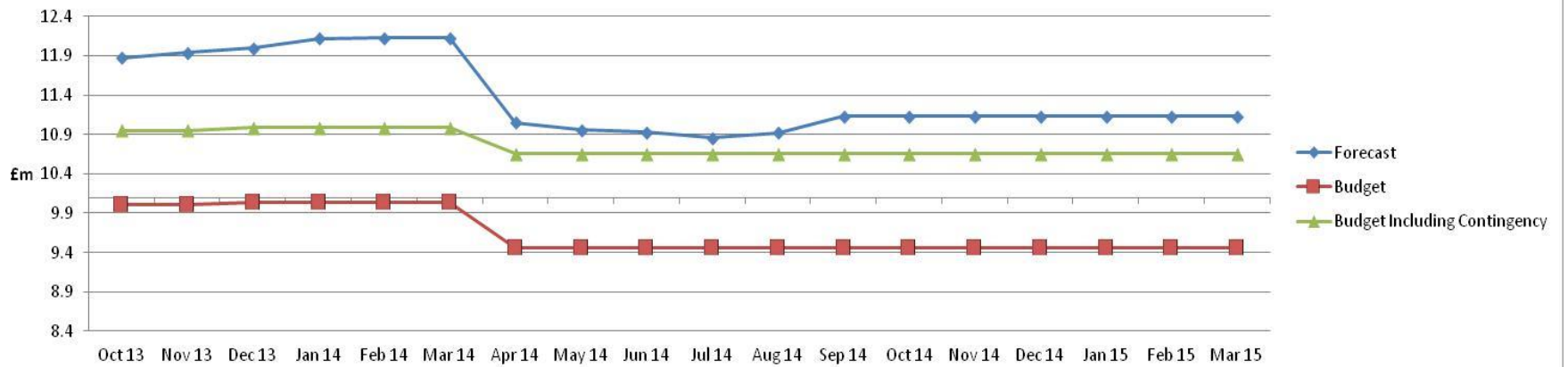
Date:.....

Children in Care Monthly Performance Dashboard

SEPTEMBER 2014

NB 2013/14 data provisional and subject to revision in line with statutory returns

Total Placement Costs



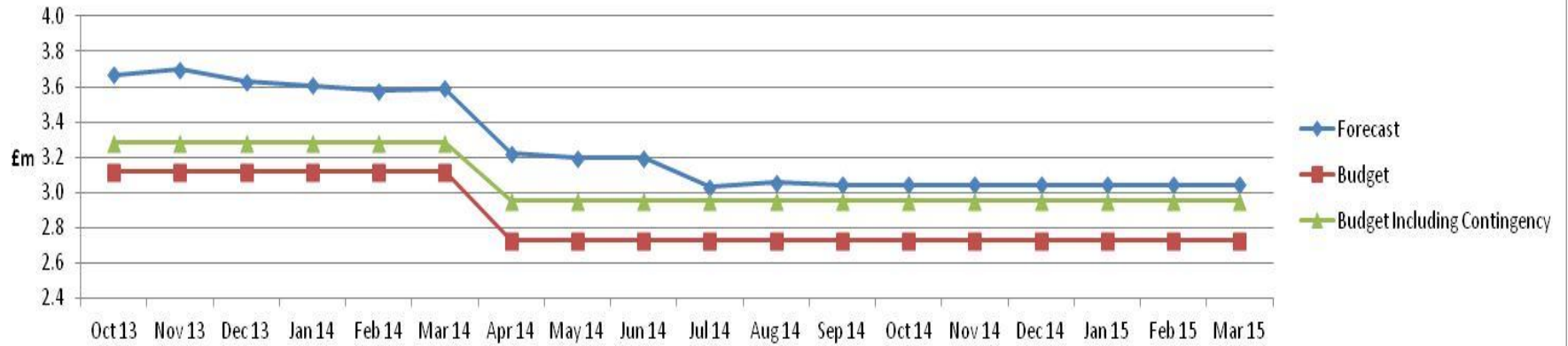
The increase in total placements forecast for September relates to Residential placements.

Residential



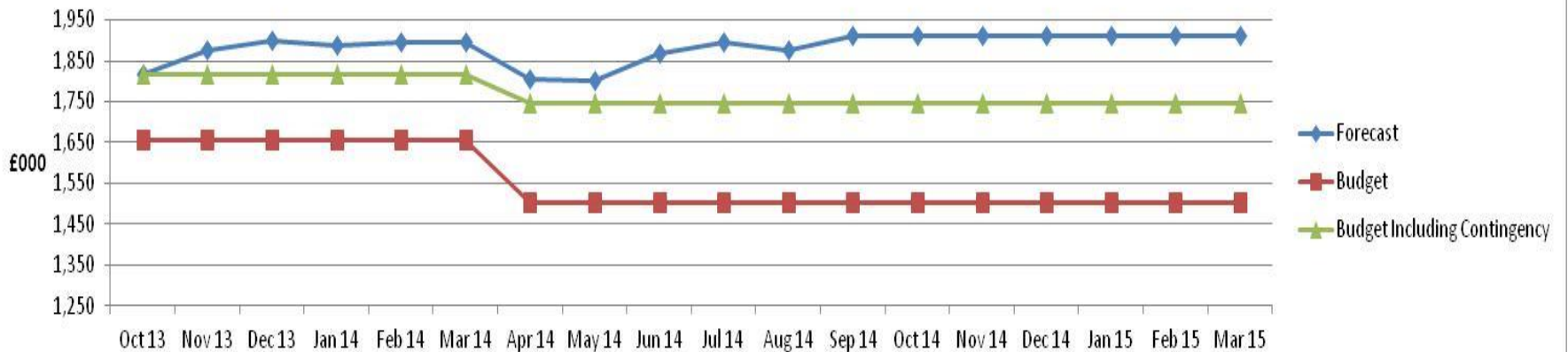
The increase on Residential placements forecast relates to one new admission and extension of some current placements.

External Fostering



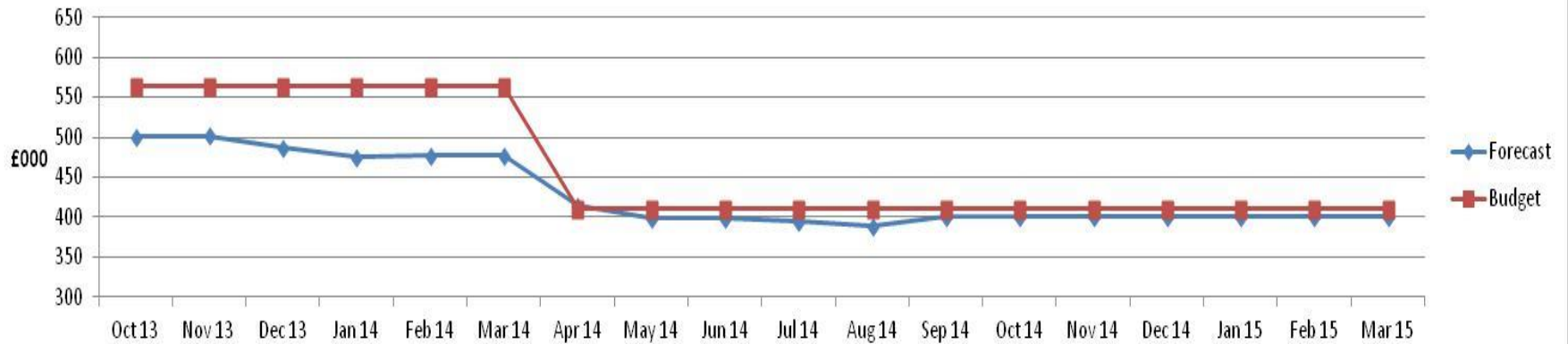
No change from last month's projection which shows the forecast exceeding the budget including contingency

Internal Fostering



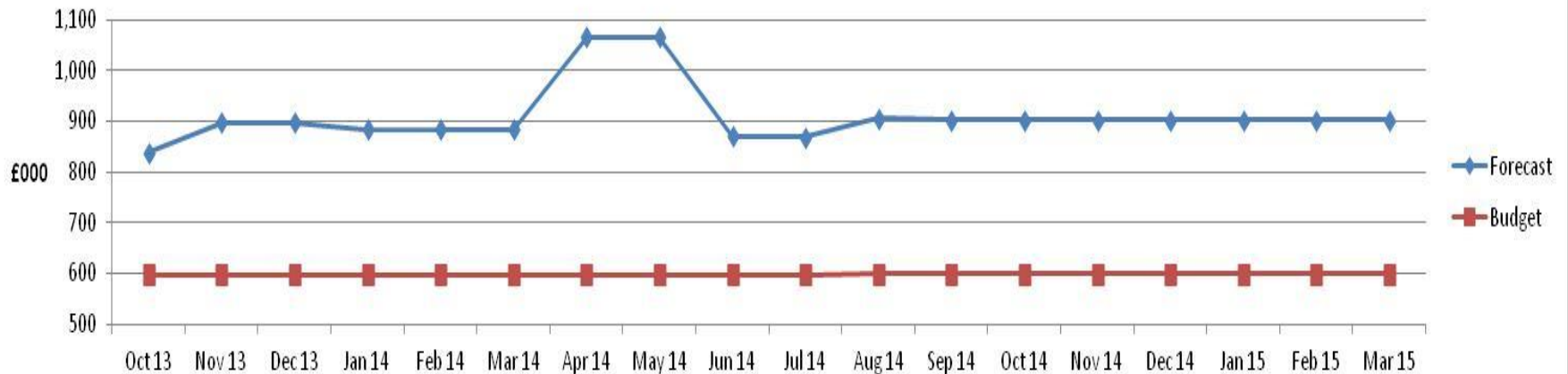
An increase in the Internal fostering forecast relates to 6 new admissions to care in the last month.

