

Economy, Skills and Transport Scrutiny Committee – 20 October 2016

Update Briefing - Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills

Introduction

During 2015/16 the Cabinet Member for Development, Transport and the Economy and the Cabinet Member for Skills, Learning and Culture made presentations to your predecessor Committee, describing activities being undertaken in their portfolios. This note provides a brief update on some of the key topics relating to Jobs and Skills. A further presentation will be made to this Committee on 20th October, describing the strategic priorities for the Jobs and Skills portfolio in the current year.

Closing the Jobs and Skills Gaps

Addressing youth unemployment and closing the skills gap remains a priority for the City Council and this Administration, particularly for the most deprived communities.

There are significant opportunities being created in Birmingham, largely driven by the development and regeneration policies of this Council and its partners, including the Local Enterprise Partnership. These include employment vacancies, college places and apprenticeship opportunities. Creating access to economic opportunities is one of the biggest issues that the City faces.

The challenge remains to address the need for skills and qualifications, and ensure that people have the tools necessary to benefit from the opportunities that have and will be created. The City Council is one of many key partners in addressing unemployment and the skills gaps locally. Our role is to provide leadership and argue for a locally focused response to the issues; coordinating and co-producing the strategies and planning to ensure there are effective and coherent pathways to employment and skills training in Birmingham that will be key to driving inclusive growth in the local economy.

Birmingham Skills Investment Plan

The Birmingham Skills Investment Plan was adopted into the Council's Policy Framework in April 2016. It was developed in partnership with a number of stakeholders, including: the Chamber of Commerce, FE, HE and the Third sectors. The Plan sets out the skills challenges over the next 10 years to stimulate economic growth and improve productivity. The implementation of the Skills Investment Plan is stimulating more partnership planning for how we meet the challenges; and how the advantages of growth can be cascaded to the most disadvantaged communities in this City.

We are closing the '**Jobs Gap**' by working in partnership to secure the resources needed to target high unemployment areas through Local Jobs and Skills Plans; capturing jobs and apprenticeship opportunities arising from major developments and infrastructure projects; and capturing jobs and apprenticeship opportunities arising from investment and enterprise in key growth and employment sectors.

We are also closing the '**Skills Gap**' by supporting workers in key sectors and local supply chain networks, to increase their skills as part of a holistic approach to business growth. We will promote continuing learning, by bringing together libraries, Adult Education and Youth Services, through a network of Community Hubs; and working with businesses, colleges, universities and third sector partners, to identify skills enhancement opportunities for local people.

Birmingham Apprenticeships & Internships

The proposed concept of a Birmingham Apprenticeship and Internship Agency has been incorporated a number of other activities given the changing policy context. As a result of the Area Based Review of Post 16 Education, FE Colleges in Birmingham are working together to put in place an employer facing '**Apporg**' to work with employers to provide a quality apprenticeship provision. This is building on new apprenticeship frameworks, which meet changing employer needs, particularly given the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy in 2017.

'**Cog**' (described below) offers a facility of directly linking young people with registered employers and training opportunities, including work experience, apprenticeships and internships. The Youth Promise Plus project will provide extensive support to young people, who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET), together with an enhanced employer engagement activity that will capture jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for project beneficiaries.

Working in Partnership

As a City Council we are positioned alongside the primary strategic employment and skills investment partners: the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), the Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service.

The development of **District Jobs and Skills Plans** with the DWP and other local stakeholders across all 10 Districts in Birmingham has provided a vehicle to capture local priorities and opportunities. Capitalising on local growth and development, the District Plans are helping to ensure that local residents have access to appropriate pathways to jobs across the City.

The Council's working relationship with the DWP continues to evolve. We are working closely with the DWP in developing a **Post 25 Skills Agenda** for the city; up-skilling those who are already in employment and supporting others to access the world of work. Local DWP staff work closely with the Council's Employment and Skills team, in order to align and improve the recruitment service to local businesses.

Following the launch in 2015, the original of 10,000 new **Work Experience Places** in Birmingham was exceeded, with **11,185** places achieved. Although the initial campaign is now completed, our partnership with the DWP to increase the number of work experience opportunities continues. Since April 2016, a further **8,615** opportunities have been offered.

As an employer, the City Council itself has committed to hosting local unemployed Jobseekers on a **Work Experience Placement**, each lasting between 2 and 8 weeks. During 2015/16, we reached a total of **99 starts** in hosted work experience placements. Some 29 people progressed into paid work. In this current year, (as at the end of July), the Council has reached a total of **55 starts** in hosted work experience placements, (from a target of 200). Some 17 people have, so far, progressed into work this year.

