

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JOBS AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO TO THE ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH MARCH 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report summarises the achievements of the Jobs and Skills portfolio over the last year. It focuses on the actions contributing to the delivery of the strategic priorities previously reported to this Committee, including on 14th September 2017.
- 1.2. I will be happy to expand on aspects of this report at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15th March.
- 1.3. This report provides an update on activities undertaken during the period 2017/18 and the Council's priority - Jobs and Skills and my portfolio priorities of:
 - Closing the 'Jobs Gap'
 - Closing the 'Skills Gap'
 - Supporting Inclusive Growth, where no place and no citizen is left behind.
- 1.4. Closing the Jobs and Skills Gaps in Birmingham is vital to our economic performance; improving the quality of life for everyone that lives and works here, contributing to the vision of a great city to grow-up and succeed in.
- 1.5. **Context:**
 - Unemployment in Birmingham has risen for the first time since 2012, with the Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Claimant Rate at 6.3%.
 - The Unadjusted Unemployment Claimant Rate is at 6.1%.
 - The Seasonally Adjusted Youth Unemployment (18-24 years) in Birmingham has continued to decrease to 8.9%.
 - The Unadjusted Youth Unemployment rate fell to 8.5%.
 - Unadjusted Unemployment has decreased in 23 of Birmingham's 40 wards.
 - The Unemployment Gap between the 10 best and worst performing wards has narrowed to 4.4% points.
 - The proportion of Young People aged 16-17 years (years 12 & 13) who are who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is 2.1%, with performance better than the other Core Cities and the National Average.

- The proportion of young people aged 16-18 years, whose participation status is 'Not Known' continues to fall.
- The proportion of young people aged 18-19 years, progressing to Higher Education, is now above the National Average.

1.6 The Challenge of Brexit:

- On 23rd June 2016, Britain narrowly voted to leave the European Union. The outcome has created great uncertainty, because it was never made clear as to what leaving the EU would mean for the United Kingdom as a whole, or for Birmingham in particular. In July, a Birmingham Advisory Group (BAG) was established to gather the views of a range of local partners. This Group soon expanded to include partners beyond Birmingham, e.g. the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership members.
- The BAG established its first draft position paper, which represents the Region's position on an agreed set of themes. This position is built on a core message around using accelerated devolution and the industrial strategy, as the levers to make a success of Brexit. At an EU level, Birmingham's role on the Eurocities Executive Committee was used to gain the support of EU Cities for sustaining collaborative and co-operative relationships with UK cities, post Brexit. This resulted in a joint Eurocities and Core Cities' position, being developed and presented at an EU Mayors summit in May 2017.
- In June, Birmingham hosted a Core Cities and Mayoral Combined Authority consultation, at the request of the Department for Communities & Local Government and the Treasury, to seek views on the proposed 'Shared Prosperity Fund', intended to replace lost EU funding. A Birmingham prepared response, adopted by the Core Cities group, was used as its response to the consultation.
- In January 2018, a Birmingham Post- Brexit Commission was initiated to work alongside the BAG and to develop a clear high level Birmingham position on Brexit. On 19th February, further to the joint initiative between the Core Cities and Eurocities, a meeting between the UK Core City Leaders and Mayors and the EU's Chief negotiator, Michel Barnier was held in Brussels.
- There has also been further input to Brexit work, led by the Local Government Association and progressed both officers and Members. Sir Albert Bore was selected by the LGA to join their Brexit Committee and develop work, in conjunction with the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. This work is examining a range of issues, including a new constitutional settlement, EU funding, EU powers, Skills, Procurement and Trade.

2. EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- 2.1 The major **Youth Promise Plus (YPP)** Programme is in full delivery across Birmingham and Solihull, supporting up to 16,610 young people into employment, education and training. It involves all the local Job Centres, five delivery partners, 10 lead contractors (half of whom are 'Third Sector' organisations) and 15 local consortium sub-contractors. In addition to staff from the two Local Councils and partner organisations, over 230 new intensive mentor workers and 21 new employment development workers now work with young people and employers to deliver this project across Birmingham and Solihull. So far, over 11,000 young people have engaged on the project and to date over 2,000 have achieved a positive employment, education or training outcome. This number will grow considerably as we move into final phase of delivery on the project.
- 2.2 The conditions on delivering YPP have presented a significant challenge. There has been huge pressure from government to deliver this £50.4m youth project in just 2 and a half years (similar scale projects in the past have been at least 6 years in duration). In October Cabinet reluctantly agreed to reduce the scope of the project, as the option to extend the finish date was not being made available at that time. However, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has now indicated a strong likelihood that EU Youth Employment Initiative funded projects can be extended. We still wait to hear the terms and conditions, to enable us to assess the best options for future provision.
- 2.3 During 2017/18 the **Birmingham Jobs Fund (BJF)** has been aligned to form part of the YPP Project (subject to the DWP's approval of this change) and re-branded as '**Young Talent for Business**'. It continues to provide grant incentives of £1,500 to businesses to employ young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). By combining the BJF and Youth Promise Plus projects, we can maximise the utilisation of European Union funds. In addition, some of the BJF has been reserved for supporting businesses to bring NEET young people into their apprenticeships. To date, approximately 500 incentives have supported businesses to recruit young people to their jobs and apprenticeship vacancies.
- 2.4 The **Birmingham Skills Investment Plan** (our 10-year plan to help close the local Skills Gap) continues to be the key driver, focused on meeting the needs of businesses and residents bringing forward an integrated approach to employment and skills support. The transfer of power from government (the Education and Skills Funding Agency) to the West Midland Combined Authority will, in the fullness of time (estimated to be 2019/20 for full devolution) should create the opportunity for local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to take a stronger and more locally focused role in influencing the deployment, funding allocations and outcomes associated with Adult Education Budget spending plans.
- 2.5 '**Step Forward**' has been initiated by the City Council in a direct response to closing the Skills Gap agenda, recognising that many low skilled, or unqualified

workers are in employment, to make skills and career progression the norm and thereby to support productivity increase. Cabinet approved the Step Forward initiative in February 2017, with the view to it being aligned to the WMCA and GBSLEP growth strategies. Since launching on 27th March, almost 40 employers have signed up to the Step Forward Pledge to date. The Council is currently developing an ESF funding application (as lead partner) to create a **Skills for Growth Hub** service within the GBSLEP Growth Hub, which will be a single point of contact for sign posting. The bid will also include the further development and delivery of Step Forward.

- 2.6 The City Council is leading the GBSLEP's **Construction Sector Skills** effort, through a joint investment strategy, in partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board. The Programme has now completed and exceeded all targets; supporting 545 participants into accredited training (target 250) of which 101 were NEETs or long term Unemployed (target 50); supported 337 job entries into the construction sector, including 55 apprenticeships, where people gained their first job within the construction sector. Additionally, we worked with 36 construction SMEs, to support the acquisition of industry-led higher level skills in leadership and management for 76 employees, who gained NVQ Level 4, 5 and 6 qualifications. The key driver was the increasing demand from the construction sector to address skills shortages and to support a talent pool of skilled, job ready people to increase the skills base, where local skills are declining. The Programme aimed to address local skills gaps by creating employment and skills opportunities for Birmingham's unemployed residents, meeting the needs of the construction employers and supporting their workforce development requirements. Employment opportunities were sourced with the City Council's construction partners, on projects such as Paradise Circus, the Longbridge site, the Constructing West Midlands Framework Contractors, Gas, Repair and Maintenance and Capital Investment Works contracts.
- 2.7 Work continues to implement the Council's **Public Procurement Policy Framework for Jobs and Skills** to maximise jobs, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities on new contracts i.e. Peddimore and deliver against existing framework contracts, including the Gas Repairs and Maintenance, Constructing West Midlands and Transportation contracts; and ensure that the **Planning Protocol for Jobs and Skills** and associated **Targeted Recruitment and Training** contract clauses are embedded as an integral part of planning agreements in relation to significant developments, thereby ensuring that both construction and end use jobs are secured and targeted at local people.
- 2.8 **Cog** connects children in education and young people NEET, to work experience, traineeships, apprenticeships, jobs and employers, through its online digital platform. The platform enables access to, and connectivity with, the Birmingham Youth Promise. The Employability Skills Award for careers advisers and teachers in schools is available to schools, free of charge, through this process. As part of a review process and taking on board feedback from current users, Cog is going through a refresh, which will improve its user

experience and opportunities searching facility. The refreshed site is due to go live by the end of March.