Relative Carers



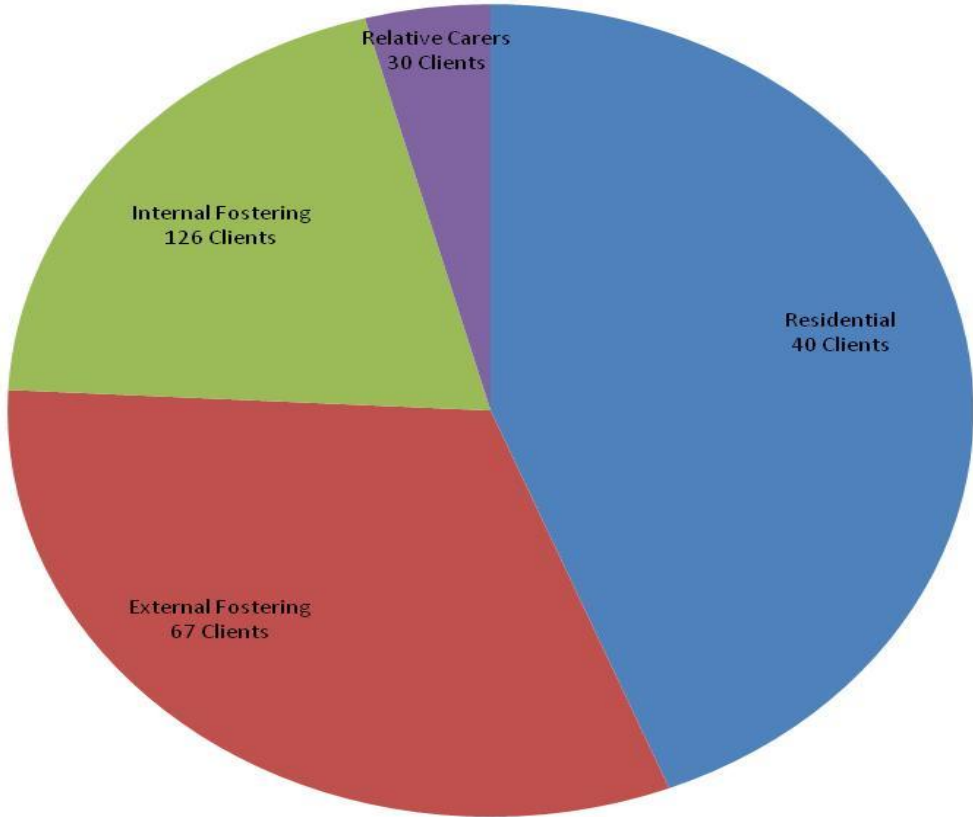
Slight decrease on last month's forecast underspend

Careleavers



The projected outturn (which is forecast on a prudent basis) still currently identifies an overspend against budget.

Placement Cost Analysis – Year 2014/2015



The cost of residential placements represents almost half of the budget for 15% percentage of the placements which incur costs (18 children placed for adoption do not incur costs)

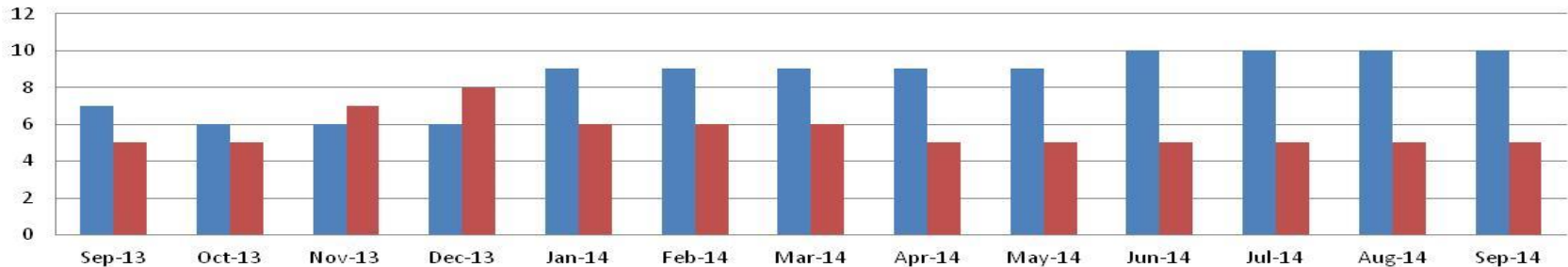
VACANCY AND RECRUITMENT INFORMATION 30/9/14

Team	Establishment				Vacancies				Agency Social Worker			Notice Given (Resignation, Retirement, Maternity & Adoption leave)				Job Offer Accepted				Long Term Sick > 3 Weeks				Maternity Leave or secondment				NQS in post	
	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW	TM	SSW	SW	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW	TM	A SWP	SSW	SW		SW
Emergency Duty Team	1.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Children in Care Team	2.0	1.0	4.0	10.6	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.2	1.0	3.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Family & Friends Fostering	1.0	0.5	1.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Mainstream Fostering Team	1.0	0.5	1.0	5.8	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
(East) ACM Team	1.0	0.0	2.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.0
(North) ACM Team	1.0	1.0	2.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.0
(South) ACM Team	1.0	0.0	2.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.0
(West) ACM Team	1.0	0.0	2.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
Sfgding Duty Team/ Family Connect	1	0	1	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0.0	
Community Social Work Team	1.0	1.0	2.6	4.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.0
DCT - Inclusion and support	2.0		0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
TOTAL	13	4	22	58.4	1	1.5	7	6.2	1	5	5	0	0	0	3	1	1	2	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	10	

There are already 8 SWs due to come into post. Recruitment day on 1st October resulted in 9 more job offers. This will enable us to reduce our reliance on agency workers

Improve the recruitment and retention of SW staff to reduce the numbers of agency SWs (Objective 1)

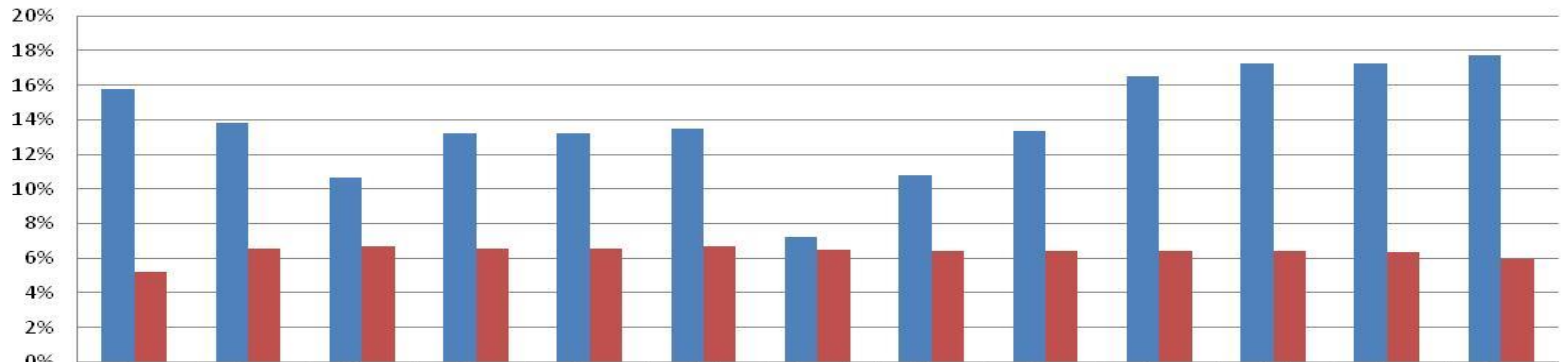
Agency usage - Social Workers



	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14
Number	7	6	6	6	9	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10
Target	5	5	7	8	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5

Numbers of Agency staff have increased due to impact of demand for SW involvement and bring Leaving Care function into the CSSS

