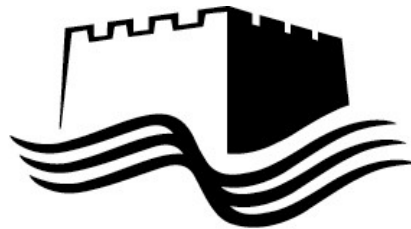


Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Reducing Worklessness amongst Young Adults 18-24



TOWER HAMLETS

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets
February 2010**

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Contributions to focus groups were received from the following organisations and some of their service users:

Limehouse Project
Ocean Somali Community Organisation (OSCA)
Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) in Partnership with the Ocean Tenants and Leaseholders Association (OTLA)

Visits were made to the following:

Community Consortium Against Poverty (CCAP)
Limehouse Project

Chair's Foreward

The issue of worklessness amongst young adults has been a matter of concern within the borough for many years. Low educational attainment coupled with low skills amongst young adults and the borough being a settling ground for migrants has all contributed to high levels of worklessness.

A number of initiatives have been developed in the past decade to tackle worklessness however the issue is still on the increase within the borough. With the current global economic recession the issue of worklessness amongst those between the ages of 18-24 is even more important to us. This is why I was keen to review what more can be done to reduce worklessness and unemployment in the borough.

Worklessness is a key priority of the Council and in particular reducing worklessness amongst specific targeted groups such as women and young BME residents. This review has taken into consideration these priorities.

What is the current situation? What is the role of the Third Sector and Social Enterprises in Tower Hamlets? Are young adults accessing provisions that are available to them? These are just some of the questions the review considered.

In March 2009 the Government commissioned a review entitled *Tackling Worklessness: A review of the Contribution and Role of Local Authorities and Partnerships* which highlighted the importance and need for local authorities to take lead on reducing worklessness within their communities. During our scrutiny review sessions a number of the recommendations from this Government review were highlighted by both the third sector and young people and in turn have been incorporated into this report.

During this review we have heard from national, regional and local organisations that have all helped us in devising our recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all and in particular the Third Sector organisations who gave up their invaluable time.

In addition to this I would also like to thank the Limehouse Project, The Community Consortium Against poverty (CCAP), The Canary Wharf Group and the Ocean Somali Community Association (OSCA) for their invaluable contributions throughout this review. A special thank you also to the young adults on the Ocean Estate, the Limehouse Project and the Ocean Somali Community Organisation (OSCA) who so willingly gave their time and shared their experiences of what barriers they have faced in accessing employment.

I hope that this review will go some way in helping young adults access the labour market in the near future.

Cllr Abdul Aziz Sardar
Scrutiny Lead, Prosperous Communities

Recommendations

The working group recommendations set out the areas requiring consideration and action by the Council and the Tower Hamlets Partnership to reduce worklessness amongst young adults aged 18-24. The recommendations cover six main areas:

Opportunities for young adults and targeted groups

- R1 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) accelerates progress on Apprenticeships by setting annual targets which are agreed by partner organisations and should explore using any locally available funding
- R2 That annual targets for work experience commitments are secured by the Human Resources Team for 14-19 year olds and the Employment and Enterprise Team for 19-25 year olds. There should be a clear emphasis on targeting groups with high levels of economic inactivity such as vulnerable young adults, women and ex-offenders
- R3 That NHS Tower Hamlets in partnership with the Council and other local health partners continue to develop specific schemes in professional health related fields with shortages to develop a workforce that reflects the community
- R4 The Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) explores extending existing Graduate Programmes in the borough to devise a summer internship programme for Undergraduate Tower Hamlets residents
- R5 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) explores either developing or supports in extending an existing mentoring project where unemployed young adults have an opportunity to be mentored by officers from the Partnership

Engaging with young adults – information and awareness

- R6 That the Employment and Enterprise Team develops innovative methods to inform young adults about job and training opportunities; this should include the use of social networking sites and text messaging
- R7 That the Third Sector Team develops a communication strategy to publicise third sector employment support available to residents locally
- R8 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) use the Connexions model to explore developing a detached and outreach strategy to reconnect with unemployed 18-24 year olds

- R9 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) works with Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and Local Authority teams to ensure that NEET young people moving into adult unemployment receive consistent and seamless support
- R10 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) commit to organising at least two job fairs annually

Role of the Third Sector

- R11 The Third Sector Team liaises with third sector organisations to develop a clear and consistent commissioning framework that sets out at the outset what it intends to purchase and what the third sector is providing. In addition, the Third Sector Team explore methods to encourage the Third Sector to be more qualitative in approach rather than merely report on outcomes
- R12 That the Third Sector Team capacity build and support umbrella organisations and Third Sector Partnerships such as the Third Sector Employment Network to carry out collaborative work, influence policy and advice and support mainstream agencies
- R13 That the Employment and Enterprise Team devise a clear Enterprise Strategy which gives on going support to local social enterprises and encourages entrepreneurship amongst young adults
- R14 That the Third Sector Team explore developing a shared database between themselves and third sector organisations showing whose working with whom whilst retaining choice for individual clients

Early intervention

- R15 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate explore the possibility of introducing greater careers education at a Primary School age, as is currently being piloted through the governments *Young peoples information, advice and guidance strategy - Quality Choice and Aspiration*
- R16 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with all Schools in the borough to ensure young people have an opportunity to gain a qualification in Employment Skills
- R17 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with Schools and Colleges to increase the availability of industry related qualifications with support from appropriate employers

R18 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with the Education Business Partnership and schools to improve quality and outcome of work experience, including a wider range of challenging opportunities with partner organisations

Community Leadership

R19 That the Council supports Councillors and other community leaders in developing their community leadership role in reducing worklessness and in particular encouraging and supporting groups which are under represented in the labour market

Further research

R20 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) commission a piece of research to map out all services, within each LAP area, that deliver employment and training provisions and looks at ways in which this could be better managed and utilised in preparation for a reduction in public services

Introduction

1. The current global recession has had a detrimental effect on worklessness across the country. With Tower Hamlets already having one of the highest concentrations of worklessness, this has had an increasingly negative impact on an already existing historical problem in the borough. A sharp increase in unemployment, which is at its highest level since 1995, has the potential to lead onto an increase in economic inactivity within the borough unless control mechanisms are in place which looks at both reducing worklessness in the current climate and also at eradicating a future generation of worklessness.
2. Certain groups have been affected by the recession more than others. A key group which has been identified here includes those 18-24 and in particular women in this age bracket. Latest figures have shown that the jobless rate amongst those 18-24 has now risen to 16.1% with the rate amongst the working age population as a whole currently peaking at 7.8%.
3. In July 2009 the Scrutiny Lead for A Prosperous Community, Councillor Abdul Aziz Sardar, identified reducing worklessness amongst young adults 18-24 as a priority area for review and in the same month the Scrutiny Working Group was established. The key aim of the review was to identify the key barriers that deter young adults 18-24 in gaining sustainable employment and what more the Council and its partners could do to reduce worklessness as a whole in the borough.
4. The review had a number of key objectives:
 - To consider how the Council can assist young adults to improve their chances of employment
 - To review the entry level opportunities available to young adults
 - To look at the information and guidance and effectiveness of having so many providers in the Borough
 - To examine the role of the Third Sector and Community Hubs in reducing worklessness;
 - To find out from young adults what they feel are the key barriers in gaining employment, particularly amongst young women
 - To analyse and have some focus on women within the borough and the Stepney and St Dunstan's ward which both have a greater concentration of worklessness
5. The group agreed the following timetable and methodology for the review:
6. **Introductory Review Meeting (August 2009)**
 - Agree scoping document
 - Receive evidence on the national context from the London Development Agency, The Learning Skills Council and the Host Boroughs Unit

- Evidence was also sought from the Lead Member for Employment and Skills and Officers from Development and Renewal and the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate

The role of the Tower Hamlets Partnership (September 2009)

- Presentations from members of the Tower Hamlets Partnership including the Director of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, Skillsmatch, Jobcentre Plus, the Canary Wharf Group, the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership and the Joint Director of HR at LBTH and NHS Tower Hamlets.

Joint session with the Members Diversity and Equalities Group (October 2009)

- Members discussed case studies collected from various local job brokerage organisations in order to better understand the issues surrounding worklessness and how it relates to equalities. There was a particular emphasis on reducing economic inactivity amongst women during the session.