2.9 The **Flexible Support Fund (FSF)** totalling £1.2m commenced delivery in June 2015 and runs to the end of March. Funding was secured to deliver (jointly with the DWP) on recruitment services for employers and job preparation services for unemployed jobseekers, through three project strands. To date, the FSF has supported 2,485 individuals into training and helped 3,351 people into employment (against a target of 1,732). The Employment Access Team has successfully developed positive relationships with various employers across a range of sectors and exceeded targeted outputs.

2.10 In order to better focus coordination in respect of Employment Support and Skills activity on local target communities, the Council has driven forward the development of for **Local Employment & Skills Boards (LESB)** in four quadrants of the city. Building on previous District level Jobs and Skills Plans and related theme groups, a series of consultative of summit meetings were held in August and September, which resulted in the broad terms of reference and geographical boundaries for the LESBs being agreed. In each area a lead agency, with a local presence, was identified to organise and convene the LESBs in their first phase and to form the reporting link between them and the Birmingham Employment & Skills Board, within the GBSLEP structure.

2.11 The four Birmingham LESBs are set up as follows:

Area	Lead agency
North Birmingham	Witton Lodge Community Association (Local registered Social landlord and community organisation based in Perry Common)
South Birmingham	Prospects Services (National Careers Service contracted provider and Youth Promise Plus Locality Lead for South Birmingham)
East Birmingham	The Pioneer Group: (Consortium of local providers leading Youth Promise Plus delivery in east Birmingham)
West and Central	People Plus (Adult Skills and Youth Promise Plus contracted provider based in Aston)

The Prince's Trust has also committed to a City-wide remit to assist the Boards around locally focused employer engagement.

2.12 Inaugural LESB board meetings were held in each area before Christmas and each LESB is currently holding themed task and finish groups, to develop a prospectus in an 'ask and offer' format, detailing key issues and 'asks' of the more strategic Birmingham Employment & Skills Board and make 'offers' of specific local actions that can be taken forward within the LESB board membership. These prospectuses are being shared with Birmingham Employment & Skills Board, with a view to implementation from April. Early activity within each local Board has included:

- Commitment to and planning of local employer engagement campaigns, to engage with local employers (including SMEs) around recruitment and training pathways.
- Working with the Council's 14-19 Skills Team on developing schools and employer partnerships.
- Better local coordination of employment support provision targeted on young people, including planning of local estate-based outreach activity.

3. 14-19 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

- 3.1 **NEET Young People** - Birmingham's progress in reducing NEET and 'Not Known' figures has continued. The NEETs figures for Birmingham, as reported to the Department for Education (DfE) are better than the national average and our statistically comparative neighbours. Not Known figures are also dropping, currently constituting just over 6% of the cohort, as opposed to 11% in 2016. These successes have been enabled by the establishment of a '14-19 Tracking' team, within the Education Service, to work with Post 16 providers to collect and accurately record participation data in the Insight database.
- 3.2 The '**September Guarantee**' aims to ensure that every young person in Year 11 and 12 receives an 'offer' of a place in Post 16 education and training is a key priority for the Council and one of the targets in the DfE Scorecard. For September 2017, 98% of all Year 11s received an offer of a place, compared to 97% nationally. However, for Year 12s, 88% received an offer, compared to 92% nationally, although this is an improvement from 85% in September 2016.
- 3.3 The **Post 16 Forum** plays a key role in providing a strategic over-view and city-wide governance of Post 16 education and training. This forum brings together colleges, school sixth-forms, training providers and other key partners involved in education, training and apprenticeships post 16. The aim is to create clearer pathways for young people, ensuring they receive appropriate and impartial advice concerning careers; and are studying in areas that will enable them to move onto employment or higher education as appropriate. The Forum has also established four sub-groups: Preparing young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) for adulthood; apprenticeships; engaging parents; and promoting modern foreign languages.
- 3.4 **Careers Strategy** – the DfE have published a Careers Strategy and implementation guidance for schools and colleges. The team have continued to provide support and share good practice among schools and colleges, through convening the termly Careers Network and delivery of the Careers & Enterprise Company funded Enterprise Advisers programme. Every secondary school in Birmingham is invited to attend the Careers Network and there is regular attendance of approximately 50 delegates. The Compass Tool has been disseminated to all schools and colleges and has been used to benchmark careers provision.