Project 20,000, developed with the DWP will capture **20,000** job opportunities and provide access to jobs for up to **5,000** young unemployed residents. This was due to complete at the end of September. Delivery of the project is now aligned with that of the Birmingham and Solihull Youth Promise Plus EU funded project.

Working with the DWP, we have delivered £1.2m of **Flexible Support Fund** to deliver targeted training and pathways to employment, linked to clearly identified employment opportunities. This includes employment services for employers and job preparation services for unemployed Jobseekers. The programme has been sub-divided into project categories or areas, the majority of which has been successfully delivered, with some elements running up until December 2016.

Destination Work is a £4 million Cabinet office funded initiative providing employment focused mentoring and motivational support to 18-24 year old unemployed young people, especially those that are NEET. Referral is through seven Jobcentres in key target locations. These are: Perry Barr, Handsworth, Washwood Heath, Erdington, Chelmsley Wood, Yardley and Solihull Job centres. Current actual outputs (for the period from December 2014 to June 2016) are: **2,276** young people supported; and **777** job starts achieved.

Birmingham and Solihull Youth Promise Plus

We are targeting personalised employment and skills support on young people Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) between 15-29 years old, through coaching and mentoring provided by a network of Intervention workers. Also provided is employer engagement activity to negotiate and create supported pathways to substantive jobs and apprenticeships with key employers and SMEs. The current programme has gross value of up to £50.4 million over 2 years, to July 2018 and should engage and support around **16,000** young people.

Birmingham Youth Promise Devolved Employment Fund

The fund has supported **791** young people, through **14 local projects** in Districts. It targets 16-24 year old NEET and unemployed young people, seeking to create supported pathways to employment and relevant skills training. It also includes a rapid response element for small scale interventions under £10,000, linked to Local Jobs and Skills Plans. To date **112** young people have secured employment, and the project is due to be completed by the end of March 2017.

Digital Access Point - Cog

Cog is a unique offer. A web-based platform for Birmingham's unemployed and NEET young people, it was developed in partnership with a software developer with input from the City Council's Employment & Skills Service Team. Free to all users, Cog, links young people looking for work, apprenticeships and other opportunities with employers and training providers.

It helps to close the Skills Gap by securing, through partnership working, the provision of quality careers and educational information, advice and guidance in schools and beyond; and working with businesses, colleges and universities to identify skills enhancement opportunities for local people.

It helps to close the Jobs Gap by capturing new jobs and apprenticeships arising from major developments and infrastructure projects; capturing jobs and apprenticeship opportunities arising from City Council Contracts; targeting young people for support into jobs and apprenticeships, especially those that are NEET; effectively supporting Care Leavers into employment, education or training; and capturing the job and apprenticeships arising from the investment in enterprise and key growth sectors. Registered employers can upload their opportunities onto the site, free of charge, and these will be directly promoted to young people looking or seeking for work and work experience.

Birmingham Careers Service

As part of Birmingham's Youth Promise there are a number of initiatives identified via the Jobs and Skills agenda for young people. These are in addition to the existing core responsibility to deliver an impartial Careers Information Advice and Guidance service to NEET young people.

Details of the extra activities are as follows:

- Delivery of quality assurance and audit support for schools, in relation to quality of Careers Education Information and Guidance - £80k
- Commissioning and procurement of Intensive Mentoring support for three cohorts of NEET young people - £50k
- Tracking of defined 'Not Known' cohort of young people, aged 16-19, once all other avenues have been exhausted - £80k
- Supporting identified Vulnerable Group clients within the NEET cohort, (including Learning Difficulty or Disability, older NEETs and Youth Offenders) - £50k.

Some £190k has also been allocated to fund identified providers to deliver against the Youth Promise Intensive Mentoring work. Provision of Intensive Mentoring is therefore available for cohorts of young people from the 'Looked After', 'Youth Offending' and 'Additional Behavioural Needs' cohorts. This will be an integral part of the delivery of the Youth Employment Initiative.

Birmingham Jobs Fund

The Birmingham Jobs Fund (BJF) is a multi-agency initiative led by the City Council in response to the recommendations of the Birmingham Commission on Youth Unemployment, published in January 2013. The overall aim of the fund was to stimulate employment and apprenticeship job opportunities through the alignment and enhancement of available incentive packages for employers, and to directly match unemployed 16-24 year old Birmingham residents into those jobs.