The Role of the Third Sector (October 2009)

- A workshop was convened involving eight local third sector employment organisations to identify what they felt were the best methods to reduce worklessness in the borough and what more the local authority could do to support them.

Focus group with unemployed young adults (November 2009)

- Working group members held a focus group with economically inactive young adults in the Stepney and St Dunstan's Ward which has the highest concentration of worklessness in the borough. The focus group involved 15 young male residents.

Focus group with unemployed young women (November 2009)

- Members held a focus group with 12 young women from the Limehouse Project to identify what they felt were their main barriers in accessing employment

The role of the Connexions services in reducing worklessness (November 2009)

- This session considered the role of Connexions in reducing worklessness within the borough and what methods used by connexions could be incorporated and used more widely to reduce worklessness amongst those 18-24.

7. The final report for this review, including its recommendations, is expected to go Overview and Scrutiny Committee and if endorsed then will be taken to Cabinet where an action plan will be drawn up. The action plan will be monitored on a 6 monthly basis until all targets have been met.

Background

The National Perspective

8. The issue of worklessnessness has been on the government agenda for many years and even more so with the current recession. The latest labour market statistics shows that the economic inactivity amongst the working age population is 21.1% or 8 million people¹. The table below details the current national economic inactivity rate amongst all age groups nationally².

	Working Age Population (%)	Economic Inactivity (%)	Economic Inactivity amongst Males (%)	Economic Inactivity amongst Females (%)
National	62%	21.1%	16.6%	25.9%

Table 1: Economic inactivity rate amongst all age group nationally

9. It has commonly been stated that the NEET group and those in the 18-24 age bracket have been worst effected by the recession. Headlines from the past few months have read:
- *“Unemployment rates for 18 - 24 year olds has increased to 16.1%”*.³
 - *“Young people - those up to 24 years old - have been particularly hard hit with unemployment leaping to a 16 - year high of 726,000”*.⁴
 - *“Latest figures show that of the 137,000 rise in unemployment in the past three months, 55,000, or 40%, were in the 18-24 age bracket”*.⁵
10. Seven years on from the publication of the *National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, the Government is suggesting a more focused approach to tackling worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise. The Government has acknowledged that local authorities have a crucial role to play in promoting employment and suggests a number of ways in which work in deprived communities can be promoted:
- Acting as lead broker and facilitating co-ordination and collaboration between multiple agencies around tailored strategies
 - Combining local government and other services into integrated responses to the needs of people who face barriers to labour market participation

¹ ONS, Statistical Bulletin, Labour Market Statistics, November 2009

² ONS, Nomis, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431871/report.aspx?town=tower%20hamlets>

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8050745.stm>

⁴ <http://www.recruitment-international.co.uk/news/record-rise-in-unemployment-1479.htm>

⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/jan/05/school-leaving-age>

- Engaging local employers through broader economic development activities

11. This is further highlighted through the White Paper, *Raising Expectations and Increasing Support: Reforming Welfare for the Future*⁶; the Government has firmly stated its intention to devolve to local authorities the responsibility to work with their partners in better understanding the local place-shaping agenda. This is a key aspect which is acknowledged throughout this review.

12. In March 2009 the Government commissioned a review entitled *Tackling Worklessness: A review of the Contribution and Role of Local Authorities and Partnerships*⁷. This again highlighted the importance for local authorities to take lead in reducing worklessness within their localities. Key activities identified here include:

- Apprenticeships – Local authorities should be more ambitious in expanding the number of apprenticeship opportunities for young people and adults
- Work Experience – Every local authority should make work experience opportunities available, particularly Working Neighbourhood Fund authorities
- Training – Local authorities should sign skills pledges and expand the use of Train2Gain to provide training and progression for their staff with low qualification
- Social Enterprises – Local authorities should use their procurement process to tackle worklessness and support local SMEs (including social enterprises)
- Section 106 – Local authorities should seek to use Section 106 agreements to expand the number of apprenticeships places

13. In response to the global recession the Government produced the White Paper, *New Opportunities: Fair Chances for the Future*⁸ to tackle the economic downturn on the long term and look to the future in producing a greater skilled workforce. Key aspects of this include:

- Support for parents and children in the early years which have a profound impact on later life chances
- Success in school, as educational attainment at 16 remains one of the most important determinants of future success
- Investment during the critical transition years from compulsory education through further and higher education and into work

⁶ Department for Work and Pensions, December 2008

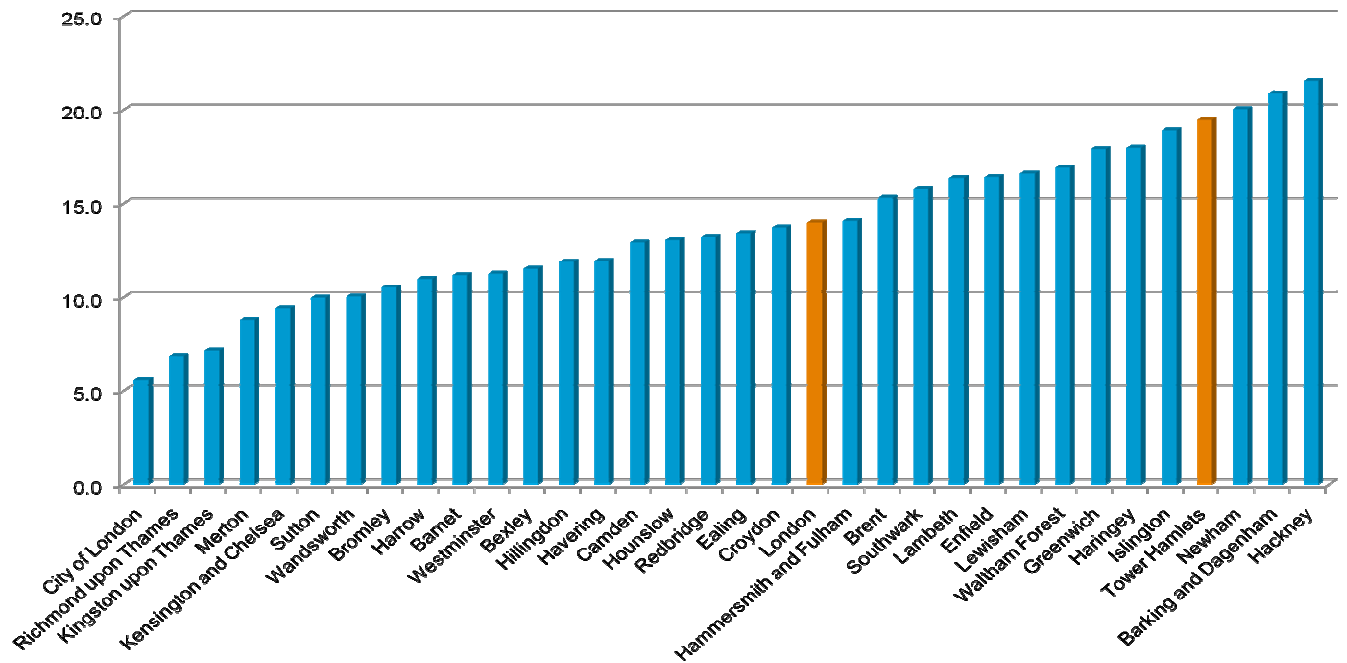
⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government, May 2009

⁸ Cabinet Office, January 2009

14. In addition to this the Governments *Building Britain's Future – Future Jobs Fund*⁹ aims to allocate £1b to successful bidders to create 150,000 jobs for young people between the ages of 18-24. Tower Hamlets Council has been successful in acquiring funding from this initiative.

The Regional Perspective

15. Kris Kranowski of the Labour Market Strategy Department at the London Development Agency presented to Members the current climate in the Capital in terms of economic inactivity. From a London perspective, Tower Hamlets has a history of poverty and in particular high levels of unemployment and worklessness. The graph below¹⁰ shows the Tower Hamlets economic inactivity rate in comparison to other London boroughs in August 2008.



16. We can see from the above that Tower Hamlets has the fourth highest concentration of worklessness in London amongst all age groups which is about 5 percentage points higher than the London average.