- 3.5 Several schools and colleges achieved external accreditation this year for delivering the **Quality In Careers Kite Mark**, including Colmers Secondary School, Lordswood Girls School and Joseph Chamberlain College.
- 3.6 '**Post 16 Sufficiency**' is an ongoing programme of work to ensure that there are sufficient and suitable places in Post 16 education and training for all young people continues. This year the focus has been supporting providers who have closed or withdrawn provision and also driving-up sixth-form quality and outcomes.

4. **HELP FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS & THOSE AT RISK**

- 4.1 The number of **Young Offenders** successfully engaged in Education, Employment and training (EET) continues to exceed the national average. The percentage of Young Offenders engaged in EET for the first six months of 2017-18 stands at 73.61%.
- 4.2 SOVA, the Youth Promise Plus (YPP) Provider dedicated to **those at risk of offending**, continues to provide essential support to re-engage Young Offenders back into EET. This YPP initiative has also enabled SOVA support to be expanded, basing workers in the Police stations and engaging with NEET young people referred by the Neighbourhood Police teams and Police Offender managers.
- 4.3 The contracted YPP Employer-facing work was hindered because the contracted provider did not recruit the number of staff required to undertake this work effectively. A **new Employer-facing Provider** has now been commissioned and started in February. It is envisaged this will generate an intensive focus in identifying employers prepared to give young offenders a chance to turn their lives around.
- 4.4 The YPP Employer-facing workers based with the Council's Employment team have been able to secure a number of route ways into employment. One of these route ways was the training and preparation for **Demolition Work**. This training is highly sought after and the Training Provider was passionate about providing opportunities for ex –offenders. As a result, eleven out of the twelve ex-offenders referred successfully completed the course. Out of the eleven that passed the course, six were then offered employment.
- 4.5 The monthly **Youth Offending Service NEET panels** have continued to stimulate ideas around innovative approaches to engaging those who are furthest away from the world of work. In response to the barriers and themes that arose, a number of pilot schemes have been introduced. These innovative strategies and initiatives are designed to attract those who would otherwise continue to remain disengaged. Examples of these approaches include:
- Entrepreneurial courses delivered by local young entrepreneurs, a number of whom have life stories that resonate with the participants. The Entrepreneurs therefore have the credibility to show by example how they

have turned their lives around and how they are successfully running businesses and making money legitimately. Through these courses the participants are encouraged to explore their entrepreneurial ideas and foster their motivation and begin to make plans.

- The Right Trax motor bike provision is a short intensive course to prepare young people for their CBT moped licence. It enables them to learn to ride in a safe environment, understand about road safety, motor bike maintenance and have the opportunity to gain accredited qualifications. This course provides an attractive ‘hook’ for disengaged young people to begin that journey of re-engagement.
- A weekly boxing session run by SOVA Intervention workers, who are qualified boxing instructors has successfully been established. These “pad work” sessions have been ideal in encouraging healthier lifestyles, building stamina, and through this contact time with the Intervention worker, developed a renewed motivation to find work.
- Vocational based short courses such as the ‘Introduction to Tyre and Exhaust fitting’ provide an ideal opportunity for young people to take a first step back into the college environment. This is facilitated via twilight courses, in small groups that provide accredited qualifications. These short courses provide enough skills and experience to help them determine if this is the career for them. These courses increase confidence and motivation, and enable young people to present well at interviews for apprenticeships in these fields.