The initiative has helped to support over **3,666** Birmingham's young unemployed people into work. Of these **2,938** went into apprenticeships. The attached **Appendix One** lists the Birmingham Jobs Fund achievements by District and Ward, as at the beginning of October 2016.

East Birmingham

This project is now incorporated into the wider **East Birmingham Investment Board** work to provide an integrated a 'cradle to grave' response to the jobs and skills agenda, which is linked to infrastructure developments.

Adult Education

Adult Education continues to perform well and has achieved a '**good**' rating from OFSTED. It works in partnership with local Job Centres to support Job Seeker Allowance claimants improve their English and employability skills. '**ESOL for Work**' is an introductory programme, from which learners can progress to '**English Works**', which is a sector based programme in either retail, customer service or health and social care. In 2015/16 academic year, 25 of the 126 people who undertook an English Works programme gained employment.

Adult Education also works with employers and the Job Centres to provide **Sector Based Work Academies**. The aim is for the partnership to provide employers, who want to recruit, with 'work ready' unemployed people. Its role is to provide the referred learners with intensive relevant employability skills training. In the 2015/16 academic year, 87 people engaged in a Sector Based Work Academy and 28 of these have gained employment to date.

The service works in partnership with the **Erdington Works** group to support the reduction of unemployment in Erdington. The Erdington Jobs and Skills Plan has been used to guide the work of the group and recently focused on supporting Employment Support Allowance Claimants.

The Adult Education **Creative Industries** curriculum offer includes textiles, floristry, upholstery, interior design and sugar craft. It also provides the skills and knowledge to set-up a business.

National College for High Speed Rail

As project sponsor, we are developing the National College for High Speed Rail to deliver skills for local people to gain the range of jobs to come from HS2. This will involve supporting workers in key sectors and local supply chain networks to increase their skills; and working with businesses, colleges and universities to identify skills enhancement opportunities for local people. Work commenced on the College site earlier this year, and the College will be open for its first intake in September 2017.

Operating from dual sites in Doncaster and Birmingham, the National College for High Speed Rail will provide a platform for: capturing new jobs and apprenticeships arising from major sector developments and infrastructure projects; capturing the job and apprenticeship opportunities arising from enterprise and key growth sectors; and supporting groups and communities facing barriers to the labour market by developing pathways to self-employment.

Building Jobs in Greater Birmingham

Building Jobs in Greater Birmingham is the strategy developed in response to employers' needs within the construction and built environment sectors, to support and grow the construction industry in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands area. The Council is working in partnership to secure the resources to target high unemployment areas, through local Jobs and Skills Plans.

Joint Investment Construction Project – Growth through People

This project was developed in collaboration with the public and private sectors, including: the Construction Industry Training Board, Carillion and other major construction companies, construction trade associations, Further Education colleges and the DWP. It seeks to address local skills gaps within the sector, creating unique employment and skills opportunities for our local unemployed residents. It also focuses on the needs of construction sector employers and supports their workforce development requirements. The following has been achieved to date:

- 209 people have obtained a **Construction Skills Certification Scheme** Card
- 53 people with little or no construction experience have undertaken a **Pre-Apprenticeship programme**.
- 477 people have completed or are currently now on **vocational training** programmes.
- 36 construction **SMEs have been supported** within the Birmingham and Solihull LEP area.
- 74 people from those businesses undertook **leadership and management training**.
- 148 people have moved into **employment**.

Business Growth Programme

ERDF funding to the value of £33m has been secured to support business growth and related job creation. Based on previous successful City Council business support activity, 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 is available to SMEs in three Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas: Greater Birmingham & Solihull, Stoke & Staffordshire and The Marches and offers grant aid to match SME investment across a range of growth-related projects.

We are working in partnership with the Local Authorities within the LEP areas to deliver the programme, which was launched in July 2016 and runs to end December 2018. The targets are to:

- Create **1,331** new jobs
- Support **576** SMEs
- Generate Private Sector match funding of **£14.78 million**.

Re-establishment of the Birmingham Employment and Skills Board

By supporting this Board it will enable a refocusing and prioritisation of the Skills Agenda, and provide a crucial link between the City Council and the GBSLEP Employment and Skills Board, strengthening strategic partnership working and improving communication and understanding.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny Committee Members on aspects of work within the Jobs and Skills portfolio that have previously been reported to them. There will, in addition be a presentation at the meeting on the 20th October, which will cover current priorities and how these are being addressed by the services within the new portfolio.

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Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills

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