17. Three (LB Tower Hamlets, LB Hackney and the LB Newham) out of the four boroughs with the highest economic inactivity rate are host boroughs for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games and also form part of the Multi Area Agreement amongst the host boroughs which collectively looks at reducing worklessness amongst other issues in the East End of London.

⁹ Department for Work and Pensions, April 2009

¹⁰ London Development Agency, Labour Market Strategy, August 2008

18. The table below shows unemployment rates for 16-24 year olds in Tower Hamlets and compares this with neighbouring boroughs, London and nationally.

	Tower Hamlets %	Hackney %	Newham %	London %	Great Britain %
Unemployment Rate	23.9	22.1	20.5	14.7	12.0
Total Unemployed	2,810	2,070	2,640	52,410	440,450

Table 2: Unemployment rates in Tower Hamlets compared to neighbouring boroughs¹¹

19. Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of unemployment amongst its neighbouring boroughs which is also nearly twice the rate of the national average.

20. Furthermore London has a higher number of people in groups traditionally disadvantaged in the labour market for a number of reasons including 21% of London benefit claimants being lone parents, compared to 14% nationally and that 23% of those economically inactive in the UK have multiple barriers compared to 30% in London.

21. Members heard that a number of initiatives have been developed to tackle worklessness. This includes the Mayor's Economic Recovery Action Plan as well as the introduction of the Mayor's Jobs Portal '*Helping Graduates into Work*' which has been designed to help recent graduates gain employment despite the recession.

22. In addition there are also intensive, personalised support through new outcome based programmes such as the £24m European Social Fund funding aimed at sustainable employment outcomes and £10m being made available to Boroughs to pilot new approaches and reach new groups.

23. The Host Boroughs Unit also presented some of the work that is and will be carried out in the near future amongst the Olympic Boroughs through a Multi Area Agreement (MAA). This looked at an integrated service delivery model where the Council being the key stakeholder locally are joined by organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, the Learning Skills Council and the East London Business Alliance who partner together in order to use convergence targets to close the economic inactivity gap with the rest of London

24. Some of the key aspects of the Olympic Legacy in terms of the MAA and the worklessness and Skills Delivery Partnership are outlined below:

- Establish a sub regional approach
- Engage all of the relevant organisations in a single conversation about worklessness and skills

¹¹Development and Renewal, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

- Use convergence targets to close the gap with the rest of London
- Commission as a partner with central government and the LDA
- Use demonstration projects to build capability and capacity locally
- Join up delivery at all levels

The Local Perspective

25. Nick Smales, Service Head for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games presented some of the key headline statistics in terms of worklessness amongst 16-24 year olds in Tower Hamlets which are detailed below:

Description	Statistic
Borough 16-24 population	28,105
Economically Active	11,760
Unemployment Rate	23.9%
Total 16-24 Unemployed	2,810

Table 3: Key headline statistics in Tower Hamlets¹²

26. A reason behind the high number of unemployed young adults within the borough includes the low skills that residents possess. This is highlighted in the table below; we can see here that the borough languishes behind its neighbouring boroughs in terms of educational attainment.

	Tower Hamlets %	Hackney %	Newham %	London %	National %
% with no qualifications - working age	23.5	15.5	20.2	12.1	12.5
% with GCE A level or equivalent - working age	11.7	13.0	11.9	16.1	22.8
% with GCSE grades A-C or equivalent - working age	11.0	12.0	15.2	15.8	22.7

Table 4: Qualifications attained in Tower Hamlets compared to neighbouring boroughs¹³

27. A key aim of this review was also to look at the Ward within the borough which has the highest concentration of worklessness. The table below shows the Job Seekers Allowance claimant count for each of the boroughs Wards and according this data, published by Jobcentre Plus for November 2009, Stepney and St' Dunstan's Ward has the highest number of claimants.

¹²Development and Renewal, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

¹³Development and Renewal, London Borough of Tower Hamlet

Claimant count by Ward and age in Tower Hamlets	
November 2009 (2009 base)	Count 16-24
Bethnal Green North	175
Bethnal Green South	215
Blackwall & Cubitt Town	165
Bow East	155
Bow West	135
Bromley-by-Bow	195
East India & Lansbury	240
Limehouse	190
Mile End & Globe Town	135
Mile End East	205
Millwall	155
St. Dunstan's & Stepney Green	245
St. Katherine's & Wapping	100
Shadwell	190
Spitalfields & Banglatown	170
Weavers	165
Whitechapel	170
Tower Hamlets	3,010

Table 5: Claimant count by Ward and age in Tower Hamlets, ONS 2009

28. The table below details the current national economic inactivity rate amongst all age groups nationally and breaks this down by gender. What is alarming here is the high percentage of economically inactive women that reside within the borough. It is generally known that the borough has a young population (33% under 25) which would in turn suggest that a large proportion of those women who are economically inactive may be under the age of 25; therefore a key aim of this review is to put forward recommendations on how this could be reduced.

	Working Age Population (%)	Economic Inactivity (%)	Economic Inactivity amongst Males (%)	Economic Inactivity amongst Females (%)
National	62%	21.1%	16.6%	25.9%
LBTH	71.2%	29.9%	16.8%	44.4%

Table 5: Comparing economic inactivity between male and females in Tower Hamlets and nationally¹⁴

29. Within the borough certain Wards also have a higher percentage of economic inactivity compared to other Wards. This can be measured in terms of the DWP benefits claimed by 16-24 year olds. The latest figures from Jobcentre Plus

¹⁴Development and Renewal, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

(November 2009) indicate that the Stepney and St' Dunstan's Ward has the highest benefit claims for females aged 16-24 in the borough.

Claimant count by females and wards in Tower Hamlets	
	Count
(2009 base)	16-24
Bethnal Green North	70
Bethnal Green South	80
Blackwall & Cubitt Town	65
Bow East	50
Bow West	55
Bromley-by-Bow	65
East India & Lansbury	75
Limehouse	70
Mile End & Globe Town	55
Mile End East	85
Millwall	55
St. Dunstan's & Stepney Green	90
St. Katherine's & Wapping	35
Shadwell	75
Spitalfields & Banglatown	65
Weavers	60
Whitechapel	75
Tower Hamlets	1135

Table 6: Claimant count by females and wards in Tower Hamlets

30. Even with the high number of economically inactive residents, there is however not a shortage of jobs in the borough. According to the Tower Hamlets Employment Strategy (November 2008) the borough has 2.5 jobs available for every economically active resident.

Tower Hamlets Community Plan

31. The Community Plan was developed in 2008 and sets out the challenges and priorities for the borough through to 2020 as well as specific targets, drawn from the Local Area Agreement, that the Partnership will focus on until 2011. A key priority of the Community Plan under the theme, *Prosperous Communities* is to reduce worklessness and increase employment and skills amongst residents.
32. The priorities identified in the Community Plan to increase employment and skills include:

- Helping families escape poverty, by providing employment support and advice on debt management
- Identifying and removing barriers to employment for target groups
- Helping people to get employment by ensuring there is support and training before and after they land a job

Fostering enterprise by:

- Providing incentives that encourage both business and social entrepreneurship
- Maximising the opportunities for local businesses from key growth sectors, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Promoting Tower Hamlets businesses and encouraging growth and tourism, with particular emphasis on the Olympics and Paralympics

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2009/10

33. The Councils Strategic Plan 2009/10 also highlights the importance of reducing worklessness in the borough and considers the reduction of youth unemployment as a key priority. Some of the key aspects in the strategic plan related to worklessness include:

- Implement the action plan within the Employment Strategy to ensure that Tower Hamlets residents access new and existing jobs and thereby reduce the numbers of people on out of work benefits
- Increase employment opportunities for vulnerable people, in particular people with disabilities and mental health problems and those experiencing homelessness
- Refresh the Third Sector Strategy and Compact to ensure that we fully support these organisations
- Develop an Enterprise Strategy which sets out our approach to fostering business and entrepreneurship

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Employment Strategy

34. The employment strategy is one arm of the emerging Economic Strategy and was developed through engaging key partners through the Tower Hamlets Partnership. An enterprise strategy is currently being developed will offer an outline of activity to support business growth, entrepreneurship and social enterprises. The employment strategy highlights five key objectives as drivers in order to reduce worklessness in the borough:

- Improved co-ordination of employment related activity and funding – shared intelligence / information from employers on job vacancies, skills required and essential soft skills

- An effective range of employer led interventions – through the use of the Working Neighbourhood Fund agree a range of employment related activities to compliment the services of Jobcentre Plus and the Learning Skills Council with a target of 4,000 additional residents into employment
- Improve transition from education to employment – ensuring all 16-17 years old have a guaranteed learning opportunity leading to employment
- Create a seamless pre-employment to post employment skills offer – welfare to work programmes, job preparation and employer led pre-employment training along with greater entry level opportunities
- Develop an effective engagement programme ensuring specific activity for target groups – further develop the Community hub model to establish networks of third sector agencies and offer more localised engagement of residents

Development and Renewal Directorate Plan 2009/10

35. Reducing worklessness is a key priority for the Development and Renewal Directorate, this involve the identification and removal of barriers to employment for target groups as well as ensuring there is support and training before and after they get a job. Two key points from the 2009/10 Directorate plan include:

- Deliver the Employment Strategy to ensure that Tower Hamlets residents access new and existing jobs and thereby reduce the number of people on out of work benefits
- Manage the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and ensure it contributes towards the delivery of LAA targets

Performance Indicators

36. The following indicator defines the importance of tackling worklessness amongst this age group:

(SP308) Percentage of young people in Tower Hamlets aged 16 - 24 claiming unemployment-related benefits

37. In addition there are also a number of Local Area Agreement Targets relating to worklessness and unemployment that the Council have signed up to which include:

(SP309, National146) Percentage of adults with learning disabilities in Employment

(SP310, National150) Percentage of adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment

(SP311, National151) Percentage Overall Employment rate (working-age)

(SP313, National153) Percentage working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods

38. The Council has in the past also undertaken various reviews linked to this review on reducing worklessness. These include:

Scrutiny Review - Employment and Community Cohesion (2003/04)

39. A number of recommendations were devised through the scrutiny panel's investigation into employment and community cohesion, some of these included:

- The need to gather more robust information of the local need
- Development of the Third Sector Strategy
- Development within BME communities to offer childcare
- Further consideration to how post-14 education equips local people adequately for employment

Scrutiny Review – Graduate Unemployment (2006/07)

40. This review considered issues of graduate unemployment and underemployment within the borough. Some of the recommendations that were put forward included:

- Further research to establish the extent of graduate unemployment and underemployment
- Expand the in-house graduate training programme
- Develop further links between schools and employers by co-ordinating career workshops / advice sessions
- Use Skillsmatch to develop volunteering or secondment opportunities for graduates to gain experience

Scrutiny Review – Child Poverty (2008/09)

41. The Child Poverty review undertaken last year outlined how a future generation of deprivation could be tackled. A number of recommendations relating to worklessness was put forward including:

- That the Tower Hamlets Partnership develop on-going programmes to support specific groups facing barriers to employment
- That Tower Hamlets Partnership re-consider its position and use of data to review the support needed to get women into employment with a particular focus on supporting Bengali women
- That the Partnership explores ways to improve employment opportunities for the Somali community including the use of outreach work

- That the Health and Employment Group consider the role of GPs in identifying ways of breaking the cycle of long term sickness for those with support needs

Current Local Authority Initiatives

Skillsmatch

42. Skillsmatch is the Councils flagship job brokerage service and is ideally placed within the Development and Renewal Directorate under the Employment and Enterprise section. The service has been based in the heart of Canary Wharf since 1997; Skillsmatch has offices at 30 South Colonnade and also at the Canary Wharf Recruitment and Training Centre at 10 Heron Quay. To date Skillsmatch has placed over 6,500 local residents into sustainable employment and has built strong relationships with corporate companies based at Canary Wharf.

43. Skillsmatch has a number of programmes which it delivers to local residents including its Transitional Employment Programmes which are aimed at reducing economic inactivity within the borough, these include:

Skills Ladder – A 10 week programme aimed at first jobbers who want to work in clerical or facilities based roles. This includes Pitman IT training, confidence building and a 6 week placement which is designed to assist residents with the transition from education to employment. In 2008-2009, 104 trainees passed through the programme, with 80% going on to secure sustainable employment. The Skills Ladder and Earn as you Learn programmes also won two National Training Awards in 2006 and 2008.

Earn as you Learn – A 10 week programme aimed at second-jobbers and includes Pitman training with enhanced business communication skills as well as an 8 week work experience placement.

Graduate Placement Scheme – A 16 week placement which includes customised training for local graduates who have completed a degree but lack credible work experience. Placements have included Credit Suisse, Tower Hamlets Council and the Serious Fraud Office. The success of the scheme can be seen with 49 local graduates undertaking placements in 2009 including 32 being based at the Council of which 17 secured employment as a result.

44. In total 161 beneficiaries have been enrolled onto Skillsmatch transitional programmes during the first three quarters of 2009-10. With the main bulk of this total being made up from the commencement of 3 Earn As You Learn Programmes, 2 Skillsladder programmes, and 3 employer led transitional programmes. 1 of which was delivered with Williams Lea and 2 in conjunction with the Tower of London. Since April 2009 approx 102 previous trainees have secured permanent employment. With the current cohorts approaching

placement end dates we would expect this figure to rise significantly as full-time employment positions are secured.

45. In addition to this other programmes also delivered by Skillmatch include SIA security and construction training. Both these programmes are designed to help local residents benefit from job opportunities created by the London 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Furthermore in 2009, 66 local residents secured employment in local educational establishments as part of the services Support Workers in Schools programme which includes a 16 week school placement as well as working towards a Level 2 accreditation.
46. Between April 2008 and March 2009, Skillsmatch placed 306 local residents into employment who were under 25, representing nearly 50% of the cohort figure into work during this period (612).

Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF)

47. WNF is a government funding stream element of the Area Based Grant that is aimed at tackling worklessness, and has been allocated to local authorities where evidence shows there are significant challenges of high numbers of people without work and low levels of skills/enterprise. Tower Hamlets was allocated a total of £32.6 million WNF of which £23.6 million was allocated through strategic commissioning for project delivery in 2009/10 and 2010/11. The key aims of this fund are to look at:
 - The short term imperative to get 4,000 local residents into sustainable employment
 - The long term goal to prevent our current large population of young people becoming the workless of the future – early intervention and prevention
 - Targeted work with excluded groups with a clear focus on moving people into employment

In addition the following 5 programme streams were identified to address the three strategic goals above:

- Family focused engagement
 - Pre-employment skills and support to access local jobs
 - Accelerating improvement in educational attainment
 - Early intervention with young people at risk of worklessness
 - Support for socially excluded groups to help them move into employment
48. The WNF has been distributed to tackle a range of issues within the borough. This includes funding projects through the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate which looks at family focused engagement. In addition to this projects look at pre-employment skills and support for residents to access local jobs. Furthermore a number of projects also look at early intervention and prevention as well as the targeting of socially excluded groups to help them move into employment.

Future Jobs Fund (FJF)

49. Tower Hamlets has been successful in acquiring £650,000 through the Department for Work and Pensions Future Jobs Fund. In addition to this an extra £273,000 has also been added to this amount through WNF.
50. The FJF programme aims to create 100 jobs during the period October 2009 and March 2011 with indicative intakes in Autumn 2009 (October), Spring 2010 (April) and Autumn 2010 (October).
51. The scheme covers employment for a 6 month period and experience has shown that success for a long-term unemployed group (which the Future Jobs Fund is targeted at) is based on a combination of wage + training + support. Referrals to the programme will be via Job Centre Plus and the principal target will be young people aged between 18-24 years who are or will have become unemployed for 10 months or more from September 2009 and October 2010.
52. To date, through the FJF the Council has recruited 18 young residents in November 2009 and 13 residents in February 2010 and has placed them in a range of different placements including various Council services, Tower Hamlets Homes, NHS Tower Hamlets and the Whitechapel Art Gallery. The programme aims to recruit another cohort of young adults in March 2010.