4.6 For those with **Special Educational Needs**, the Youth Offending Service is currently undertaking work, in conjunction with the Birmingham SENAR Service, to develop an innovative Post 16 provision for those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties. This provision will be designed for those who require more intensive support in learning. It will create an educational learning structure that can adapt to their needs and risks. It will provide the confidence, skills and competences needed for the workplace. This provision will enable essential support for those who leave special schools and alternative provision, who would not successfully make the transition into the main FE colleges and Work Based Learning providers. The Service Specification and delivery model for this provision is being developed and it is hoped this provision will be commissioned to start by September 2018.

4.7 Other initiatives currently being developed for the **Vulnerable 16-18 NEET cohort** include, the targeting of 3 NEET Hotspot areas in Birmingham. This has involved undertaking a ‘saturation’ approach of contacting all NEET young people and those whose destination are ‘Not Known’ in a certain post coded area. This is done through a combination of door knocking, phone calls and mail outs, offering them a locally designed Education and Training Provision delivered in their local area that is accessible and meets their needs. The success of this approach will be reviewed to determine whether this should be expanded to other NEET cohorts and hotspot areas in Birmingham.

- 4.8 **EET Champion** and Co-ordinator manager roles have been developed within the Services of the Children's Trust. These have been created to ensure effective support for the vulnerable NEET cohort is fully utilised. These roles have been identified for the Family Support Services, Looked-After Children's Education Service, Care Leavers Service and Youth Offending Service. In addition, a Lead role is to be created within the Trust to help co-ordinate the support that is available, and develop new initiatives that will raise aspirations and enhance employment opportunities for those that need more supported route ways into training and employment.
- 4.9 This work, however, is all reliant on the continuing intensive support being available for the vulnerable NEET cohort after the YPP project ends. This support and engagement into Education, Employment and Training is essential if we are to enhance the life outcomes of our most vulnerable young people.

5. SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

- 5.1 Since March 2017, the proportion of **18+ Care Leavers in EET** has increased to 64%, which is ahead of the Council target of 58% and ahead of the national average of Care Leavers in EET, which is currently 48%. The Care Leavers Service now has an Employment, Education and Training manager in post. It is the responsibility of this officer to track and monitor the EET or NEET status of every young person currently being supported by the service, approximately 700 young people aged 18 – 21 years.
- 5.2 For young people in EET, the focus is on **joint- working with the EET providers** to help the young person sustain their engagement. For young people who are NEET, the focus is on linking each NEET Care Leaver with a NEET support specialist, based in the young person's locality. Also, for the NEET cohort, the focus is on increasing opportunities through **targeted pre-employment and employment projects**, within the Council and with outside partners. Going forward, we will continue this work to develop employer links, including through the Employment and Skills team and through the Corporate Parenting Network.
- 5.3 Of the EET cohort, approximately 100 young people are **in Higher Education** (approximately 12%) which is twice the national average for Care Leavers in Higher Education. Also, of the EET cohort, 120 are in paid employment. Of those, around 100 are in entry level and low paid jobs, which includes zero-hours and temporary contracts. We are working closely with the DWP to ensure that all of our young people in this situation have applied for Universal Credit to mitigate for loss of earnings. This is essential for Care Leavers, most of who live in their own tenancies and are responsible for their rent.
- 5.4 The remainder of the EET cohort are **in Further Education**. Approximately 40 are on level 3 courses and are aiming to progress to Higher Education. Also, in the Further Education cohort, there are over twenty young people on ESOL courses. The majority of these young people are awaiting Home Office determination on their right to work in the UK.

- 5.5 The NEET cohort is currently getting support and employment opportunities through the **YPP project** and delivered in-part through the online jobs platform **Cog**. This additional resource has contributed to the increase in Care Leavers moving into employment. We will need to consider carefully as to how these important additional NEET support services can be maintained, if YPP ends in July.
- 5.6 In terms of **employment opportunities within the Council**, we have work successfully with the Public Health team to ensure that the Care Leavers, who applied for their apprenticeships, got the relevant support and guidance to make successful applications. As a result, since the start of May, there have been four Care Leavers in post with Public Health.
- 5.7 We have also worked in **partnership with the public and private sectors**. M&B Breweries now have two Care Leavers on their apprenticeship scheme; while Core Assets have recruited two Care Leavers as business admin apprentices. We are now supporting four Care Leavers, who are applying for one-year fixed -term posts with Her Majesties Courts and Tribunals Service. These posts are ring-fenced for Care Leavers, through a national scheme.
- 5.8 Funding has recently been agreed for a **Service Development Apprentice** to work in the Care Leavers Service. Naturally I would like this post to go to one of our Care Leavers. Staff are now working with HR on the logistics before this opportunity can go live.

