

**Executive response : Scrutiny Review of Employability and Skills**

<b>Recommendation 1</b>		
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.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. The City Board and its relevant sub-groups are the key partnership forums for employment and skills outcomes. The Council is represented at a senior level at each of these partnerships. All Council representatives will be fully briefed on the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review to ensure that this strong role as champion and honest broker is in place.	Initial discussions to take place by 30 April 2015.	Strategic Director, Place
<b>Recommendation 2</b>		
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.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. The City Board and its relevant sub-groups are the key partnership forums for the employment and skills agenda. The Council is represented at a senior level at each of these partnerships. All Council representatives will be fully briefed on the outcomes of the	Initial discussions to take place with all Council representatives on the City Board and its sub-groups by 30 April 2015.  Discussions to commence with the Councils Corporate Communications Team by the end of February 2015.	Strategic Director Place

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<p>Scrutiny Review to ensure that this strong role as champion and honest broker is in place and that this is utilised to generate confidence and credibility in the capability of the City to deliver against the employability and skills agenda. Discussions will now commence with the Councils Corporate Communications team to identify proactive ways in which this confidence and capability can be promoted and enhanced.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>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"> <li>• provide clarity of roles and responsibilities whilst also ensuring quality provision</li> <li>• make provision for oversight and accountability, consideration should be given to establishing a bespoke forum to maintain oversight of this agenda</li> <li>• take into account the extent of the issues facing the City and ensure interventions are scalable and closely aligned to the emerging work on the Combined Authority</li> <li>• ensure consistency of approach for young people in the City</li> </ul>		
Comment	Timescale/progress so far	Officer Responsible
<p>Accept. The City Board is the lead partnership forum for employment and skills in the City. The Board currently has two sub-groups the Growth Board and the Inclusion Board. There is also already a Skills and</p>	<p>Discussions to take place with the Skills and Employment Board, City Board and its relevant sub-boards by the end of May 2015.</p> <p>New strategy to be presented to the Council, Skills and Employment Board and City Board</p>	<p>Service Director, City Economy</p>

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Employment Board in place for the City. It is proposed that we capitalise on these existing structures, and discuss with chairs the need for any refinement to terms of reference in light of the review findings.	that takes into account the funding of the Scrutiny review, the Skills Commission and changes in funding regimes by end of September 2015.	
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**Recommendation 4**  
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.

Comment	Timescale/progress so far	Officer Responsible
Accept. As outlined above the key partnership forum is the City Board and its sub-groups. It is proposed that discussions are held with the City Board and the Director of Education to identify the most appropriate way to engage schools within the employability and skills agenda.	Discussions to take place with the Director of Education, City Board and its relevant sub-boards by the end of May 2015.  (Further planned activities to be incorporated into the proposed strategy to be produced in response to Recommendation 3)	Head of Enterprise and Skills

**Recommendation 5**  
That the Council has a key role as influencer for example specific work that 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. This influencing role needs to extend to issues of skills and employability that relate to the Combined Authority.

Comment	Timescale/progress so far	Officer Responsible
Accept. The review will feed into the on-going work on work experience and greater flexibility already under discussion with DWP.	Initial discussions underway.  (Further planned activities to be incorporated into the proposed strategy to be produced in response to Recommendation 3)	Head of Economic Inclusion

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<b>Recommendation 6</b>		
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.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. To form part of the work programme for the Economic Inclusion team.	Work to map and simplify the journey has commenced and will be concluded by August 2015.	Head of Economic Inclusion
<b>Recommendation 7</b>		
That the Council and its partners implement a series of initiatives, which include:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A toolkit outlining the available support for aspirant individuals in the City to enable them to access employment and enterprise</li> <li>b) A mentoring programme for entrepreneurs</li> <li>c) Collaborating to deliver a joined up, high quality work experience programme</li> <li>d) A multi-agency volunteering strategy that includes employment pathways for volunteers</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Funding of £20,000 has been secured from public health to develop a clear toolkit outlining the available support for aspirant individuals to access employment and enterprise. This piece of work will be overseen by the Inclusion Board. Timescale – completion by November 2015 to link to Universal Credit roll-out</li> <li>b) Mentoring support for entrepreneurs forms part of the current work within the Economic Inclusion team. This currently focuses on the areas of highest deprivation in the City and within these</li> </ul>	Head of Economic inclusion

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areas a small fund is already in place to provide mentoring support from experienced entrepreneurs where this is demonstrated to be a barrier to aspiring entrepreneurs. Timescale – already in progress. Further work between March 2015 and September 2015 to identify the potential to develop this city wide

- c) There is already the structure in place through the Education and Business Partnership team to support work experience within the Council. This currently focuses on young people. Work is underway to link this with the work of the Enterprising Communities team to extend the offer more widely. In addition work is underway with other partners such as Talent Match to develop a more joined up approach. Timescale –City Council work experience programme in place September 2015.
- d) Volunteering Strategy – work has commenced on the City Council to develop volunteering as a pathway to work, working in partnership with the Volunteer Service. Timescale – July 2015. This will be followed by work across partners to embed volunteering as a pathway to work in the wider partnership arena utilising the Council approach as a foundation Timescale – December 2015

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	<p>e) A pathway of support for young people to get ready for work including consistency on work experience and the development of lifeskills links closely with the work of the Education and Business Partnerships team. Initial discussions have highlighted the crucial role of schools in this process. Recommendation 4 above will set the initial foundations for engaging with schools in this dialogue. Once that this is in place (timeline May 2015) work will commence with schools and the Education and Business Partnership to develop a consistent citywide work experience and lifeskills offer.</p>	
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<p><b>Recommendation 8</b> 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>		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept.	To be built into the on-going work of the Black Country Growth Hub and business forums.	Head of Enterprise and Skills

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<b>Recommendation 9</b>		
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.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. The review will feed into the on-going work with businesses led by the Enterprise and Skills service.	To form part of the work programme of the Enterprise and Skills Service.	Head of Enterprise and Skills

<b>Recommendation 10</b>		
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 and geography.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. The recent re-configuration of services to form a cluster of services within the City Economy with a service director for this area enables a far greater focus to be placed upon the development of robust intelligence. The focus on intelligence and trends related to business growth and job opportunities, future skills needs and resident profiles will form part of the work of this service area.	To form part of the work programme for service development within City Economy. This will include the collection of specific intelligence relating to age and geography.	Service Director Economy

<b>Recommendation 11</b>		
That the Council utilises its staffing teams to gather intelligence, broker partner relationships and work closely with businesses in the City.		
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Timescale/progress so far</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
Accept. The recent re-configuration of services to form a cluster of services within the City Economy with a service director for this area enables increased co-ordination in terms of gathering intelligence, brokering partnership relationships and working closely with businesses in the City. It will also enable external funding to be maximised in terms of delivery against the employment and skills agenda.	The re-configured service area came into place in January 2015	Service Director Economy