Vacancy rates for Social Workers - actual to target



	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Actual vacancy rate	16%	14%	11%	13%	13%	13%	7%	11%	13%	16%	17%	17%	18%
Target vacancy rate	5%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%

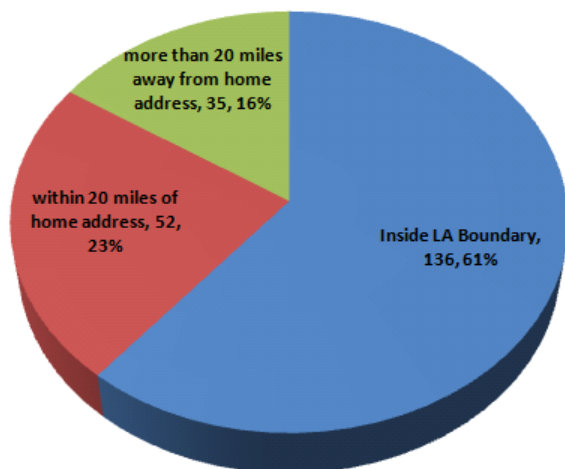
Vacancy rates have increased; however there are 8 SW/SSW due to come into post in the next few weeks, and 9 more who have been offered jobs

Improve the recruitment and retention of SW staff to reduce the numbers of agency SWs (Objective 1)

Number of Children in Care / Supportive Accommodation at Month End, by Placement Type

	Placed for Adoption	Placement with relative or friend	Local Authority Carer	Agency Carer	Residential Placements	Placed with own parents	Independent living	YOI / Prison	Grand Total	
Aug-13	13	33	128	90	46	9	4	0	323	
Sep-13	14	33	130	84	45	12	3	0	321	
Oct-13	18	35	118	86	45	11	3	0	316	
Nov-13	19	35	123	84	46	9	3	0	319	
Dec-13	21	33	118	76	42	9	4	2	305	
Jan-14	23	32	119	72	44	11	4	0	305	
Feb-14	24	32	120	71	42	12	5	0	306	
Mar-14	24	31	120	71	40	13	8	1	308	
Apr-14	21	30	122	73	40	14	7	1	308	
May-14	22	29	121	73	38	13	6	2	304	
Jun-14	21	29	127	69	36	13	5	1	301	
Jul-14	19	27	121	68	40	15	6	0	296	
Aug-14	18	28	123	68	41	16	6	0	300	
Sep-14	18	30	126	67	40	13	7	0	301	
12mth High	24	35	127	86	46	16	8	2	319	
12 mth Low	18	27	118	67	36	9	3	0	296	
12mth Average	21	31	122	73	41	12	5	1	306	
Change from previous year	n %	+4 +28.6%	-3 -9.1%	-4 -3.1%	-17 -20.2%	-5 -11.1%	+1 +8.3%	+4 +133.3%	0 n/a	-20 -6.2%

Children placed in foster care by distance from home - 30th September 2014



The rise in independent living placements (above) is a reflection of low numbers producing large percentage increases and changes to recording.

73% (219/300) of our looked after children are placed in foster care, including relative/friend carers. This is a little below the all England outturn at 2012/13 year end (75%) and below the 'in year' peak of 77.9% reported in both June and July of 2013, from which the percentage has generally since been falling.

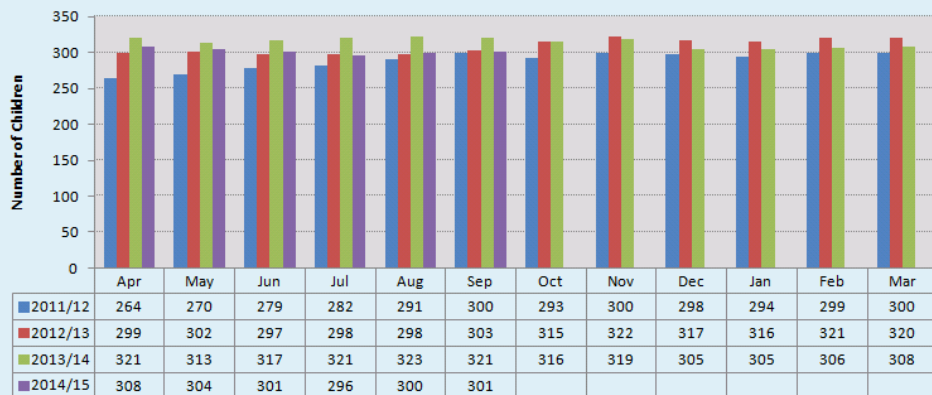
As at 31st August 2014, 123 children were placed with Telford & Wrekin foster carers, some 41%. This is above the year end figure for 2013/14 of 40% (115/320) and only slightly below the 'in-year' peak of 40.5% (130/321 – September 2013).

The pie chart to the left shows the children placed in foster care (including LA foster care, agency and relative/friend placements) by distance from their home address. 85% (187/219) of children in foster care are placed within 20 miles of their home address. 61% (134/219) of these children are placed within T&W boundary. This compares favourably with all England average of 47% being within council boundary. 15% (32/217) are placed over 20 miles away from their home address.

18 Children are currently placed for adoption.

Number of Children in Care at month end: 30 April 2011 to 30 September 2014

(Please note: these figures were accurate at the time of reporting, however may vary slightly due to changes in recording)



New Children In Care Episodes by Age Group at Start and by percentage of new CIC episodes

Age Group	01-Apr-13 to 31-Mar-14	As % of new CIC	01-Apr-14 to 30-Sep-14	As % of new CIC	Year end Forecast based on YTD
Under 1 year	37	33.0%	19	▲ 34.5%	n/a
1-4 years	23	20.5%	12	▲ 21.8%	n/a
5-9 years	13	11.6%	7	▲ 12.7%	n/a
10-15 years	35	31.3%	12	▼ 21.8%	n/a
16+ years	4	3.6%	5	▲ 9.1%	n/a
Total	112		55		n/a

NB Table refers to episodes of care - some children in each year's figures appear multiple times & across age groups.

The current rolling 12 month average of the number of children in care is 306, a figure which has been falling month-on-month since December 2013.

Period of care end reason	Cessations in the period April 2013 to March 2014							Cessations in the period 1st April 2014 to 30th September 2014						
	Under 1 Year	1-4 Years	5-9 Years	10-15 Years	16+ Years	Grand Total	% of all cessations	Under 1 Year	1-4 Years	5-9 Years	10-15 Years	16+ Years	Grand Total	% of all cessations
E11 - Adopted – application unopposed	1	2	0	0	0	3	2.4%	0	5	1	0	0	6	▲ 9.7%
E12 - Adopted, consent dispensed with	1	15	1	0	0	17	13.8%	1	10	0	0	0	11	▲ 17.7%
E4 - Returned home to live with parents (no order)	4	10	6	18	2	40	32.5%	4	0	2	5	4	15	▼ 24.2%
E41 - Returned home - Residence order	2	2	2	1	0	7	5.7%	2	1	0	0	0	3	▼ 4.8%
E43 - Special guardianship order made to former foster carers	0	3	0	2	0	5	4.1%	0	1	0	1	0	2	▼ 3.2%
E44 - Special guardianship order made to carers other than former foster carers	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.8%	0	1	0	0	0	1	▲ 1.6%
E5 - Independent arrangement with formalised support	0	0	0	0	29	29	23.6%	0	1	1	1	7	10	▼ 16.1%
E6 - Independent arrangement (no formalised support)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	2	2	▲ 3.2%
E7 - Transferred to adult social services	0	0	0	0	6	6	4.9%	0	0	0	0	3	3	▼ 4.8%
E8 - CLA ceased for any other reason	3	3	1	2	2	11	8.9%	1	2	0	0	5	8	▲ 12.9%
E9 - Sentenced to custody	0	0	0	2	2	4	3.3%	0	0	0	0	1	1	▼ 1.6%
Grand Total	11	36	10	25	41	123		8	21	4	7	22	62	

Shaded bars in Totals row & column are proportional to values & provide a visual indicator; arrows indicate direction of travel from previous year.