Key Findings

Opportunities for Young Adults and Targeted Groups

53. Deborah Clark, Former Joint Human Resources Director at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and NHS Tower Hamlets, presented some of the programmes the Human Resources Services at LBTH and NHS Tower Hamlets were currently delivering to reduce worklessness amongst young adults between 18-24 years of age.
54. The partnership currently has 100 apprentices although this is to increase to 200 by 2012. The scheme was initially aimed at those 16-19 years of age however it is now open to all and covers areas such as Customer Care and Construction. 90% of those who completed the schemes have gained employment with the Council. Members were keen for the partnership to increase the number of entry level and apprenticeship posts available. This was in turn echoed at later sessions and in particular during the focus group session with young women where participants highlighted the need for more entry level placements.
55. Three possible routes for apprenticeship programmes were identified during the session. Firstly, with the increasing number of Housing and Commercial Developments in Tower Hamlets, the working group highlighted the need for the Council to tap into apprenticeship opportunities through Section 106 Funds.
56. In addition to this Members also felt that the council should actively look into apprenticeship placements within organisation and companies that they procure services to as part of their contracts.
57. Furthermore it was also noted that worklessness and unemployment have an impact on Registered Social Landlords and the Metropolitan Police in terms of an increase in anti-social behaviour amongst young adults who are economically inactive. In addition it was also highlighted that there are potential health inequalities amongst those that are economically inactive which has an impact on NHS Tower Hamlets. With this in mind it was felt that such services in partnership with the Council need to take more responsibility in increasing its intake of apprenticeships locally.
58. The working group also heard that the Tower Hamlets HUB delivers just over 300 apprenticeship programmes to under 19s. Apprenticeship programmes were important in allowing young adults to gain both work experience and study for a qualification which would in turn set them up for a possible career. It was suggested that specific targets should be developed on an annual basis in terms of how many apprenticeship placements are delivered across not just the Council but also its partners and in turn the Prosperous Community Plan Deliver Group were best placed to do this.

R1 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) accelerates progress on Apprenticeships by setting annual targets which are agreed by partner organisations and should explore using any locally available funding

59. It was noted that the Council plans to provide 50 work experience places per year across the borough with each Directorate providing a minimum of 10 placements. Currently two work experience placements had been filled within the Human Recourses Team. Members suggested that this should be increased and the Council and its partners should drive this agenda forward and maximise the number of placements available. However, it was stated that the issue here was of departments being willing to take on a local resident and making sure that their time spent with the Council is productive for both the resident and their employer.

60. The increase in the number of work experience placements, particularly targeting specific groups, was also highlighted during the focus group with the young male participants. They suggested that they had found it difficult to seek employment due to previous criminal records and even though they had reformed, they were still unable to find work. They felt that the partnership should have a specific programme targeting those who have a criminal record and are seeking work.

Case Study – Sainsbury’s

Supermarket chain Sainsbury’s delivers a programme called “You Can” which aims to help people back into the work place and offer support, training and skills opportunities for them to success. “You Can” is a selection of programmes which target specific groups such as those with disabilities.

Currently the programme runs a scheme that helps female ex-offenders get skills, experience and ultimately employment that can help them rebuild their lives after they leave prison. Sainsbury’s have set up a trial with Holloway Prison, which hopes to benefit more women in the future.

Their partnership with the London Employer Accord also enables them to support ex-offenders back into work. They are running this programme in selected stores across London and in 2008/09 supported 140 people through this scheme.

61. This was also consistent with a meeting with Paul Rickard, the Council’s Resettlement Co-ordinator who stated that there was a need for the partnership to look into the viability of having work experience placements for ex-offenders. Paul highlighted the excellent work that the high street chain Sainsbury’s had accomplished through their partnership with the London Employment Accord in giving ex-offenders the opportunity to re-establish their place back in the community. The working group felt that the Council should look into being involved with such initiatives.

R2 That annual targets for work experience commitments are secured by the Human Resources Team for 14-19 year olds and the Employment and Enterprise Team for 19-25 year olds. There should be a clear emphasis on targeting groups with high levels of economic inactivity such as vulnerable young adults, women and ex-offenders

62. The working group noted that the Gender Equality Steering Group was also looking into the high percentage of economically inactive women locally. The working group acknowledged the immense work NHS Tower Hamlets has undertaken in years to recruit from the local community but also heard that there was a shortage in some health related fields locally which could be tapped into through specific training schemes for local residents. Members were keen that these professions had a workforce that reflected the local community.
63. The draft outline report on the health careers plan (November 2009) notes that over the last ten years there have been significant increases in the number of Bangladeshi employees working in the three NHS Trusts (NHS Tower Hamlets, Barts and the London NHS Trust and the East London NHS Foundation Trust). The largest increase has been seen at NHS Tower Hamlets (from 66 to 249 which equates to around 15% of all staff). A smaller increase has been seen at Barts and the London Trust where the proportion of Bangladeshi staff has increased to 5% of all staff in 2008. This includes a proportionate increase from 1.5% in 1998/99 to 3% in 2009 among clinical professionals. However, this still lags behind the overall figure, which itself is not representative of the local population.
64. Amongst nursing and midwifery staff at Barts and the London NHS Trust the proportion has increased from 0.1% to 0.8% for the same period. Whilst this is an eightfold increase, it is from a very low base¹⁵. This is mirrored at NHS Tower Hamlets which has only 5 nurses at Band 5 or above with Bangladeshi backgrounds out of a workforce of 308 in these bands. There are eighteen in all grades out of total workforce of 432. At East London NHS Foundation Trust, 2.3% of the workforce is of Bangladeshi origin (2.2% for all nursing staff).
65. Across the Health Economy, Bangladeshi staff members are generally concentrated in lower administrative and clerical grades. They are generally employed at lower grades in clinical posts than their White British or Black African counterparts. Among all three NHS Trusts, the proportion of Bangladeshi staff in registered nursing and midwifery roles stands at 46 in all grades out of a total workforce of 3626, or 1.2%.
66. NHS Tower Hamlets have devised an action plan to tackle some of these

¹⁵ It should be noted that 17% of nursing staff at BLT are shown as of unknown ethnic origin, so this figure may be understated.

inequalities that exist in the local healthcare job market including encouraging postgraduate entry through local graduate programmes and working more closely with local Schools and Colleges. Members were keen for more of these schemes as well as the draft action plan that NHS Tower Hamlets are devising to be implemented in order to increase access to local health related jobs for local residents.

R3 That NHS Tower Hamlets in partnership with the Council and other local health partners continue to develop specific schemes in professional health related fields with shortages to develop a workforce that reflects the community

67. Derek Harvey from Jobcentre Plus highlighted some of the programmes they were delivering to tackle the issue of rising unemployment amongst young adults between 18-24 years of age. Some of the existing help which is available includes the New Deal for Young People and lone parents. In addition to this there are a number of programmes which will be starting in the near future to tackle issues arising from the current economic crises.
68. The Young People Guarantee will be rolling out in January 2010 which guarantees an offer of a job, work focused training, or meaningful activity for all 18-24 year olds who have been on JSA for 39 weeks. This is open to those within disadvantaged areas of which Tower Hamlets qualifies.
69. The Backing Young Britain programme will also be delivered which targets those who are newly unemployed and have recently left school, college or university. This was a rallying cry to businesses, charities and government bodies to commit to at least one of 7 'asks' which include work trials, mentoring place and graduate/non graduate internship programmes.
70. Members were keen for local residents who were at University to have the opportunity to undertake an internship with the Council or one of its partners. This was also suggested by young adults, particularly past university students who attended the focus groups in that they felt they lacked work based experience when entering the labour market post university studies.
71. The scrutiny review on Graduate Unemployment in 2006/07 also highlighted that a key barrier for local graduates in securing employment was the lack of work experience that they possessed. Rather than re-inventing the wheel and setting up an undergraduate internship programme, working group members felt that the Partnership should explore expanding a number of already existing graduate development programmes so current university students can undertake a placement over their summer break. This would both allow Partnership organisations to have a semi-skilled student for up to 10 weeks as well as allowing that student to gain invaluable work experience which in turn makes them more job ready post graduation.

72. Members identified the Skillsmatch Graduate Programme, the Tower Hamlets Graduate Development Programme and the East London Business Alliance's Graduate Local Employment Scheme as potential programmes which could be expanded to deliver such internships.

