

**EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2020
REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE
COUNCILLOR JAYNE FRANCIS**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out my portfolio priorities that relate to the Employment & Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Skills, expansion for key growth sectors enterprise and innovation	Developing the skills and employability of Birmingham’s workforce, thereby enabling each citizen to realise their potential. Engaging with the skills agenda throughout the Council and Birmingham in liaison with local, regional and national partners.
Youth Engagement and Youth Service, along with Lifelong Learning (post 14 skills and adult education)	Clear progression and vocational pathways from education into further and higher education and employment. Provision of all-age guidance, skills development, training and work experience to meet the economic needs of the city now and in the future.
Skills and Entrepreneurship in Schools	Development of 14-19 career pathways, enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools.
Employment Opportunities	Enabling all residents to access employment through the development and delivery of local employment plans.

3. PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

3.1 Development of 14-19 career pathways, enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools

The Council is supporting schools and Post 16 providers with implementation of the new T-Level (technical qualifications) through facilitating knowledge-sharing and awareness. This supports schools with providing advice and guidance to parents and pupils about Post 16 courses and careers so they can make informed choices.

Schools are encouraged to commission enterprise education providers as they deem appropriate and the Council signposts and shares good practice. Information about any new bona fide enterprise education providers is shared to schools as we become aware of them. The Council does not endorse or quality assure them.

As part of Youth Promise Plus, 16-29 year olds have access to business start-up support through Prince’s Trust.

Young people’s financial literacy has been highlighted as a concern and national resources for Schools to support financial literacy have been disseminated.

The Council is supporting enterprise in Special School Sixth Forms by enabling three schools to sell their products at Woodcock Street and Lancaster Circus, each term, following a successful pilot last year.

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And the Preparing for Adulthood Board as part of its employment workstream is scoping the self-employment and entrepreneurship pathway for young people with SEND, based on national good practice.

Since the delivery of a successful Area Based Review of Post 16 provision in Birmingham in 2016, the city has had a strong Post 16 Forum Partnership. It is chaired by a Headteacher and has representation from Schools, including Special Schools; Colleges; Training Providers; Universities; and other strategic partner groups working in Post 16. The groups priorities have included vocational changes (including the management and delivery of T Levels in the city); good mental health for young people; and apprenticeships.

The Council retains a strong involvement in careers advice for young people, to assist them in making choices that are right for them post 16 and the Careers Service of the Council retains a strong focus on working with NEET young people, to ensure that they are able to re-engage with employment, education or training as quickly as possible. The Careers Service retained its Matrix Accreditation after an external inspection. This reflects the quality of the advice provided to young people.

The Assistant Director for Employment and Skills is also a Board member of the Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Advisor Network project – which aims to work with all secondary schools in the city, providing careers audits and linking schools to local companies, working with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

3.2 Apprenticeships

There is now a Culture Change Officer attending management teams across the council to raise apprenticeship awareness and how the levy can be used to upskill the workforce.

The Organisational Development Team is conducting skills analysis with service areas and identifying where apprenticeships could be utilised to address skills gaps, and a marketing campaign for schools is being developed to raise awareness of apprenticeships and their benefits.

Apprenticeship Levy Adoption Principles have been drafted and are currently awaiting approval, and new apprenticeship opportunities have been ring-fenced for Birmingham residents.

Partnerships have been developed with local institutes such as University of Birmingham, and BCC has been identified as a key partner regionally and nationally in the Apprenticeship field.

There will be a presentation at the Scrutiny meeting with the Culture Change Officer, but some headline figures are included below for information:

3.2.1 Current Apprenticeship Levy

- Current fund = £5,531,111
- Funds spent in last 12 months = £349,901
- Estimated planned spending for next 12 months = £585,236. Increase of 67% over the next 12 months – will keep going up!

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- Projected £2,624,947 will be paid into the levy within the next 12 months = £218,746 per month

3.2.2 Public Sector Apprenticeship Quota

- Public Sector bodies with more than 250 employees have a target that 2.3% of workforce start apprenticeships annually
- Based on current headcount, BCC need to start 233 apprenticeships per financial year (excluding schools)
- As of the end of December 2019, 94 new apprenticeships have started so far this financial year
- A number of apprenticeship starts are planned for early 2020.

Organisation Name	No. of employees (headcount) as at 31 March 2018	No. of apprentices as at 31 March 2018	% of employees who were apprentices as at 31 March 2018	New apprenticeship starts as a % of headcount 2017-18
Birmingham City Council	30116	123	0.4	0.4
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	14306	142	1	0.8
Coventry City Council	9012	89	1	1.5
Derby City Council	7384	63	0.9	0.9
Leeds City Council	14525	276	1.9	1.4
Leicester City Council	11973	122	1	1
Liverpool City Council	12385	91	0.7	0.5
Manchester City Council	13725	210	1.5	1.4
Nottingham City Council	9145	89	1	0.9
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	9357	143	1.5	1.5
Sheffield City Council	12214	147	1.2	1.1
Walsall Council	7179	175	2.4	2.4
Wolverhampton City Council	7133	113	1.6	1.1

Source - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-sector-apprenticeships-in-england-2017-to-2018>

3.2.3 Work being undertaken with partners across the city

- The council is able to 'gift' part of the levy
- Focussed on new apprenticeship creation but could also be about job retention
- Priority is SME's who don't pay the levy
- Conversations with the WMCA about their use of the levy – some opportunities for alignment
- Exploring other initiatives in the city where the levy could add value – need to avoid duplication
- Working with HR colleagues to ensure we have the resource to gift the levy appropriately

3.3 Employment Access Team update

The Employment Access Team works on employer engagement, matching demand with supply, upskilling communities for job opportunities, building and influencing strategic partnerships, and seeking to maximise opportunities arising from Birmingham hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

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The team captures opportunities through:

- Planning protocol for jobs and skills
- Procurement policy framework for jobs and skills
- Business Charter for Social Value
- Other Sources, ie BDI, WMGC

They attract and network with employers to provide opportunities for unemployed citizens as well as supporting employers to identify and address workforce development through referrals to the Business Growth Programme, as well as responding to redundancy and developing progression pathways to enable people to access training, work experience, jobs and apprenticeships.