Reduce the numbers of children in care (Objective 3)

Unit costs – 30/09/2014

Placement Type	Children in Care at 31.03.14	Weekly Unit Cost 31.03.14	Children in Care at 31.07.14	Weekly Unit Cost 31.07.14	Children in Care at 31.08.14	Weekly Unit Cost 31.08.14	Children in Care at 30.09.14	Weekly Unit Cost 30.09.14
Placed for Adoption	25	N/A	19	N/A	18	N/A	18	N/A
Relative/Friend Carer	31	£418	27	£378	28	£381	28	£377
LA Carer	120	£445	121	£430	123	£435	123	£432
Agency Foster Carer	71	£825	68	£852	68	£851	68	£852
Residential Placements	41	£2,649	40	£2,472	41	£2,466	41	£2,449
Placed with Parents	13	N/A	15	N/A	16	N/A	16	N/A
Supportive Lodgings	8	N/A	6	N/A	6	N/A	6	N/A
Other Placement	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A
TOTAL =	309	£868	296	£795	300	£803	300	£804
Supported Accommodation (Careleavers)	N/A	N/A	16	£674	16	£669	21	£656

- Unit costs for these both Internal Fostering and Relative Carers include an apportionment for overheads.
- Overheads relate to both the Social work Fostering team, management and other associated support costs.
- Residential Placement Unit cost reduction from 13/14 to 14/15 relates to a full year effect of the saving arising from the Queensway residential block and spot bed provision.
- The Care Leavers service transferred from Adult Services on the 1st April 2014. Supported Accommodation is the largest area of placement spend in this service and where there is most opportunity to deliver efficiencies.
- The Total weekly unit cost is calculated by dividing the full year forecast (including above overheads) for all placements by the total number of weeks forecast for all placements.

Reduce costs through better procurement and service redesign (Objective 4)

Performance Area	Target	Sep-14	Benchmarking Data	Status and Comments	2013/14 (provisional)	2012/13	Good performance direction
% of LAC aged 10-16 in foster placement or placed for adoption	Maintain percentage	73.5% (83/113)	No benchmarking data available	3 of the children not in foster care in this cohort are placed with their own parents, 3 within a residential accommodation setting, with 5 in residential schools, 1 in a secure unit and the remaining 18 children placed in homes or hostels.	75.2% (85/113)	81.6% (93/114)	Higher = Better
Number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of all children in LA care for 6 months or more as at month end	10%	6.54% (17/260)	WMG Q3 Avg – 7.0%	As at 30th September 2014 there were 18 children placed for adoption. A further 3 children since 1st April have been subject of an SGO.	9.9%	10%	Higher =
				At the end of March 2013 this measure was 10% where 27 children had been adopted in year (including SGOs).	(27/273)	(27/268)	Better
Number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of all cessations of LA care in the year to date.		27.4% 17/62	England Average 2013/14 - 17% SN Average 2013/14 - 20%	The reported performance for the half-year of 27.4% represents a notable increase from the year-end performance for 2013/14 of 17% (though this was in line with the England average).	17% 20/120	24% 25/95	Higher = Better
Adoptions within best interest timescales	100%	100% (17/17)	All England Avg: 2010/11 – 74.0% SN Avg 2010/11 - 69% WMG Q4 12/13 Avg- 60.9%	Timescales from decision making through to placing children for adoption and being adopted are very positive in T&W.	95% (19/20) 20 children had been adopted as at 31/03/2014	100% (23/23)	Higher = Better
Increase in numbers of children placed with internal carers	20 additional children placed with internal mainstream	3 additional children since 31st March 2014	Not Available	As at the end of September 2014 there were 126 children placed with internal foster carers, representing 42% of all CIC at that point and an additional 6 children since 31st March 2014. This percentage represents the highest recent proportion of the total CIC cohort placed with internal foster carers.	5 (increase from 115 to 120)	14 (rise to 115 from 101)	Higher = Better
Reduction in numbers of children placed with external foster carers	10 fewer placed with external carers (see comment)	4 fewer children since 31st March 2014	Not Available	As at 30th September 2014 there were 67 children placed with external carers. The year end figure of 71 for 2013/14 represented a decrease of almost 23% of the previous year end figure. (Note: Target is not a mirror image of increase in internal carers due to step downs from residential. Placement changes as a whole would need to be looked at in order to appreciate the change in placement types - this is highlighted within the weekly finance report)	Decrease of 21 (from 92 to 71)	Increase of 2 (from 90 to 92)	Lower = better
% of children with 3 placements plus in the year (this includes repeat episodes of care)	10%	2% (6/300) Rolling Year 01/10/13 – 30/09/14 6.3% (19/301)	All England Avg: 2012/13 – 16% SN Avg: 2012/13 – 17.9% WMG Avg 2013/14 – not	So far in the year commencing 1st April 2014 there have been 6 children with 3 placements or more in this period. The rolling 12 month figure to 30th September 2014 is 6.3%, with 19 of the cohort of 301 CIC having 3 or more placements.	8.76% (27/308) Rolling Year 01/09/12 – 31/08/13 9.28% (30/323)	10.30% (33/321)	Lower = Better
Under 16 years of age and CIC for 2½ years in current placement for minimum 2+ years	75%	67.90% (89/131)	All England Avg: 2012/13 – 70% SN Avg: 2012/13 - 70.4% WMG 2013/14 Avg – not known	As at the end of September 2014, 89 of the 131 young people aged under 16 who had been in care for 2.5 years had been in their most recent placement for a minimum of 2 years (67.9%). This is lower than the same point last year when 76.3% (87/114) of children had been in the same placement for 2 years.	74.80%	79%	Higher = Better

Safeguarding and Early Help - Cost Improvement Plan 14/15
Position As At - 30/9/2014

A number of targets were set and included within the Council Budget Strategy for 14/15. The table below shows progress against these targets.									
No.	Description	Target No.	Forecast (Actual) No.	Variation on No.	Target Saving £k	Achieved £k	Variation on £k	Increase in demand £k	Comments
Objective 1 - Recruitment & Retention									
1	Reduce no. of agency social workers (April 14 - Sept 14)	5	10	5					At the end of September 2014 there were 10 Agency SWs; The numbers have not reduced as hoped due to high demand for SW involvement and failure by some applicants to take up posts offered, and transfer in of services for care leavers in January. At that time there were 4 Agency workers across CIC and leaving care; this has been reduced to 3 and should reduce to 1 by the end of November. Telford is participating in regional work to cap Agency costs and improve quality
	Reduce no. of agency social workers (Oct 14 - Mar 15)	0	0	0	95	0	-95		The level of demand for SW services remains high; this is being tackled in a number of ways both Strategic and Operational; presentation to Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB) which achieved sign up to a change in partner behaviour at the frontline to avoid involvement of a SW where this is not necessary; Partnership meetings of senior managers to interrogate the data and identify and act on themes will commence in November; Children in Need Panels commenced in October to get cases closed or transferred to non- SW lead professionals in a more timely way; development of arrangements to monitor "step down" cases to ensure that non SW Lead Professional remains active. New model of recruitment (assessment day) has proved very successful, although it is still very difficult to recruit experienced staff. Accordingly the strategy to "grow our own" continues to be strengthened in a number of ways eg more capacity to take final placement students, support for newly qualified staff including more Advanced SWs practitioner capacity - fast track pilot for SSWs, ensuring parity of salaries with other councils, introduction of accredited Systemic Practice training. In addition the council has recently introduced/retained a number of initiatives which will aid recruitment and retention (car leasing salary sacrifice, electronic devices to facilitate mobile working and continued payment of the HCPC registration fee for SWs). 9 appointments were made on the 1st of October and there are a number from July taking up post in the next few weeks. Mobile working will also improve efficiency which helps with capacity The forecast for the spend on permanent staffing vacancies across social work teams mostly offsets the non achievement of the Cost Improvement plan regarding use of Agency SWs
Objective 2 - Placement Strategy									
2	Reduce no. in residential placement (End of March 14)	45	40	-5					The role of the Edge of Care Manager is proving very successful in preventing residential admissions for reasons of behaviour. There has only been 3 new admissions (excluding remands) and only one transfer from external fostering for this reason since December 2013. One of the YP newly admitted moved to the contract carer and went home after a few weeks. One was planned as (successful) respite weeks placement.
	Reduce no. in residential placement (November 14)	42	40	-2	550	484	-66		Until this month the budget position forecasted that the savings would be met, however this is a volatile budget line due to the level of unit cost and the impact that any full year effect for any new admission would have at this stage of the financial year - recent reduction in savings is due to new admission
	Reduce no. in residential placement (March 15)	40	40	0					
3	Actual no. in External Fostering placement (End of April 14)	71	73	2					Achieving a reduction in external fostering will get progressively harder and the target for this year has reduced from 15 to 10 to reflect this. Good progress to date - 3 fewer carers and £209K saving achieved
	Reduce no. in External Fostering placement (November 14)	65	68	3	285	196	-89		The Family Placements team continue to achieve good enquiry to assessment to approval conversion rates for internal foster carers, and have arrangements in place to identify and address any avoidable delays in the process The Placement Stability Panel is being used to good effect by some teams - activity is underway to make sure referrals are consistently made. Work has begun to proactively identify and support children who have been fixed term excluded from school as we know this is a risk factor for admission to care and foster care breakdowns
	Reduce no. in External Fostering placement (March 15)	61	61	0					
4	Reduce unit cost for Care Leavers	£620	£669	£49	110	0	-110		The budget (and overspend) for care leavers transferred to Safeguarding this financial year. The minimum intention for this year is to get the spend back to budget, and the current forecast outturn is £95k less than 2013-14 Activity is underway to "join things up better" eg add to the elements relating to care leavers in the Cost improvement plan, and apply the same robust methodology to forecasting and tracking progress of individual care plans through RAMP. Since beginning of financial year there have been monthly reductions in the forecast but not yet at level to reduce unit cost. The recent restructure identified a post with lead responsibility for ensuring young people are better prepared for adulthood from an early age as possible and supporting the development of appropriate care packages ("stage not age") The Staying Put Policy has been approved - this will improve support for care leavers with minimal additional costs this financial year
5	Contract Carer (Apr 14 - Sep 14)				11.5	9	-3		The Contract Carer is subject to Annual Review just like other foster carers and this and an analysis of use has identified the types of needs best met by the carer.
	Contract Carer (Oct 14 - Mar 15)	639 nights	441 nights based on current usage	(198) days	12	0	-12		When she is not fully occupied by the YPs she is caring for she offers support to other carers - this activity is not included in the savings figures
Objective 3 - Review Approach/Strategy for Reducing CiC									
6	Parenting Assessments - reduce use of external providers, in particular residential				106	97	-9		External Parenting Assessments require the approval of RAMP or the AD CSSS (emergencies) Work is underway to develop the market in this area including being part of a current tender our for preferred provider list for non- accommodation services This is a prudent estimate of savings as costs beyond xmas are less predictable.
7	Reduce transport contact costs and implement Fostering to Adopt (target of 2 children)				18	-26	-44		Family Placement service have started a review of transport costs. Changing Futures Project is up and running, it is very early days but there have already been a number of referrals of parents who have previously been judged unable to parent a previous child, and there is very promising anecdotal evidence about benefits in terms of problem reduction and delayed pregnancies Arrangements are in place for consideration of Foster to Adopt, both during the assessment and approval of adopters and at Legal Planning Meetings involving subsequent siblings
Objective 4. Utilise Commissioning Approach									
8	Queensway Block & spot bed utilisation - Target Saving 13/14 for 75% Occupancy of all bed nights available (2,920 nights = 100%)	2,190	2,190	-	35	35	0		Achieved but could alter if there are unexpected changes in individual childrens care plans
9	Care Leavers - further review the CiC strategy to ensure appropriate and sufficient placement mix	£620	£669	£49	50	0	-50		CiC placement strategy is being reviewed
10	Commission residential care & support for Disabled children, as an alternative to residential educational placements				35	0	-35		Options for local provision are being considered with local providers Needs analysis is due to commence via consideration of the circumstances of children with the most complex needs
	Total Saving by 31/3/15				1,307	795	-512		
	figures as at July 2014				1,307	807	-500		