R4 The Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) explores extending existing Graduate Programmes in the borough to devise a summer internship programme for Undergraduate Tower Hamlets residents

73. Members met with a number of young male and female residents aged 18-24 who were finding it difficult to access employment during two focus groups. One of the focus groups took place at the Ocean Tenants and Leaseholders Association (OTLA) Hall on the Ocean Estate and consisted of 15 young men whilst the second focus group was a specific women's only session taking place at LIFRA Hall through the Limehouse Project.

74.



Young adults at the two focus group workshops



Young adults at the two focus group workshops

75. Many of those who participated in the focus groups suggested that they had a lack of local role models to aspire them when seeking employment. A way to tackle this was for the Council to devise a mentoring project where young adults could seek advice from Council and partner employees on how best to go about

seeking employment as well as advice on application forms. Members were enthusiastic about the partnership setting up a mentoring scheme which could both benefit those who are economically inactive as well as those employed by the Council and its partners.

76. Tower Hamlets already has a number of existing mentoring programmes in place which include those being delivered in schools by the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership. Members recognised the benefits that mentoring could bring to young adults who were unemployed including constant support, guidance and assistance with seeking employment. In addition to this members also recognised that mentoring gives adults the opportunity to be a positive role model for young people by sharing their knowledge, skills and life experiences.

77. It was noted here that the Partnership could either develop a new scheme from scratch although this was highlighted as being cost intensive. An alternative approach was for the Partnership to support the extension of an already existing mentoring scheme so it delivers a programme specifically for those who are unemployed in the borough. The Osmani Trusts Shaathi Project was highlighted as a possibility.

78. The Shaathi Mentoring project was set up and established in 2002. The mentoring project implements an early intervention approach in working with “hard to reach” and “disengaged” young people. Many of these young people have been identified as being at risk of becoming excluded from mainstream services such as education, training and employment or are engaged in anti-social behaviour and criminality. The project works with and alongside mainstream services such as School’s, PRU, Connexions, Social Services, Youth Offending Teams and others. The project acquired the Approved Provider Standard (APS) in 2006 and Investing in Volunteers (IIV status in 2008).

R5 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) explores either developing or supports in extending an existing mentoring project where unemployed young adults have an opportunity to be mentored by officers from the Partnership

Engaging with Young Adults – Information and Awareness

79. Methods used in engaging with young adults were a popular theme that popped up at a number of sessions, most notably during the focus groups with young adults themselves. They felt that a lot more could be done by both the Council and its partners in engaging with them and their peers.

80. Current methods of advertising local vacancies and training opportunities included the East End Life and the Council’s website. However young adults felt

that more innovative method should be in place to engage with those who either did not have access to the internet or did not read the East End Life.

81. A number of young adults highlighted the Ocean Job Shop (the employment wing of the Ocean New Deal for Communities) and their process of engaging with local residents through text messaging as being extremely successful and for such methods to be put in place in order to engage those that were hard to reach. The working group felt that there are other avenues such as social networking sites which could provide a useful tool to engage young adults.

R6 That the Employment and Enterprise Team develops innovative methods to inform young adults about job and training opportunities; this should include the use of social networking sites and text messaging

82. During the focus groups with young adults, members spoke of the current work the Council and its partners were undertaking in terms of reducing worklessness as well as the resources that were being invested to ease the issues within the current financial climate.

83. The Working Neighbourhood Fund was one of the programmes that were introduced to young adults however a number of participants were not aware of this and what third sector organisations were being funded. The working group felt that publicising this will ensure WNF projects were known to a wider audience and in turn would enable those needing support to access them.

84. As the lifetime of WNF is time limited, it was suggested that in general, third sector employment support and job brokerage services should be publicised more within each Local Area Partnership Area. The working group acknowledged the important role of the third sector in reaching out to hard to reach groups. Furthermore Members also felt that the third sector should be more utilised in engaging with these hard to reach groups and in particular within a climate where value for money will be of greatest importance.

R7 That the Third Sector Team develops a communication strategy to publicise third sector employment support available to residents locally

85. Young people commented that the Council and its partners needed to do more to engage with them and their peers, particularly on the streets. It was important to engage with young adults who were socially excluded and in turn were not accessing job brokerage services and only attended Jobcentre Plus to sign on. They highlighted the model used by Drugs Outreach Workers in Tower Hamlets as best practice in engaging hard to reach communities and suggested a similar model be developed by employment advisors.

86. Members were keen to take this idea forward, particularly as it was also mentioned during the session with the Head of Youth and Connexions, Dinar Hossain and the Futures Area Manager Steve Grocott. During this session it was highlighted that the Connexions service undertakes outreach work to engage with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). This included working closely with Youth Centres, on the streets and also door to door knocking.

87. It was also noted that an ever increasing challenge which was being faced was to keep track of those young people who were NEET but then turned 18 and were classified as being adult unemployed. It was highlighted here that there was a need for a smoother transition for these young people who included the greater partnership working between the Connexions Services and Jobcentre Plus to make sure that these young people do not drop off the radar once they turn 18.

R8 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) use the Connexions model to explore developing a detached and outreach strategy to reconnect with unemployed 18-24 year olds

R9 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) works with Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and Local Authority teams to ensure that NEET young people moving into adult unemployment receive consistent and seamless support

88. The very high turn out to the recent Tower hamlets Jobs Fair highlighted the issues of unemployment in the borough. Members were keen for such job fairs to take place at least twice a year so residents could engage with a number of potential employers under one roof.

89. Members acknowledged the wide ranging benefits that such job fairs brought including the increased partnership working between the Council and its partners which are expected to be increasingly important with the expected reduction in public finances.

90. Further the working group recognised that such job fairs encouraged partner organisations to also work towards a workforce that reflected the local community and in addition gave local residents a greater chance to understand and have access to a range of industries. Members felt that such fairs should also include careers advice and guidance to local residents as well as an opportunity for local third sector organisations to publicise themselves.

R10 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) commit to organising at least two job fairs annually

Role of the Third Sector

91. A session looked at the role and importance of the Third Sector in reducing worklessness within the borough and particularly amongst hard to reach residents such as women. Eight local third sector organisations who are working in the job brokerage and employment fields attended the session and contributed their view on the key issues facing them when working with local residents.
92. Jon Underwood and Nasim Ahmed from the Third Sector Team outlined examples of projects that are being funded through the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF). Most of the WNF has been distributed to local third sector organisations and Tower Hamlets has been very generous in doing this compared to other London Boroughs. Furthermore a year of the programme still remains with a targeted output of 4000 jobs expected from the project over its lifetime; however this figure was put in place before the current economic crises.
93. Examples of projects which are being funded that look at some of the Council's priority areas such as the funding of the Muslim Women's Collective which is working with Muslim Women as well as the Somali Integration Team that works with Somali girls. It was noted that WNF will come to an end in March 2011 and it was paramount that sustainability strategies are something that third sector organisations need to consider. Also highlighted at the session were the key themes which link the Third Sector Strategy with the Council's Community Plan including a greater voice for third sector organisations and the introduction of a Council for Voluntary Services.
94. The session also included a small workshop where participants split up into two groups and highlighted what they felt were the key issues facing the third sector and how the sector could be better utilised. The workshops were facilitated by members of the working group. Common recommendation themes were mentioned by both groups which were noted by the Members.
95. Representatives felt that there were inconsistencies in the way the Council commissioned services to the third sector. In particular it was mentioned that tendering was usually based on price whilst monitoring was based on costs. Participants also stated that there was a need for more flexibility with monitoring and management in that there was too much focus on targets rather than qualitative outcomes. Organisations were being tied down with the need to constantly measure performance and outcomes rather than tackling the long term causes of worklessness.

R11 The Third Sector Team liaises with third sector organisations to develop a clear and consistent commissioning framework that sets out at the outset what it intends to purchase and what the third sector is providing. In addition, the Third Sector Team explore methods to encourage the Third Sector to be more qualitative in approach rather than merely report on outcomes

96. With the Working Neighbourhood Fund expected to end in March 2011, the importance of sustainability and the capacity building of third sector organisations was widely discussed during the workshops. Representatives suggested the need for third sector employment organisations to work in greater partnership with each other. In addition there was a need for a voice for third sector employment organisations to be set up and capacity built locally considering the importance which the sector holds for the Council to meet its objectives.