6. YOUTH SERVICES

- 6.1 Youth workers from the Birmingham **Youth Service** have committed 50% of their time to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). They have engage with some of the 'hardest to reach' and most challenging young people, by using their youth work skills to build a positive relationship with the young person enabling them to provide the appropriate level of support to by breaking down barriers to move them towards Employment, Education and Training (EET).
- 6.2 This work is intensive and often requires supporting the young people over a long period of time, due to the complex and multiple issues they often encounter. It seeks to build young people's resilience and equip them with the appropriate skills to make a positive transition to adulthood and the world of work.
- 6.3 The Youth Service supports the young person to reach their potential and take their place in the local community. Without this support there is likely to be on-going costs for the City Council and more generally public services.
- 6.4 The successful delivery of the YEI has been dependant on the broad range of partnership work the Youth Service has delivered. For example, specialist support to young people, provide housing, mental health, looked after system and sexual health support, funding for basic items to enable them to move into

EET, work with parents, careers advice and education and training opportunities.

- 6.5 The safe and young person friendly space provided by the network of Youth Centres gives opportunities for young people to socialise, learn new skills and be supported by a youth worker. This engagement work is critical to the successful delivery of the YEI and supporting youth employment.

7. CAREERS SERVICE

- 7.1 Birmingham Careers Service has the responsibility to work with 16-17 year old young people, who are NEET. In support of the jobs and skills agenda, it delivers impartial **Career's Information Advice and Guidance**. It also delivers a traded impartial careers information and guidance service for schools to support Preventative Net and Post 16 Option work
- 7.2 Young people are also supported through the Umbrella **Sexual Health** Contract, which includes sexual health awareness work, plus preventative NEET work and work with NEET individuals.
- 7.3 There is **Cross Directorate work** with Education and Participation teams in the People and the Economy Directorates, to support NEET Preventative, EET, Known NEET and NEET Hotspot delivery work. There is also Cross Directorate work with the SENAR Service in the People Directorate, to support Post 16 Progression, NEET preventative work for those with Special Educational Needs and Education, Health and Care Plans for young people.
- 7.4 The Careers Service is a main partner in the **Youth Promise Plus** / Youth Employment Initiative activities. It also provides match-funding to enable other service providers (both internal and external) to deliver on this agenda.
- 7.5 The NEET 16-17 year-old figures are looking favourable, both on a Core City basis and overall national figure comparison, with **Birmingham as the best performing Core City**. Birmingham has a large cohort of young people, 25,000 plus, compared to other Core Cities, which has an impact on the difficulty of this work.
- 7.6 The **NEET figure for 16 to 17 year olds**, of 2.2%, makes Birmingham the best performing Core City and lower than the national average (for January) of 2.7%. This also represents a reduction compared to last year's figures of -21%.
- 7.7 The **Not Known figure for 16 to 17 year olds** is 6.6%. This compares with the national average of 3.15%; Birmingham again has a reduction compared to last year's figure at this stage by -2.2%. A new resource is now in place to help with monitoring and work still being delivered around the tracking of these young people.

