

Update on actions against recommendations of Scrutiny Review Employment and Skills 2015

Recommendation	Update
<p>R1. That the Council takes a stronger role as the champion and honest broker within and across partnership forums to ensure that employment and skills outcomes are effectively delivered.</p>	<p>In 2016, we established the Skills and Employment Board to drive forward the Skills and Employment Action Plan. The Board has representation from major institutions and key sectors including business, Job Centre Plus the University, College, and voluntary community sector. The chair is a local business representative. The Skills and employment Board reports to the City Board and includes representation of the Economic Growth Board and Inclusion Board. Refer to 3.1 in the main report.</p>
<p>R2. That the Council utilises its role of champion and honest broker within partnership working to generate confidence and credibility in the capability of the City to deliver against the employability and skills agenda, linking strongly with the Council's Corporate Communications Team.</p>	<p>The Council has developed, on behalf of the broader partnership, the Skills and Employment Action Plan and components such as the workbox (3.9) and post 16 skills plan (appendix). A One City Skills Conference was held on 30 November 2016 and attracted over 100 attendees from local skills and employment organisations in which they signed up the work plan, developed the detail of the plan and signing up to the principles.</p>
<p>R3. That the City develops a long term cross partnership strategy for employability and skills to achieve a step change in reducing the number of the working age population with no qualifications and not in employment. The strategy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> provide clarity of roles and responsibilities whilst also ensuring quality provision <input type="checkbox"/> make provision for oversight and accountability, consideration should be given to establishing a bespoke forum to maintain oversight of this agenda <input type="checkbox"/> take into account the extent of the issues facing the City and ensure interventions are scalable and closely aligned to the 	<p>Skills and Employment Action Plan (3.2 onwards) in place. A three year plan will be developed by the Skills and Employment Board.</p>

<p>emerging work on the Combined Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ ensure consistency of approach for young people in the City 	
<p>R4. That schools be strongly encouraged to fully engage in the partnerships in the City that are dealing with employability and skills issues to meet the reasonable expectation that schools will support young people to develop soft skills, receive careers advice and gain work experience to get work ready.</p>	<p>The post 16 Skills Plan (appendix to main report) sets out actions to encourage schools to provide independent advice and guidance, pre-apprenticeships curriculum, meaningful careers education and guidance. The plan is delivered by a range of partners and internally through the Education Business Partnership and Connexions. Majority of schools are signed up to the Quality Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) award.</p>
<p>R5. That the Council has a key role as an influencer for example specific work needs to be undertaken with Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) to consider more flexibility regarding Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) and voluntary work experience arrangements.</p> <p>This influencing role needs to extend to issues of skills and employability that relate to the combined authority.</p>	<p>The Council are in discussion with DWP around freedoms and flexibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work more closely in partnership with DWP at local level including regular meetings and information sharing between frontline staff. 2. Recognising basic skills needs where claimants are identified as requiring additional support with basic skills to support them with their employability, any courses that they attend should be counted towards their claimant commitment. 3. Drug and alcohol work collaboratively with DWP and Health to understand the scale and develop solutions to drug and alcohol as a barrier to employment for young people 4. JCP should allow young people to attend extended employability programmes to support them into work to reflect the needs in Wolverhampton. Many young people require support with their soft skills, confidence building, CV's and interview skills and understanding of reality of work to help them to become job ready and stay in work. 5. Funding to support to help young people stay in work.

	<p>Impact can support those young people who have been supported into work by the Impact project but not young people supported into work by JCP mainstream.</p> <p>6. Major programme funding to address youth unemployment – the European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funded Impact Project - is only funded until mid-2018. If Impact successfully met its job targets, we could make a significant impact on youth unemployment locally, can DWP consider continued funding for local activities to address local needs beyond mid 2018.</p> <p>The new DWP/ CWC project (3.12 onwards) will provide greater flexibility on employment support working with those pre-work and in work, provide more intensive support to the unemployed and work with graduates as well as unemployed.</p>
<p>R6. That Partnership working needs to ensure a far greater understanding of the support available across agencies in terms of the customer journey for our residents seeking work</p>	<p>The Workbox (3.9) will set out multiple customer journeys modelled around typical customers, based on evidence and input from organisations and individuals, providing a much stronger and more effective way of engaging and participating in skills and employment activities. This will strongly link to individualised and tailored support throughout the journey.</p>
<p>R7. That the Council and its partners implement a series of initiatives, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A toolkit outlining the available support for aspirant individuals in the City to enable them to access employment and enterprise b) A mentoring programme for entrepreneurs c) Collaborating to deliver a joined up, high quality work experience programme 	<p>The Wolverhampton Workbox will provide a fully functioning, interactive website providing information, advice and job opportunities around skills and employment.</p> <p>We have recently commissioned a VCS Enterprise project to move them towards and into self-employment which complements various ERDF funded provision.</p> <p>The Education Business Partnership service have enabled 1563 students to be on work experience, supported by 1049</p>

<p>d) A multi-agency volunteering strategy that includes employment pathways for volunteers</p> <p>e) A clear pathway of support for young people to get work ready, including consistency relating to work experience opportunities and the development of life skills.</p>	<p>companies in and around Wolverhampton</p> <p>As part of our VCS commissioning work, we have embedded volunteering within and changed model of delivery to a structured and supported route for volunteering</p> <p>The European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funded Impact project (3.29) supports young people along their pathway into employment.</p>
<p>R8. That the City develops appropriate business support to enable the growth and development of small and mediums size enterprises (SMEs) and should offer targeted support to budding entrepreneurs and innovators. This should build on the work of the Black Country Growth Hub and the business led forums in the city.</p>	<p>The Council led on the development of the Black Country Growth Hub (3.4) and more recently a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) bid AIM (Advice Invest and Market Development) which will provide more capacity to support SME's grow. Diagnostic designed to provide more meaningful support to businesses and enable them to design the support package to meet their needs.</p>
<p>R9. That the Council works closely with businesses to ensure that they recognise the value, and return on investment, to their business from training their employees and supporting career progression.</p>	<p>The Skills for Growth team (3.5) engage with employers to identify their skills and employment needs and supports them to access appropriate support.</p> <p>Wolves@work pledge as part of the joint CWC/DWP project (3.12) will work with employers to assist pre-recruitment and sustained employment including workforce development.</p>
<p>R10. That the Council develop and effectively utilise a robust intelligence base to better understand the trends in business growth and job opportunities, future skills needs, and resident profiles. This should include specific intelligence relating to age, geography and other equality characteristics</p>	<p>In addition to statistic collection, our approach to business relationship and diagnostic is capturing intelligence on business needs and market growth contributing to the shaping of services and informing partner and wider stakeholder processes. The Enterprise team will look to engage and capture through our relationships with businesses, the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ understand and respond to the latest thinking, ✓ trends and innovation in key sectors; ✓ to provide feedback to the Growth Hub and other partners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on key products and services; ✓ to secure engagement in the Councils regeneration and place growth agenda; ✓ to gain a heads up on any potential growth opportunity or de investment decision ✓ understand local supply chains, ✓ business financing arrangements, ✓ Workforce development plans.
<p>R11. That the Council utilises its staffing teams to gather intelligence, broker partner relationships and work closely with businesses in the City.</p>	<p>The Enterprise Team's Business Development Managers are proactively target 250 companies within the city to facilitate and enable growth and capture benefits for local residents. Many of these businesses are located within our strategic corridor areas: Northern Corridor, Southern Corridor and the City Centre.</p>