Workshops involving Third Sector Organisations

97. Nasser Miah (Chief Executive) of the Community Consortium Against Poverty (CCAP) highlighted the importance of partnership working, particularly post WNF, and gave the example of CCAP where all organisations involved apart from Bart's and the London NHS Trust were from the third sector.

98. Nasser highlighted that a number of organisations involved with CCAP were working towards the Council's priorities where organisations who are part of the consortium such as the Limehouse Project and the Jagonari Centre both work with Muslim women and women in general whilst the Ocean Somali Community Association (OSCA) and the Osmani Trust were working with Bangladeshi and Somali residents and City Gateway were engaging young people. In addition to this Nasser also mentioned the need to support and build the Third Sector Employment Network which brought together a number of third sector employment initiatives within the borough.

99. This was echoed at a previous session where Kim Chaplain from the Host Boroughs Unit highlighted the need for localism and devolution when tackling worklessness and those services needed to stop competing with each other but rather should work together and not in isolation.

100. In considering issues arising from this session the working group felt it was important to develop the third sector and in particular the role played by them as highlighted above. In addition to this Members also recognised the growing importance of partnership working with the third sector and in particular within the current financial climate

R12 That the Third Sector Team capacity build and support umbrella organisations and Third Sector Partnerships such as the Third Sector Employment Network to carry out collaborative work, influence policy and advice and support mainstream agencies

101. The importance of social enterprises in reducing worklessness was highlighted during the review. A number of social enterprises were publicised to the working group and how such projects had aided residents to escape economic inactivity. Two such projects which have aided local residents to access employment include the Bromley-by-Bow Centre's *Beyond the Barn* initiative and the Tower Projects *Tower Hamlets Valeting Enterprise*.

Case Study – Beyond the Barn, Bromley-by-Bow Centre

'*Beyond the Barn*', a unique and growing network of currently, 21 successful social enterprises across Tower Hamlets, all supported and kick started by the Bromley by Bow Centre social enterprise team. They range from an ethical cleaning service to an IT consultancy. All have a shared mission to create local jobs, deliver vocational training, recycle profits back into the local community, provide goods and services for local people and improve the environment across the borough. *Beyond the Barn* have a turnover of more than £1 million and have created over 100 new jobs within the community to tackle issues such as worklessness - 56% from BME communities and almost 30% run by women.

The greatest success for *Beyond the Barn* is Bikeworks a Community Interest Company, which has recently been awarded the "Best New Social Enterprise in England" and the "Best New Social Enterprise in UK" in the 2009 Social Enterprise Awards.

Bikeworks operates a "community cycling hub" based in Victoria Park. They deliver a number of cycling based programmes. These include employment and training opportunities for the long-term unemployed, cycling for health, all ability cycling for disabled people, bike recycling and sales and repairs to the public.

The work of *Beyond the Barn* has been recognised by Central Government as best practice "This work is cutting edge and a fantastic example of *social enterprise meeting the needs of the entire community*". Phil Hope, Minister of State for the Third Sector, 2008

Case Study – Tower Hamlets Community Valeting Enterprise, Tower Project

The Tower Hamlets Community Valeting Enterprise (THCVE) was set up in May 2009 and is one of a number of social enterprises run by the Tower Project. It aims to deliver a professional transport valeting service to local authorities, public bodies, organisations, schools, youth clubs and businesses.

What makes THCVE unique is that they are a Community Interest Company. Meaning they work for, and are part of the local community. They provide training, work and employment opportunities to disabled people, vulnerable adults and long term unemployed people living in the local community of East London.

The creation of work and training opportunities by THCVE in an area of high unemployment, worklessness and poor health conditions allows those people furthest away from the labour market to gain accredited training, work skills and paid opportunities in a supported employment environment. As a social enterprise all profits made are re-invested into these aims of providing more training and work for unemployed people.

During its 7 months of operation they have successfully recruited 8 young people with moderate learning disabilities who have engaged in an accredited valeting and employability Open College Network program and completed a 3 month work placement. As valeting contracts with Tower Hamlets Council and others increase they expect to be able to offer paid employment opportunities to those who have successfully completed their placements, this will happen over the next few months.

102. Third Sector organisations present at the session however stated that there was a continuous need for the Council and partners to support social enterprises through all stages from their development to making sure they are sustainable.

103. Members were keen for the Council's new Enterprise strategy, which is currently being drafted, to include specific support to third sector organisations to both develop social enterprises and also support their sustainability.

104. In addition to this, Members and young people taking part in the focus groups also highlighted a keen interest in encouraging young entrepreneurs within the community through support from the Council. This would ideally be through training and development opportunities for young people with innovative ideas that have the potential to benefit the local community.

R13 That the Employment and Enterprise Team devise a clear Enterprise Strategy which gives on going support to local social enterprises and encourages entrepreneurship amongst young adults

105. With the Council's target of 4000 jobs and the notion of double counting, it was discussed that there was a need to develop a shared database which is accessible by all third sector employment organisations and other partners. This in turn would aid joined up and partnership working between organisations through increased referrals. In addition to this it would minimise the administration work which is carried out by each organisation when registering a client. Furthermore it would allow organisations to better understand the individual client as well have access to information of the services they had visited in the past.

106. The working group felt an investment into this project would deliver better outcomes for local residents in the Long run and also support the partnership in commissioning services. It would also allow a more comprehensive evaluation of services being delivered by third sector organisations and allowing resources to be directed according to needs.

R14 That the Third Sector Team explore developing a shared database between themselves and third sector organisations showing whose working with whom whilst retaining choice for individual clients

Early Intervention

107. Members were keen to look at methods of reducing a future generation of worklessness within the borough as this was a topic that was mentioned at a number of sessions that took place. Members suggested that there needs to be more meaningful careers advice given in schools and this should start at a primary school age.
108. A Government pilot scheme is currently taking place in Bristol, Coventry, Gateshead, Manchester, Plymouth, Reading and York which is trialling career related learning at a Primary School age. The pilot scheme is a part of the government's strategy to increase the information, advice and guidance given to young people and is highlighted in the governments report *Quality, Choice and Aspiration*. The report highlights how research has shown that 11 year-olds have very high aspirations, with 75 per cent saying they wanted to go to university.
109. It is suggested that parents can have a huge influence on children's learning and career aspirations at all stages. This has led to the Government trialling career related learning in 38 primary schools to encourage pupils and parents to discuss careers and education choices early and during the final years of primary school. It is further suggested that parents will get the help, support and resources they need to do this confidently, and help prepare their children to choose the right subject options at 14.

R15 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate explore the possibility of introducing greater careers education at a Primary School age, as is currently being piloted through the governments *Young peoples information, advice and guidance strategy - Quality Choice and Aspiration*

110. In addition to this the report also highlights the importance of careers information for secondary school students and includes an Information and Guidance (IAG) guarantee which entitles young people in Schools to get :
- Support from a Personal Tutor who knows them well and who can help them to access specialist advice and ensure any learning needs or issues are quickly addressed;
 - High quality programmes of careers education which help young people to plan and manage their own careers;
 - Information, advice and guidance about the benefits of higher education and how to access the opportunities that it affords
 - A programme of work related learning (in Years 10 and 11), giving young people direct insights into the world of work
111. During the session with connexions it was noted that the youngest age that students are given careers advice is in Year 9. In addition to this members

were alarmed that through service level agreements and due to resources only 40 days of careers advice was given per academic year to each school which signed up to the programme. Members felt that was not enough and more needed to be done to increase the careers advice given at a secondary schools age.

112. Members heard that a method of increasing careers advice in schools could be to ensure that all young people in Secondary Schools have an opportunity to gain a qualification in Employment Skills such as the Passport to Employability.

113. Passport to Employability is a modular programme delivered by the Tower Hamlets Education Business partnership (EBP) and covers aspects ranging from managing money, searching and applying for a job, through to enterprise activities and allows students to work towards a BTEC Work Skills Level 2 which has GCSE equivalency.

R16 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with all Schools in the borough to ensure young people have an opportunity to gain a qualification in Employment Skills

114. During the session with the Tower Hamlets Partnership, Mike Tyler of the Education Business Partnership presented what employers thought were the key barriers facing young adults in gaining employment. This included a lack of work related skills amongst local residents.