Report for Scrutiny – 4th November 2014

Key stage 1 - Summary of provisional results 2014

- In 2014, 89% of Telford and Wrekin pupils achieved **Level 2 or above** in **Reading**, an improvement of 1 percentage point on 2013's performance (88%). The gap between T&W and the National Average has remained the same as the previous year, at 1%pt below England (90%) and the same as West Midlands (89%).
- In 2014 the percentage of the borough's pupils achieving **Level 2 or above** in **Writing** was 87%, an improvement of 1%pt on 2013's performance (86%). The gap between the Borough and both the Regional and National rates (86%) for all pupils has remained the same as the previous year, at 1%pt above.
- In 2014, the percentage of the borough's pupils achieving **Level 2 or above** in **Maths** was 92%, an improvement of 1%pt from the year before. The regional and National rates also improved by 1%pt, placing Telford and Wrekin at the same as National and regional for the second year running.
- In 2014, 77% of the **Boroughs year 1 pupils** reached the required standard of **Phonic** decoding. An improvement of 10%pts from 2013 (67%). This places Telford & Wrekin at 2%pts above West Midlands (75%) and 3%pts above the national average of 74%. This is a marked improvement on 2013 when Telford & Wrekin were 3%pts below regional and 2%pts below National. The regional and national improvement was 5%pts. (England 69% to 74%, National 70% to 75%)
- In 2014, 89% of the **Boroughs year 2 pupils** had reached the required standard of **Phonic** decoding. An improvement of 5%pts from 2013. This places Telford & Wrekin level with the regional average and 1%pt above the national average (88%) This is an improvement on 2013 when Telford & Wrekin were 2%pts below regional and 1%pt below National. The regional and national improvement was 3%pts.

Key Stage 2 – Summary of provisional results 2014

Attainment: Reading, Writing and Mathematics Combined

	Level 4+ Reading, Writing and Maths combined			Level 4B+ in Reading, Writing and Maths			Level 5+ in Reading, Writing and Maths		
	England	T&W	Gap to National	England	T&W	Gap to National	England	T&W	Gap to National
2013	76	74	-2	63	59	-4	21	21	0
2014	78	78	0	67	66	-1	23	22	-1

- The percentage of pupils achieving **Level 4** or above in Reading, Writing and Maths is 78%, an improvement of 4%pts from 2013. This is the same as England (78%) and 2%pts above West Midlands (76%). The gap to national has improved from 2%pts below in 2012 (82%) and 2013 (83%) to the same as England for 2014. This is the first time that T&W has matched England for this measure and the first it has exceeded the Regional percentage.
- The percentage of pupils achieving a **Level 4B** or above in Reading, Writing and Maths is 66%, an improvement of 7%pts from the year before. This is above regional (64%) and below England (67%).
Telford and Wrekin have closed the gap to national from 4%pts below in 2013 to 1%pt below in 2014. The gap to regional has closed from 2%pts below to 1%pt above in the same time period.
- The percentage of pupils achieving **Level 5** or above in Reading, Writing and Maths is 22%, this is the same as West Midlands, and 1%pt below England (23%). Telford & Wrekin have improved by 1%pt in the last year, whilst England and West Midlands have improved by 2%pts in the same period.

Progress: Percentage of students making 2 levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2

	Maths (Test)			Reading (Test)			Writing (Teacher Assessment)		
	England	T&W	Gap to National	England	T&W	Gap to National	England	T&W	Gap to National
2013	88	85	-3	88	87	-1	92	92	0
2014	89	88	-1	91	91	0	93	92	-1

- The percentage of pupils making at least 2 levels of progress in **Reading** (91%) has increased by 4%pts from last year's 87%. This is the same as England and 1%pt above West Midlands (90%).
T&W have closed the gap to National for two years in a row, improving from 2%pts below in 2012 and now matches the National rate for Reading.
- The percentage of pupils making 2 levels progress in **Writing** (92%) remained the same as the year before. Both West Midlands and England improved by 1%pt from the year before to 93%, leaving Telford & Wrekin 1%pt below national and regional.
- The percentage of pupils making 2 levels progress in **Mathematics** (88%) has improved by 3%pts from last year's 85%. Telford & Wrekin remain 1%pt below England (89) and the same as West Midlands (88%).
The gap to National has improved from 3%pts below National last year, to 1%pt below for 2014.

Key Stage 4 – Summary of Provisional Results 2014

It should be noted that all Key Stage 4 data is from an early Statistical First Release and does not take account of the data checking exercise in schools and the outcomes of remarks with exam boards. Early indicators suggest that some schools will have a significant improvement in outcomes as a result of whole cohorts of student exams being recalled for remarks.

Attainment: 5 A*-C including English and Mathematics

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14	
Telford and Wrekin	↔	47.7	↔	55.9	↔	57.9	↔	61.3	↔	58.6	↔	51.2
West Midlands	↔	48.5	↔	54.2	↔	57.4	↔	58.8	↔	59.9	↔	54.2
England (state-funded sector)	↔	50.9	↔	55.3	↔	58.4	↔	59.1	↔	60.8	↔	56.1

Red, Amber and Green shadings indicate which of the three comparators had the highest percentage achieving the measure. Green is highest through to red which is lowest. Arrows indicate the direction of travel from the previous years' performance.

Figures for 2013/14 are provisional, all other figures are final. Figures for 2013/14 are based on the new 2014 methodology applied to 2013/14 data.

Ofsted Categories

The following tables compare the percentage of pupils in schools in Telford and Wrekin in each Ofsted category with other authorities in the West Midlands and with National averages. Data accurate for 31st October 2014.