8. ADULT EDUCATION

- 8.1 Overall 22,905 learning aims for **Adult Education Learners** were completed during 2016-17, through the Birmingham Adult Education Service. This is 1,772 fewer than in the previous academic year. The gender split is roughly 75:25 female to male participation. Female Learners perform slightly better than Male Learners, although the gap is small, having reduced from 3% to 1%. The highest achieving ethnic group is Asian/Asian British. The lowest achieving ethnic group is Black Caribbean, with a gap of 12%, compared with Adult Learners overall. Learners with Learning Difficulties perform in line with the overall average achievement rate. The majority of learners come from the most deprived postcodes areas in Birmingham (and nationally). In Birmingham, their progress is in line with, or better than learners from less deprived postcodes.
- 8.2 The **Overall Performance** of Adult Education was equal to, or better than in the previous academic year 2015/16. Overall learner retention was 95%, which was maintained from previous year. Overall pass rate on individual learning aims was 98%, which is 1% above the previous year. Overall achievement was 93%, which was maintained from previous year. Overall progress of learners within BAES provision is 41%, of which 13% make progress to a higher level of learning from one year to the next.
- 8.3 **16-18 Learners** account for 1% of learning aims achieved. Learner retention was 93%, which is high, at 11% above the national rate and maintained from previous year. The Learner pass rate on individual learning aims was 89%, which is 2% below the previous year, but 3% above the national rate. Overall achievement of this group was 83% which is high at 12% above the national rate and maintained from previous year.
- 8.4 **Adult Learners on Externally Accredited Provision** make up 33% of learning aims. Learner retention was 93%, which is 1% above previous year and 1% above the national rate. The Learner pass rate on individual learning aims was 96%, which is 2% above previous year and 4% above the national rate. The overall achievement of this group was 89%, which is 2% above previous year and 4% above the national rate.
- 8.5 **Adult Learners on Internally Accredited Provision** account for 66% of learning aims. Learner retention was 96%, which is 1% below previous year (there is no comparable national rate data available). The Learner pass rate on individual learning aims was 99%, which is maintained from previous year (there is no comparable national data available). The overall achievement of this group was 95%, which is 1% below previous year (again, there is no comparable national data available).
- 8.6 The Birmingham Adult Education Service was **inspected by Ofsted** in September and received a 'Requires Improvement' judgement for Overall Effectiveness. Weaknesses were identified in: governance; quality assurance and control; use of data to measure impact of the service on learners and the city; aspects of teaching practice and the progress learners make in the

classroom and over time; and the measures in place to ensure learners are safe on line. Strengths were identified: in learner behaviour; and welfare and in the promotion of British values. It was recognised that the inspection had taken place during a transitional period, which had encompassed restructuring and the opening of new centres. The BAES will be expected again, in approximately 18 months.

8.7 **A Post Inspection Action Plan** is complete and a programme of Support and Challenge monitoring is in place with Ofsted. Key changes are in place or progressing, including:

- Principal in place for 12 months.
- New Advisory Board to strengthen governance.
- Assistant Principal for Quality in place for 6-12 months to strengthen quality systems and raise standards.
- Appointment of Responsive College Unit to complete data analysis project to ascertain rate and type of learners' progression and destinations.
- Secondment of IT Systems Manager and engagement with IT and D senior officers to lead IT Transformation Programme and establish appropriate systems and tools for teaching and learning, e-safety and management of learners' experience.
- Appointment of a Senior Coach to develop coaching programme to improve teaching practice.
- Implementation of regular unannounced classroom observations and post observation action planning.
- Implementation of termly Performance Panels to assess impact managers have on improving their areas and a Notice to Improve system where progress is not sufficient.
- Purchase of new software to support careers education, information and guidance; initial assessment of learners, tracking and monitoring learner progress over time.

Ofsted will continue to visit the Adult Education Service, as part of the monitoring programme.

9. **BUSINESS & ENTERPRISE SUPPORT**

9.1 The £33m EU funded (ERDF) **Business Growth Programme** has been successfully delivering since July 2016. The Programme provides grant aid to eligible Small & Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs) to support their growth plans and stimulate the creation of new jobs. The Business Growth Programme involves working across three Local Enterprise Partnership areas: Greater Birmingham & Solihull, Stoke & Staffordshire and The Marches.

9.2 **Performance of the Programme** over the last 18 months is summarised below:

- 500 applications received through the marketing campaign
- 317 applications approved
- £9.2m of grant funding awarded
- £26.5m of private sector investment attracted, generating
- 1,007 new jobs created
- 200 (63%) of applications approved are within the GBSLEP area.