115. The session highlighted that a way to increase skills amongst young people was for both the Council and educational establishments to work closer with employers to develop and increase the industry related qualifications that were currently available to young people. It was suggested here that the more options that were available to young people the better their chances would be post compulsory education.

116. During the focus group, young adults also raised concerns about their lack of industry related skills being a barrier to employment and highlighted in particular that more work related experience should've been available to them during their Secondary School years. Members were alarmed that some students hadn't undertaken the two weeks work experience during their time at School and others suggested that the two weeks taught them very little and wasn't productive.

117. Members noted that the poor quality of the two weeks work experience in schools should be looked into as this had been highlighted a number of times both during this review and externally.

- R17 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with Schools and Colleges to increase the availability of industry related qualifications with support from appropriate employers
- R18 That the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate work with the Education Business Partnership and schools to improve quality and outcome of work experience, including a wider range of challenging opportunities with partner organisations

Community Leadership role of Elected Members

118. The working group held a joint session with the Members Diversity and Equalities Working Group (MDEG) looking at issues of equalities in worklessness. This was particularly important to the review with a focus being on reducing economic inactivity amongst young women in the borough which is a key equalities priority of the Council as highlighted in the table below.

Priority area	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/Belief	Sexual Orientation
A Prosperous Community: Worklessness	Reduce number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training	Increase number of disabled people in employment	Reduce rate of economic inactivity among working age women	Reduce levels of unemployment and worklessness amongst Bangladeshi and Somali residents	Reduce rate of economic inactivity among Muslim women	

Table 8: Priority areas of inequality to be addressed through Diversity and Equalities Action Plan 2009-10

119. In the workshop members considered a number of scenarios captured from real life examples from local third sector organisations. Members were asked to think about what they thought their community leadership role should be in relation to the scenarios posed to them. A number of scenarios involved BME women and issues with cultures and traditions in terms of employment.

120. Key points from the discussion included members noting that as community leaders they had a community leadership role to play in reducing worklessness within the borough. They felt that they should influence and change the perception of certain parts of the community in making them realise the importance of working as a means of escaping poverty. It was suggested that elected members need to advise and educate parents in their constituency as to

the importance of their children gaining a good education and in turn securing sustainable employment.

121. Discussion also centred on the need for members to attend seminars so they can increase their knowledge and awareness of certain local issues such as reducing worklessness. Members could support the Partnership in reducing worklessness in various ways such as a greater role on the Local Area Partnership Steering Groups.

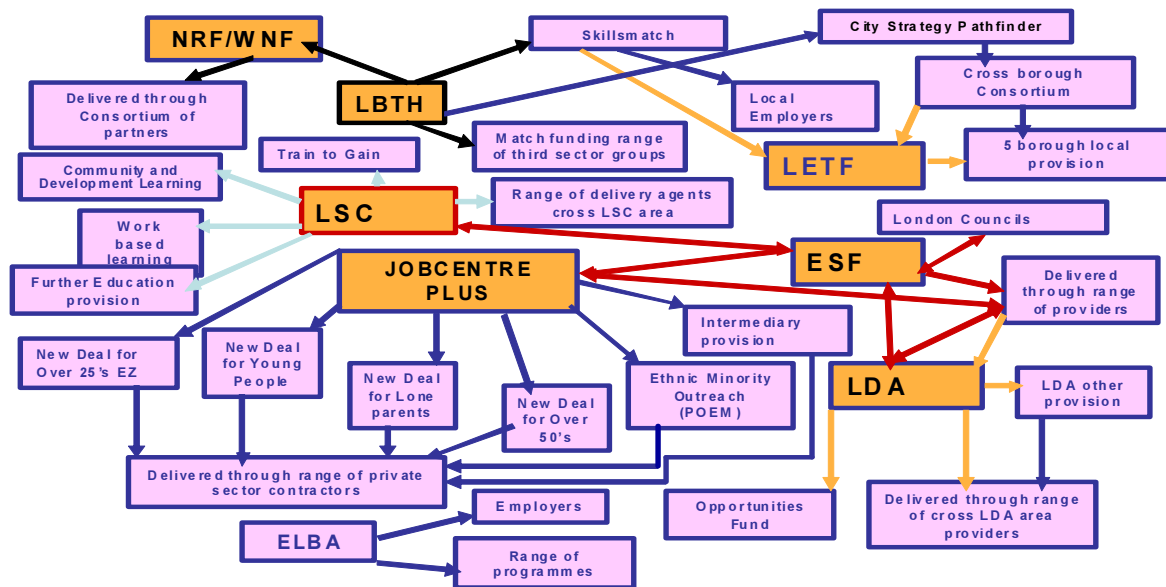
122. An addition to this, it was also suggested that this should be expanded to other community leaders within the borough and not just elected members. The need to develop those such as LAP chairs and religious leaders to portray the importance of education, skills and employment was also noted.

R19 That the Council supports Councillors and other community leaders in developing their community leadership role in reducing worklessness and in particular encouraging and supporting groups which are under represented in the labour market

Further Research

123. During the introductory meeting for the review it was highlighted that there were a number of organisations within the borough who were delivering job brokerage services to residents and this in turn could be confusing both to employment advisory staff and young adults themselves.
124. Nick Smales also highlighted the issue of a lack of coherence in the delivery of services with this being too complex with too many deliverable organisations. The notion that there were over 60 projects involved within the WNF highlighted this issue. This was consistent with Kim Chaplain of the Host Boroughs Unit who stated the need for devolution and localism when tackling worklessness although an issue which is coherent here is the fact that there are too many provisions in place which make it hard for advisors who are aiding people into employment.
125. The diagrams below detail the complexity of some of the job brokerage services that are available to residents of the borough.

FUNDING AND PROVISION ROUTES FOR EMPLOYMENT RELATED ACTIVITIES IN TOWER HAMLETS



External agencies and programmes working to reduce worklessness in the borough

126. It was suggested that with pending cuts in public services, the need to map out and evaluate what employment and skills related services are available in each LAP area should be highlighted. This would look at both the possible duplication and efficiency of services which is bound to be of importance with the expected cuts.

127. It was noted at a later session that there are some existing data and mapping work which has recently been undertaken through the City and South East London City pathfinder strategy and this could be an initial starting point for this piece of work. Organisations that are LDA funded were stated as being on this database. However with this in mind Members were keen to still undertake a mapping exercise which separates services by LAP areas.

R20 That the Prosperous Community Plan Delivery Group (CPDG) commission a piece of research to map out all services, within each LAP area, that deliver employment and training provisions and looks at ways in which this could be better managed and utilised in preparation for reduction in public services

CONCLUSION

128. In conclusion, the Working Group have made a number of recommendations which it feels will address and reduce some of the issues relating to worklessness and add value to the lives of young adults in the borough. These build on the recommendations which have been put forward in previous scrutiny reviews around unemployment and child poverty. The working group understands that specific socially excluded communities within the borough need to be targeted in order to reduce worklessness as a whole and in turn has made recommendations specifically targeting women and ex-offenders.
129. The working group welcomes the work the Partnership has been developing to reduce worklessness. In particular it is hoped the WNF programme will address some of the really difficult unemployment issues
130. The review highlights the importance of the third sector in reducing economic inactivity within the borough and in particular the role of social enterprises and how they can be developed as a vehicle to reduce worklessness. The need for the Council and its partners to utilise such social enterprises in order to harness their sustainability is key here. A number of recommendations relating to developing the third sector highlight their importance.
131. The need for greater information and in particular how the Council and its partners relay information to young adults has also been discussed at length. Recommendations for the use of innovative technology and detached work to engage with those that are hard to reach have been forward.
132. The Working Group recognises the importance of eradicating a future generation of economic inactivity. It has put forward recommendations to increase work experience opportunities for young people in secondary schools as well as methods of early intervention through the introduction of careers advice sessions from a primary school age.
133. Finally recommendations surrounding the role of Elected Members and their Community Leadership responsibilities have been highlighted. Elected members play a crucial role in advising their constituents of where to seek employment advice as well as to encourage them of the importance of being economically active in order to live prosperous lives.
134. To conclude it can be said that this review in itself will not tackle worklessness in the borough but with the implementation of some of these recommendations there is a strong possibility that it can be a positive influence in reducing worklessness locally.

Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

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