Rank	Area	G or O ▼	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
1	Solihull	87.5%	31.3%	56.2%	8.4%	4.1%
2	Herefordshire	86%	14.1%	71.9%	10.1%	3.9%
3	Worcestershire	85.6%	20.4%	65.3%	14.4%	0%
4	Telford & Wrekin	84%	14.4%	69.6%	15.1%	0.9%
5	Warwickshire	81.5%	26.2%	55.3%	16.4%	2%
6	Shropshire	81.3%	9.6%	71.6%	16.8%	2%
7	England	79.4%	21.2%	58.2%	17.7%	2.9%
8	Birmingham	77.4%	25.6%	51.9%	16.6%	6%
9	West Midlands	76.5%	18.7%	57.8%	19.5%	4%
10	Staffordshire	75.5%	10.8%	64.7%	23.6%	0.9%
11	Wolverhampton	72.7%	11.8%	61%	21.2%	6.1%
12	Sandwell	71.1%	18.4%	52.7%	27.2%	1.7%

Rank	Area	G or O ▼	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
13	Dudley	70.7%	12.8%	57.9%	23.1%	6.3%
14	Coventry	68.6%	17.6%	51%	26.8%	4.5%
15	Walsall	65.8%	19.7%	46.1%	21.5%	12.7%
16	Stoke-on-Trent	63.5%	11.8%	51.7%	29.3%	7.2%

Monitoring the recommendations of the Scrutiny Report on the Provision of Primary School Places

- a) **Consultation on School Catchment numbers:** The consultation exercise on primary school attendance areas in north central Telford was conducted during the last academic year and has now been completed. The solution which was agreed satisfied all parties and addressed the problem of having too many primary aged pupils living in the Hadley area. This is likely to be revisited at a later date in the light of planned housing growth in the area. However the School Organisation Team always consults widely on proposed attendance area changes and tries to find solutions that are acceptable to the vast majority of those affected.
- b) **Admission Appeal Meetings:** Following the Scrutiny Committee enquiry about the attendance of Head teachers at admission appeal meetings there have been a number of discussions with officers and Head teachers to ascertain whether this would be feasible for us to adopt. In order to gain a full sense of the practice across the West Midlands the Admissions Team has conducted some research through the regional admission forum. Whilst there is no preferred pattern it seems that there is a wide degree of variance across local authorities with some inviting Heads to attend and some not doing so.

There is a further meeting to discuss admission appeal hearings with the legal section of the council next week. Colleagues from the legal section act as clerk to the appeals and oversee the procedure used.

- c) **Academies Protocol:** The discussions to develop a protocol for Academies is ongoing and as an initial step the School Improvement Service have revisited the Securing School Improvement Protocol to take account of the Local Authority's statutory responsibility for standards across all schools in the Borough. The draft suggestions will be subject to further consultation with Head teachers and the relevant professional associations.

Jim Collins
Assistant Director: Education and Corporate Parenting

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Report

Review of Youth Unemployment

November 2014

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Chair's Foreword

Everyone we have spoken to during this review has recognised that youth unemployment is a priority in Telford and Wrekin and we have received evidence of the work each of the organisations is doing to reduce the rate of youth unemployment. It can be easy during a Scrutiny Review to focus on the negative findings and in the latter stages of the review during discussions with some partner organisations I have become aware of some of the joint working that is taking place across sectors. I recognise that this report perhaps does not fully set out the relationships that do already exist between our FE colleges and local employers e.g. that TCAT is working with Reed recruitment agency and New College has a full time Recruitment Officer to ensure that students are given the opportunity to apply for jobs with local employers. The opening of the Automotive Engineering Centre at TCAT has been supported by many local employers and is a great example of what can be achieved.

However, despite these examples of good practice – all the organisations we spoke to recognised that further work is required and that there is a need to ensure that this is co-ordinated and funded at a strategic level. The Committee recognised the commitment made by the Council and the leadership role it is developing as demonstrated through the Job Junction Scheme and Jobs Fair. There is an opportunity for the Council's role to be further developed through a longer term skills strategy and to ensure that organisations are working together and sharing information to meet the needs of all the young people in the Borough and our local employers. We have also made some practical suggestions about how to help young people access the Job Junctions and to ensure that the Council can demonstrate these outcomes.

I want to thank everyone who has taken part in this review. Many of the organisations who have taken part in this review are not required by law to participate in Local Government Scrutiny but I have been pleased that everyone we asked to provide information and attend meetings did so - and in a spirit of partnership working. This demonstrates the unique role that Scrutiny can have in both holding the Council Executive to account and bringing organisations together to find solutions. I also want to thank the apprentices who came to speak to us – they demonstrated a commitment and enthusiasm for their work and are a credit to themselves and the Council. Finally I would like to recognise the work of the previous chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, Cllr. Mike Ion, who instigated this work with the Committee last year.

Cllr. Kevin Guy

Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Introduction

The rise in the level of youth unemployment precipitated by the financial crisis and ensuing recession became a matter of concern in the UK and across Europe.

Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee were concerned that the rate of youth unemployment in Telford and Wrekin was so high and that it was significantly higher than national and regional average rates. In November 2013 the rate in Telford and Wrekin was 32.1% compared to 24.6% regionally and 20.8% nationally, equating to around 3,700 young people.

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 on prosperity of the borough as a whole.

The committee decided to review what provision was available to support young people into work focussing on three key lines of enquiry:

1. To investigate what barriers exist locally for young people (aged 16-24) to getting 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 Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, senior Council officers, Principals and officers of FE providers, Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme prime contractors and provider, the Marches LEP Skills Champion, Chair of the 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 to hear the views of staff and customers.

The committee would like to thank all those who took the time to meet with them or to support the review.

The review took place between November 2013 and September 2014. In May 2014 changes were made to the membership of the committee at Annual Council. Cllr. Mike Ion stepped down as Chair and was Cllr. Kevin Guy was appointed as Chair, and Cllr. Scammell was appointed to replace Cllr. Hope.

Overview and main findings

The committee considered a wealth of information presented during the review.

A presentation to the committee in November 2013 set the context for the review and in January 2014 the Cabinet report Tackling Youth Unemployment – Our Commitment set out additional background information and a number of Pledges and investment priorities which were adopted as the cornerstone of the Council's youth unemployment strategy. In September 2014 the committee received an update on the trend in youth unemployment and progress towards delivery of the Pledges.

The update showed that between November 2013 and March 2014, youth unemployment in the borough had fallen from 32.1% to 26.4%. Comparable regional and national figures were 24.6% to 22.3% and 20.8% to 19.3% respectively – in other words, youth unemployment was falling at a faster rate in Telford and Wrekin than the regional or national average rate.

Key elements of the committee's work were looking at FE provision, DWP's work programme and the effectiveness of Job Junctions, the Jobs Fair and other Council funded provision.

The committee concluded that the direction of travel is good in terms of the Council's response to the issue and the rate of reduction of youth unemployment in the borough. Members commended the great strides that have been taken, in particular:

- The designation of Executive and officer responsibility for skills and employment
- The decision to move the Skills Team from education services to business support to enable closer alignment of skills provision with business needs
- The adoption of the Pledges and the additional £1.3m investment
- The Council's engagement with the Marches LEP Skills Board and Skills Plan so Telford & Wrekin is prepared to bid for funding allocations flowing through the LEP
- The excellent work of officers in delivering the Jobs Fair, the Job Junctions, the Job Box Mentors and the development of a coherent offering under the Job Box brand to streamline and improve access to the range of support services.

Although the downward trajectory of youth unemployment is encouraging there is a long way to go: 26.4% youth unemployment means there are around 3,200 individual young people aged 16-24 not in education, training or employment.

The following section of this report sets out in detail the issues identified by the review and a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the issues. The committee accepts that a huge amount of good work has already gone into, and continues in, tackling youth unemployment and the recommendations in this report are intended to build on this work to strengthen the position further.

Key issues, conclusions and recommendations

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
Developing the role of the Council in providing a strategic lead in driving the skills agenda with partners across the borough and the need to align employment opportunities and future skills needs with FE provision		
<p>Key to tackling youth unemployment and growing the local economy is to ensure the skills that employers need are available in the local labour market and at the right time.</p> <p>The committee agreed that the Council should take a strategic lead in driving the skills agenda forward across the borough and that the Council is well placed to lead on skills identification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council acknowledged it has a duty to lead in driving forward the strategy to tackle youth unemployment • Cabinet agreed a number of Pledges for the Council in tackling youth unemployment in its role as Facilitator and Broker • College Principals felt the Council had a role to play as strategic lead, including the development of a skills plan to project business needs, co-ordinating the alignment of resources and data sharing • An employer view was that public sector agencies need to be better at identifying and understanding business needs • A written submission from one of DWP's prime Work Programme contractors stated that "Serco's approach is achieved by working alongside strategic and delivery partners, including local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, employers, community regeneration groups, sector skills councils and 	<p>1.The Council should continue to develop its strategic role in leading the skills agenda across the borough.</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"> • Provide detailed skills needs projections for businesses in the borough linked to employment opportunities in other LEP areas to inform skills planning • Show how connections between businesses and the education sector (schools, FE and HE) will be further developed and strengthened, including exploring sponsorship opportunities. • 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>3.Cabinet should work with the LEP to access funding opportunities to support the</p>

