

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny	Date: 2 July 2013	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No:	Agenda Item:
Report of: Corporate Director Isabella Freeman Originating officer(s) Vicky Allen, Strategy, Policy & Performance Office, Strategy & Equality		Title: Removing Barriers to Youth Employment, report of the Scrutiny Working Group. Wards Affected: ALL		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report submits the report and recommendations of the review on removing barriers to youth employment Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Agree the draft report and the recommendations contained in it.
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Head for Strategy & Equality to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the scrutiny review group.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Working Group was established in November 2012 to look at removing barriers to youth employment.
- 3.2 The objective of the review was to investigate how the council and its partners could improve the support provided to young people to become work-ready, and helping to remove barriers to their employment.
- 3.3 As part of the review, a progress update was provided on the two recent scrutiny reviews on youth unemployment in order to examine whether outstanding recommends had been implemented and where learning from these could be used as a basis of recommendations going forward.
- 3.4 The progress review identified the importance of apprenticeships as a key route for young people into work. Initial analysis into the apprenticeship offer uncovered complexity within the system which could be confusing. The scrutiny

working group therefore chose to focus on apprenticeships. The working group wanted to look at how the council could add value and maximize the apprenticeship agenda to benefit young people within the borough. The review therefore investigated the following areas:

- Understanding the supply of good quality apprenticeships and how this can be stimulated;
- Understanding demand for apprenticeships by young people; and
- Supporting young people to access opportunities and be competitive in the labour market: how can the council add value to this agenda?

3.5 The report with recommendations is attached at Appendix A.

3.6 Once agreed, the Working Groups report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations.

4. BODY OF REPORT

4.1 Please refer to appendix 1 for the content of the report.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

5.1 This report describes the review on removing barriers to youth employment Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.2 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report except for recommendation two which would need to be contained within existing budget provision.

5.3 In the event that the Council agrees further action in response to this report's recommendations then officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made in conjunction with Education, Social Care and Wellbeing Directorates as the lead Directorate for Youth Services and also the Council's external youth employment partners.

6. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

6.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework for the Executive to provide a response.

- 6.2 The Council does not have a specific employment power. It has, nevertheless, set out employment-related objectives in its sustainable community strategy for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 (set out in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan). In order to have a prosperous community in Tower Hamlets, the Council seeks to tackle worklessness and to improve educational aspiration and attainment. The Council has adopted an employment strategy to further these objectives. The Council may take action to pursue these strategies, provided that in doing so it acts in accordance with its statutory functions.
- 6.3 Several of the recommendations in the report are concerned with the provision of information, advice and guidance to young people. This is something that the Council may support. The Council has power under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to specified restrictions and limitations imposed by other statutes. It should be recognised that significant responsibility is given to schools in relation to career advice and guidance.
- 6.4 Section 42A of the Education Act 1997 makes it the responsibility of governing bodies of maintained, secondary schools (and the local authority in relation to pupil referral units which offer secondary education) to secure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance during the relevant phase of their education. The guidance is required to –
- Be presented in an impartial manner;
 - Include information on options available in respect of 16 to 18 education or training, including apprenticeships; and
 - Be such as the person giving it considers will promote the best of the pupils to whom it is given.
- 6.5 The relevant phase of a pupil's education for such advice begins with the year in which the majority of the pupil's class attain the age of 14 and ends with the year in which the majority of the pupil's class attain the age of 16.
- 6.6 When considering any action to remove barriers to youth employment, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

7. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Around 271% of all JSA claimants in the borough are 16-4 years old, and the JSA unemployment rate for this age group is 8.5% which is around two percentage points higher than that of the working population (16-64). Around 5.4 of the London working age population are employed within the borough. The majority of people employed in Tower Hamlets are working in the financial and insurance industries, in business administration and support services, professional services, and information and communication. Apprenticeships, which mix working with training which leads to a recognised qualification, are a good way of enabling young people from the borough to be supported in their transition from school to work.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report or recommendations.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct crime and disorder reduction implications arising from the report or recommendations.

11. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

11.1 Reports concerned with proposed expenditure, reviewing or changing service delivery or the use of resources must incorporate an Efficiency Statement. Please refer to the relevant section of the report writing guide.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

¹ December 2012

Brief description of “background papers”

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.

To be completed by author

To be completed by author ext. xxx

None

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Removing barriers to youth employment, report of the Scrutiny Working Group.