This has led to over 10,000 local unemployed residents accessing jobs, apprenticeships, pre-employment training and work experience placements.

Total Schedule (including historical information) as at 31 October 2019

Employment Category (Type of new entrant)	Person Weeks YTD (2019/20)	Cumulative	New Entrants YTD (2019/20)	Cumulative
New Entrant (Job Start)	10,579	59,476	369	9,485
New Entrant (Apprentice)	2,379	25,825	34	4,421
New Entrant (Graduate)	476	6,181	11	5,744
New Entrant (Work Placement)	279	5,258	117	3,275
TOTAL	13,714	96,740	531	10,162
Job Safeguarded	0	0	284	702

Seizing the opportunity afforded by the Commonwealth Games for jobs and skills

The Games are bringing significant job opportunities to the region. We are well placed to be making a key contribution to fulfilling the vision and mission of the Games and to date have:

- Gained jobs and skills commitments through the Social Value Charter with Procurement
- Construction phase engagement for Perry Barr Residential Scheme (PBRs) and Alexander Stadium through Procurement and Planning
- Actively supporting the newly developed on-site Construction Skills Hub
- Working with WMCA, DWP, NCS, Sandwell MBC (Aquatics Centre) and local FE/private training providers to develop progression pathways to site and back office jobs.
- Lendlease (delivering PBRs) has made a commitment to achieve 22,000 person weeks¹ on the project.
- Other commitments at the PBRs include 1,000 pre-employment training places to be supported; 50 existing apprenticeships working on site through the supply chain; 400

¹ Person week is up to 40 hours over 5 days
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jobs including 50 new apprenticeships to be created, and 30 paid summer intern (6 week) placements; 10,500 work experience hours.

3.4 Youth Promise Plus

The Employment & Access Team also delivers the Youth Promise Plus programme, which is covered under an additional report to Scrutiny, which is attached and will be presented at the meeting and the team also deliver the World of Work programme, supporting unemployed residents over the age of 25 back into work.

3.5 Partnership Groups

The Council also works closely with other key partners on the Skills and Employment agenda for the city. There are a number of partnership groups, including those with the West Midlands's Combined Authority. These include the Youth Taskforce, established last year by the WM Mayor to support young people into work. At present youth unemployment for those 18-24 remains quite high across the region, whilst NEET levels in Birmingham continue to drop. This suggests that while local activity has been successful for the 16+ age group, there are still a number of young people over the age of 18 who are not in work or further education. Work in the last quarter of 2019 focused on trialling a new pilot programme for youth unemployment, looking at best practice nationally in similar schemes such as Progression Coaches and Youth Employability Advisors, and links across to the Youth Promise Plus project. The Taskforce has also focused on data and evidence, and geographical areas where youth unemployment is higher than others.

Prevention is as important as a cure, and the Taskforce members are exploring a programme of delivery for "At Risk" groups based around a Pathfinder Model. It is still early days for this initiative, and Birmingham continues to play a key role in developing this area of work.

3.6 East Birmingham

Initiatives related to skills and employment often focus on geographical areas, where evidence suggests that there are acute or longstanding issues. There has been an East Birmingham Board arranged by the Council and focused on infrastructure opportunities as well as other issues such as health, skills, education and employment. From this group, a sub-group has been developed which includes partners such as WMCA, BCC and training and education providers such as South & City College, Go Train, Shaw Trust, Muath Trust, Netcom Training and Pathway Group.

An Action Plan is being delivered, with plans to develop a campaign toolkit which will identify the right channels, spaces and venues to promote messages about employment opportunities.

Large employers such as HS2 are already engaged with members of the taskforce, and so they are now going to focus on medium sized enterprises, and how they work with recruitment agencies and direct employers.

Immediate priorities include identifying the top 50 medium sized businesses in East Birmingham and where relationships with them already exist, and WMCA will organise an employer round table with East Birmingham based employers and hold an Opportunity Roadshow in February 2020.

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4. CONCLUSION

As is demonstrated in brief here, much is being done by BCC and other partners in the region to ensure that whatever other socioeconomic factors come into play, access to training to provide skills necessary for the opportunities available in the region is made available. There are so many other variables and unknown factors that can impact on unemployment and deprivation levels, and we wait to see what challenges leaving the EU brings for our supply chains, services, exchange rates and morale. We know that there will be recruitment challenges in some sectors; and indeed, potentially for the Council itself. The Skills and Employment team are looking to work with colleagues leading on the potential changes Brexit will bring, to try and mitigate some of the impact on local businesses, such as the number of individual signing up for residency in a timely fashion and the skill sets that may be lost.

We continue to work with unemployed residents across the city, and our partners to offer pathways back into employment, education or training, with a particular focus through the YPP programme for young people in the city. Our NEET levels in the city continue to be one of the best of any Core City, which is a real success story over the past four years, and we are working closely with partners on changes to post 16 provision – such as T Levels. Close working with colleagues in schools, colleges, universities, training providers, community groups, charities, young people, residents and businesses continues to be essential to delivering better outcomes for the city and individuals. There are many partners working towards improving skills, education and employment levels in the city, and we continue to work hard to develop these relationships and collaborate on opportunities wherever they exist.

Councillor Jayne Francis
Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture

January 2020

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