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
	<p>Government departments to ensure that the Work Programme complements, rather than duplicates, existing employment and training provision.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative figures for the Work Programme in Telford and Wrekin to March 2014 showed 770 JSA claimants aged 18-24 had been referred to the work programme and there had been 222 job outcomes. 	<p>development and delivery of the strategy.</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 be better joined-up.</p>
The need to align employment opportunities and future skills needs with FE provision		
<p>The committee was impressed by the quality of provision offered by both colleges and agreed the borough was fortunate to be served by 2 providers with vision and ambition. Both were going beyond their remit as FE providers in terms of engaging hard-to-reach young people.</p> <p>Members acknowledged there were arguments on both sides of the merger argument but felt that with new Principals at both colleges now is an opportune time for the colleges to reconsider coming together to look at provision across the borough in a more strategic and holistic way. This could be as a federated body with shared governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marches LEP Skills Plan identified “delivering skills required for business growth” and “developing shared responsibility for skills through effective partnerships” as priorities. The LEP Skills Board Chair acknowledged connections between businesses and FE could be stronger and that future skills demands need to be fed through to FE providers in a timely way. • A view from an employer that there needs to be better connections between business and FE • Members visited the two FE colleges (TCAT and New College) and spoke to the Principals of both. Members noted that 	<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>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>

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
<p>and managements structures rather than a merger. Blackburn could provide a model.</p>	<p>college provision is concentrated in the north of the borough and that there could be the potential for duplication of resources or provision. Members heard there had been discussions about a possible FE merger which had stalled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of the college Principals on the question of a potential merger. One view was that competition is good, and as long as providers focus on the students, having separate colleges is not an impediment to securing better opportunities for young people. The other view was that one strategic provider could serve the interests of the borough better but it would need to be a genuine merger and not a take-over of one institution by another. 	
<p>The need to identify who and where young unemployed people are so that help can be targeted towards them</p>		
<p>The committee welcomed the pro-active approach of the Council in identifying people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data showed there are a significant number of young people unemployed but 	<p>7.The Strategy should make proposals for on-going data-sharing mechanisms with</p>

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
<p>to target for support but were concerned that the database will quickly become out of date and a more permanent data sharing solution needs to be found</p>	<p>not claiming benefits who will not show up on the claimant count</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a statutory duty to track young people up to age 19 and officers were confident this happens. There is no statutory duty to track post-19 except adults with learning disabilities aged 20-24 and there is a risk that young people fall from sight • Data protection precludes DWP sharing personal details about individual claimants meaning the Council cannot proactively target support. Through a secondment from DWP to the Council, Members heard in November 2013 that a database of c.300 claimants aged 18-24 had been built up. The approach was to nudge those closest to the labour market into work and to reach those furthest away from the labour market by knocking on doors and re-engaging them through an approach based on their needs. • Jobcentre Plus could not add a tick-box to their forms for clients to give permission for their details to be shared with the Council without a change of national policy • New College funds a project for a provider 	<p>reference to Jobcentre Plus and FE colleges to identify hard-to-reach young people and improve destination tracking.</p>

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
	<p>to work in local communities and knock on doors to reach disengaged young people and TCAT employ 5 workers whose role is to engage with communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in Job Junctions said they needed to know who and where unemployed young people are to target them for help. 	
The need to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities and to support small companies to offer apprenticeships		
<p>The committee supports the development of the Apprenticeship Hub and a brokerage service for local employers to promote apprenticeships and reduce the administrative burden on businesses.</p> <p>One member raised questions about the quality standards of apprenticeships which were not within the scope of this review but the committee agreed was a valid issue to explore.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 4,700 SMEs in the borough – if half offered an apprenticeship it could wipe out youth unemployment • Approximately 20% of businesses in Telford and Wrekin had offered an apprenticeship in 2013 • The LEP Skills Plan identified approximately 25% of businesses would be interested in offering a government supported traineeship program where a young person gained periods of work experience • The Chair of the Telford Business Board said there is a lack of awareness in the private sector about grants and support available to help them offer apprenticeships. • The Chair of the Telford Business Board 	<p>8.The Council should prioritise the development of the Apprenticeship Hub as a Pledge and this should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assigning a named point of contact to each business b) Proactively targeting of the 25% of businesses identified by the LEP as interested but not having time to get involved c) Promote the Hub through business networks including the Telford Business Board, Telford Business Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce d) Note that the Scrutiny Committee would support a bid for funding through the LEP to support this work.

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
	<p>raised concerns about providers' lack of understanding about business needs which results in a mismatch between the skills needed by businesses offering work placements and the skills of the young person placed with the company. A poor experience can deter further involvement.</p>	<p>9.The Council should monitor and report on the progression of care leavers and where appropriate prioritise care leavers for Council apprenticeships.</p>
<p>The need for a co-ordinated single point of entry to services so young people and their parents know where to look for help and whether there are any gaps in provision</p>		
<p>The Committee agreed that the Council has done a good job in developing the Job Box website as a virtual, one-stop-shop for people to access support and job vacancies.</p> <p>Members thought the website is well laid out and easy to use and were pleased to see it linked into employer and recruitment agency vacancies.</p> <p>The Committee was also pleased to hear that an App was being developed to increase penetration into the youth market.</p> <p>The committee commended the apprentices who attended a scrutiny committee meeting as a credit to the team of apprentices and to themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November 2013 a presentation to the committee listed over 20 interventions which play a role in helping young people into work, from training providers to targeted support programmes to wider services such as improving school attendance and mental health services. A key question was how young people and their parents know what support is available and how to access it. • Feedback from Council apprentices showed very diverse routes which had led them to the apprenticeship (Connexions, parents, Relate, social worker, employment fair) but that there was an issue with young people not knowing where to go for help. • Apprentices identified a need for work experience opportunities with a check list 	<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>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>

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
	<p>to show prospective employers what they have done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One apprentice had consulted other apprentices to gather ideas about how to tackle youth unemployment and a list of ideas was provided to the committee 	
Whether the Council's investment in the Jobs Fair and Job Junctions deliver value for money and the programmes funded by the Council's £1.3m investment are sustainable		
<p>The committee agreed tackling youth unemployment is a key priority for the Council and should remain so. The additional £1.3m investment to tackle the issue is supported.</p> <p>The Committee commended officers on the success of the Job Junctions and the Jobs Fair but agreed that further work was needed to monitor performance over the longer term in order to evidence their value for money.</p> <p>Members agreed the Job Junctions and Job Box Mentors were filling a gap in provision by offering independent, expert one-to-one support in venues accessible to local communities.</p> <p>The committee was pleased to hear that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members visited several Job Junction sessions in different locations to see them in action and get feedback from staff and customers. Feedback from customers was positive. Feedback from members based on the visits was positive in terms of how staff were supporting people. Attendance was good in the established venues but attendance by young people was poor. Members commended the excellent work of staff. • Data on Job Junctions showed attendance was growing and 105 people had been helped into work • Members were not provided with detailed costs of the Job Junctions • Data on the cost and outcomes from the Jobs Fair showed 69 vacancies filled from the fair at a pro-rata cost of £287 	<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> <ul 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

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
<p>Telford & Wrekin is supporting the LEP Skills Board and this should position the authority to benefit from future funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council had invested £1.3m into interventions from early delivery of savings • The Council does not benefit from DWP funding for helping people into job such as invested in the work programme • The Council is not eligible as an employer for apprenticeship grants 	<p>contacts or improvements to mental health. There should be referral mechanisms with wider council services and partners, particularly GPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 use with appropriate safeguards. • Consider increasing the number of computers in Sutton Hill to 16 • Consider more central venues for the Newport Job Junction including the option of using the library • Improve internal and external signage • Consult young people on how they want to be engaged and develop a strategy which supports their greater engagement with the Job Junctions • Information from the database of young unemployed people should be shared

Committee's conclusions	How the issue was identified and what evidence was considered	Recommendations
		<p>with staff in Job Junctions so they are able to target support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Holding the Executive to account and monitoring the implementation of recommendations accepted		
<p>The committee noted the Cabinet members' willingness to be held to account for delivery of the Pledges. The Committee will also monitor the implementation of the recommendations in this report accepted by Cabinet.</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>

Summary of recommendations

Developing the role of the Council in providing a strategic lead in driving the skills agenda with partners across the borough and the need to align employment opportunities and future skills needs with FE provision

1. The Council should continue to develop its strategic role in leading the skills agenda across the borough.
2. This role should include developing a longer term (3 years) Skills Strategy for the borough within 6 months which should:
 - 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.
3. Cabinet should work with the LEP to access funding opportunities to support the development and delivery of the strategy.
4. The Council should build links with the two Work Programme prime contractors operating across Telford and Wrekin to explore how provision can be better joined-up.
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.
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.
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.