9.3 Outline applications seeking a £22m **extension of the Business Growth Programme** have been submitted and subject to government approval will be available during 2018/19. The new Programme will now run for a further three years to December 2021, growing a further 1,000 businesses and creating another 2,000 new jobs.

9.4 To help address the Skills Gap, the Council has led the development and will manage two major new initiatives, funded by £2.6m, through European Social Fund to increase skill levels within Birmingham. The **GBSLEP Skills Hub** is new initiative, awaiting final approval and will be launched during 2018. It will handle all business skills enquiries. It will also undertake diagnostics, training needs analysis and develop action plans to implement identified needs. The Skills Hub will also refer appropriate SMEs onto the GBSLEP Skills Fund.

9.5 To complement the work of the GBSLEP Skills Hub, a £12m **Skills Fund** will also be launched during 2018. It will offer training grants between £500 to a maximum of £18,000 per SME, to upskill new and existing employees. This will lead to full qualifications, units or a unit of qualification at basic, level 2 and below and at level 3+, including higher level management and leadership skills. The Skills Fund will respond directly to the skills and training needs identified by the employers for their employees by working with the GBSLEP Skills Hub; thereby offering employers what they want, at the time that they need it, to implement their skills and growth plans. The Fund will engage with 2,000 SMEs and upskill 7,030 individuals over a 3-year period.

10. **COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIPS & WORK EXPERIENCE**

10.1 **Work Experience** continues to be a key factor in attracting and growing our future talent pipeline and our HR team is looking to expand its current offering by working with a local FE college to provide Supported Internships. These opportunities will be exclusive to people who face Physical, Mental and Educational barriers by offering practical Work Experience, with Functional Skills training.

10.2 The City Council has created 110 **apprenticeship new starts** in the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. This represents an increase of 155% in the same period to 31st March 2017. During this period, fifteen apprentices (out of forty-three) were successful in gaining permanent contracts within the Council

and one with the NHS on successfully completing their apprenticeship. This represents a conversion to permanent employment of 35%.

- 10.3 The City Council piloted an innovative programme to support **Care Leavers into Apprenticeships**. Working with the Royal Society of Public Health, Children in Care Team and HR, forty-seven Care Leavers undertook a 5-day structured learning programme. A total of eight Care Leavers were invited to interview and four were successful in gaining a 2-year Fixed Term Contract (FTC) apprenticeship with our Public Health Team.
- 10.4 A successful **Traineeship Programme** was run between April and June 2017, with support from the 'Youth Promise Plus' Team (Youth Employment Initiative) to identified suitable candidates. The programme commenced with ten young people aged 16-24, with six trainees completing the course. Through support from supervisors, South & City Collage and an intensive 2-day preparation for interview course run by HR, all six candidates were successful in gaining a 1 year FTC.
- 10.5 HR staff have worked with Landlord Services to convert Agency Workers to Apprenticeship roles. A total of nineteen were appointed from a cohort of twenty-five at significant cost savings to the service.
- 10.6 The City Council continues to use **Interns** to help develop employability skills. During 2017/18 our service areas have supported twelve of undergraduates / graduates, with up to 1 year FTCs. From the 2016/17 Cohort (of 19) two have secured Permanent Contracts and one has secured a 6 month FTC with the Council, all at GR4 level.

11. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 Although it has only been just over six months since I discussed my priorities with your Committee, much has been achieved. There has been good progress in comparison to the Core Cities, particularly in relation to the way we have supported young people not in employment, education or training. However, much still needs to be done to address the jobs and skills gaps in Birmingham in an inclusive way, not least in tailoring government programmes to fit local needs. There remains the problem of how we fund these vital services in the future. There are also the challenges arising from Brexit and the uncertainties of operating in a Post-Brexit world.
- 11.2 I would like to thank the Members of the Economy, Skills and Transport Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their help and support during this difficult time. I would also thank the staff of the City Council, particularly in the Economy and Place Directorates, for their continuing commitment. In these exceptionally uncertain times, they have again ensured the delivery of the achievements of the Jobs and Skills portfolio, for the benefit of the people of Birmingham.

Councillor Brett O'Reilly
Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills
March 2018