The need to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities and to support small companies to offer apprenticeships

8. The Council should prioritise the development of the Apprenticeship Hub as a Pledge and this should include:
 - a) Assigning a named point of contact to each business
 - b) Proactively targeting of the 25% of businesses identified by the LEP as interested but not having time to get involved

- c) Promote the Hub through business networks including the Telford Business Board, Telford Business Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce
- d) Note that the Scrutiny Committee would support a bid for funding through the LEP to support this work.

9. The Council should monitor and report on the progression of care leavers and where appropriate prioritise care leavers for Council apprenticeships.

The need for a co-ordinated single point of entry to services so young people and their parents know where to look for help and whether there are any gaps in provision

10. Efforts should be made to target marketing of the Job Box website to parents so they know how to help their children.

11. Consider the suggestions put forward by the Council's apprentices for tackling youth unemployment, noting that Members do not support the principle of offering monetary incentives to engage young people.

Whether the Council's investment in the Jobs Fair and Job Junctions deliver value for money and the programmes funded by the Council's £1.3m investment are sustainable

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.

Members ask that the following suggestions are considered:

- 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 use with appropriate safeguards.
- Consider increasing the number of computers in Sutton Hill to 16
- Consider more central venues for the Newport Job Junction including the option of using the library
- Improve internal and external signage
- Consult young people on how they want to be engaged and develop a strategy which supports their greater engagement with the Job Junctions
- Information from the database of young unemployed people should be shared

with staff in Job Junctions so they are able to target support.

- 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.

Holding the Executive to account and monitoring the implementation of recommendations accepted

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.

Acknowledgements

Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cllr. Kevin Guy (Chair)
Cllr. Stephen Burrell
Cllr. Gill Green
Cllr. Jackie Loveridge
Cllr. Alan Mackenzie
Cllr. Jane Pinter
Cllr. Roy Scammell
Cllr. Chris Turley
Cllr. Mike Ion (Chair to May 2014)
Cllr. Tracy Hope (member until May 2014)
Dr. Shaukat Ali - HE representative
Mr. A. Atkinson - Catholic Diocesan representative
Mr. Roger Avey - Town & Parish Council representative
Ms. Emma Ofori - Secondary Parent Governor representative
Mr. Steve Rayner - Anglican Diocesan representative
Ms. Mel Ward - Primary Parent Governor representative

Witnesses

The committee would like to thank the following people for taking the time to meet them:

- Cllr. Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills
- Kate Callis, Assistant Director Development, Business & Employment
- Sue Marston, Skills Service Delivery Manager
- Jan Ellis, Principal & Chief Executive, Telford College of Arts & Technology (Feb 2014)
- Chris Scott, College Deputy Principal, Telford College of Arts & Technology (Feb 2014)
- Bev Jackson, Assistant Principal – Learner Services, Telford College of Arts & Technology
- Garry Philips, Principal and CEO, New College Telford (March 2014)
- Catherine Whitehead, Assistant Principal, Student Voice and Reputation, New College
- Steve Orton, Employer Manager, Jobcentre Plus Telford and Wrekin
- Liz Harding, County Training
- Paul Hinkins, Chair of the Telford Business Board and Marches LEP Board member
- Prof. Ian Oakes, Higher Education Champion on the Marches LEP Board and Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- Nathaniel Sambrook, Amy Giles and James Doyle, Council apprentices

The committee would also like to thank Marie Blake and her team of staff working in the Job Junctions for supporting the member visits and for their valuable insights, in particular Steve Blake, Nigel Lunn and customers who took time to talk to the members.

Key written evidence

- Youth Unemployment Presentation (November 2013)
- Telford College of Arts & Technology Presentation (November 2013)
- Tackling Youth Unemployment – Our Commitment, Cabinet Report (January 2014)
- Jobcentre Plus – Customer Journey Presentation (February 2014)

- ONS claimant flows for Telford and Wrekin and breakdowns to small areas (February 2014)
- Ideas for Youth Unemployment from Telford & Wrekin apprentices (February 2014)
- New College Telford Presentation (March 2014)
- DWP Work Programme Official Statistics to March 2014 and cumulative referrals and job outcomes for Telford and Wrekin to March 2014
- Serco Briefing on Work Programme outcomes in Telford and Wrekin, The Work Programme Executive Summary and the Customer Charter (August 2014)
- Marches Skills Plan Presentation (September 2014)
- The Marches Skills Plan 2013-2015 and First Annual Review October 2013
- Update on Youth Unemployment report including data on Job Junction and Jobs Fair outcomes (September 2014)
- Tackling Youth Unemployment – Progress to Date, Cabinet Report (September 2014)

Suggestions Following Discussion with Council Apprentices

Following discussions with colleagues, members of the public and 30 young people aged between 16-24 the following suggestions were put forward by an apprentice employed by the Council who had met with the Scrutiny Committee as part of the Review:

- **Up – Front Wage:** Upon starting either a job or an apprenticeship, I believe the wage should be put up-front, this is due to the growing numbers in youth debt, it is a well known fact that money is the main incentive for anyone to go into a job, so in a way to get youths into employment perhaps an up – front wage could be a good idea.
- **Coffee Morning** – This is due to the lack of knowledge about certain jobs, as it would be a casual informal discussion between an employer and members of the public, discussing the ins and outs of what their job warrants, for instance business administration, discussing the transfer and distribution of data. As it would be casual and have free beverages I believe it would be excellent, perhaps set up in a central location such as First Point.
- **Voucher** – Perhaps as an incentive to want to get to the interview stage, those who are successful get a £10 -£25 Telford town centre gift card, whether successful or unsuccessful in getting the job.
- **Job prospects** – Following the National Entrepreneur Week where small business owners came together to discuss expansion within Telford & Wrekin, I believe that a scheme should be set up with these small businesses to enlarge their business, they require more staff to achieve this goal and money, we have the demand from a large number of would – be employees and due to the new government Wage incentive scheme which entitles an employer a sum of money upon employing a youth. Following the initial training the Youth would then be entitled to qualify for a full time position within the company.
- **Free Driving Lessons** – In most Jobs the employee needs to be flexible, such as my own position, where I travel around Telford a lot via public transport, however, public transport is defiantly not reliable. Due to the low wage packet received by Apprenticeships (roughly £99 p/w), I believe they should warrant for free driving lessons whilst in their apprenticeship, whether car or motorbike. (This idea was given to me by about 25 of the 30 youths I spoke to.)
- **Longer Work experience perhaps 3 x 2 weeks in Years 9, 10 & 11** - In order for youths to get a taste of employment I believe the single taste they are given in year 10 is not enough, also our minds are constantly changing regarding our careers so the taster they have in Year 10 may not be anything to do with the career path they choose. If warranting 3 x 2 weeks is not an option due to age or other aspects, perhaps expanding the 2 weeks in year 10 to a month with the possibility of 2 separate placements is an option.

Other than Incentives a few other ideas are:

Reducing the high aspects of jobs that Youths hold - By this I mean, if a youth's passion is in football and their goal is to be an International sports star, this does not mean, that we should not keep that passion alight, however show them other career aspects within football, Manager, Coach, Teacher e.t.c. Show them the jobs behind the scenes, not just the glory, allow them to see that their maybe a CEO to a company however in order to attain that position he had to climb up the ladder, so show them each step the CEO took to achieve their position.

I work with CV's (Curriculum Vitae) and a main segment is that of Key skills the skills a would be employee has that would keep an employer interested in them.

Key Skills – These are their personal skills that may be interesting to an employer, for example if a Youth wishes to gain employment within Software in ICT, they need the knowledge of JAVA, an international company who works with JAVA and is looking to recruit Apprentices, Cap-Gemini could be used as a training provider. If a Youth wishes to gain employment in sport a key skill would be the knowledge of coaching a football team, which perhaps Telford AFC could provide a 2 to 3 day training course.

An increasing number of youths are starting to claim job seekers as an income, and due to the nature of an apprenticeship the wage is only slightly more. If a young mother is claiming income support and housing benefit and wishes to go into employment, she will lose most if not all of her housing benefit and most if not all of her income support, the average rent for a property is roughly £475 a month for a two bed property, an apprenticeship wage is £430 roughly a month, not only would they be unable to pay for their rent, this has not taken into account shopping, baby care and bills. If it is our wish for young mothers especially to go into employment, I believe we as a council must set up a scheme to help reduce the stress from them, perhaps letting them keep their full housing benefit.

Housing benefit is one of the main issues surrounding the transfer of Youths on benefits to Youths in employment.

On a lighter note, there are services we provide that help Youths in Telford and Wrekin Council a few of these are:

- Telford Job junctions
- TCAT
- Connexions
- Relate
- Employment Coaches
- Turn Around
- NCS

Other suggestions from Apprentices put forward at the meeting with the Scrutiny Committee:

- Need to publicise NUS membership to apprentices so they can access discounts

- Apprenticeships could be promoted in the council newsletter. It should be eye catching, perhaps next to an article which people will be interested in. Could be a series “The life of an apprentice” featuring a different apprentice each time.