

<b>Committee/ Meeting:</b> <b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b> 11 September 2013	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b> CAB 31/134
<b>Report of:</b> Corporate Director: Aman Dalvi Originating officer(s) Vicky Allen		<b>Title:</b> Removing Barriers to youth Employment – report of the scrutiny working group Wards Affected: All wards	

<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Shafiqul Haque, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills Cllr Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Families
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A Great Place to Live
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Support more people into work

1. **SUMMARY**

- 3.1 This report submits the report and action plan in response to the review recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group on removing barriers to youth employment.

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Consider this report of the scrutiny working group and agree the action plan in response to the review recommendations.

3. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 3.1 In recent years, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken two reviews of youth unemployment: one on graduate unemployment in 2006/07 and another on reducing worklessness amongst young adults aged 18-24 in 2009/10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were keen to take a fresh look at this issue to explore what the council and its partners can do to reduce youth unemployment in the borough. The Committee felt that it was appropriate to revisit this issue as, since the last reviews, the continuing global recession has depressed employment further especially for young people.
- 3.2 Improving employment opportunities for residents in general, and for young people in particular, has been a local priority for a number of years. There are a wide range of organisations within the borough

which support young people in their post-16 options, including statutory and publically funded organisations. By working with businesses and providing employment training and job brokerage services, the council aims to secure economic benefits for local residents.

- 3.3 The council's contribution to the total borough spend on information, advice and guidance, capacity building and employment preparation work is approximately 5%. Given its limited financial resources, the council's role as an influencer and an enabler is crucial in helping young people to effectively access both pre-job support and job opportunities.

#### 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the proposed recommendations are strategic, measurable and attainable, and clearly address the council's need to better communicate its decision making with residents and Members. A timetable for delivering the recommendations has also been agreed by officers at the most senior levels of the organisation. The action plan is outlined in appendix 1.
- 4.2 To agree some, but not all recommendations. As outlined above all of the recommendations are achievable at little additional cost to the organisation. Although the scrutiny review group is confident all the recommendations will be addressed, there may be reasons for not accepting all of them.

#### 5. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.2 The Working Group was established in November 2012 to look at removing barriers to youth employment.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 As part of the review, a progress update was provided on the two recent scrutiny reviews on youth employment in order to maximize whether outstanding recommendations had been implemented and where learning from these could be used as a basis of recommendations going forward.
- 3.5 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 to 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?

## **6. BODY OF REPORT**

6.1 The report is attached as Appendix A. The review makes eight recommendations to improve this area of council work:

- R1. Increase access to independent information advice and guidance for young people.
- R2. Support the development of a universal mentoring scheme.
- R3. Work with the Educational Business Partnership and businesses to improve the work experience offer for young people at school.
- R4. Increase employment opportunities for young people through introductory work experience.
- R5. Improve online information about apprenticeships and other employment opportunities.
- R6. Raise awareness and improve the perception of apprenticeships in schools.
- R7. Support businesses to improve the quality of the opportunities they offer so they can become accredited apprenticeships.
- R8. Clarify the role of the council in the apprenticeship agenda and build on relationships with providers through the employment and enterprise task group.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 7.1 This report describes the review of removing barriers to youth employment that was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.2 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report except for recommendation R2 which would need to be contained within existing budget provision.

7.3 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.

8. **CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)**

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

8.5 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.

8.6 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.

## **9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 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.

## **10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the reportor recommendations.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations. Risks relating to the recommendations will be monitored through the council's corporate risk register and directorate risk registers. Risks are assessed for likelihood and impact, and will have responsible owners and programmes of mitigating actions.

## **12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

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<sup>1</sup> December 2012

12.1 There are no direct implications of crime and disorder as a result of the recommendations of this review.

**13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

**13.1** The scrutiny review group met with council officers and partners to ask them what the council should concentrate on to add value to the apprenticeship agenda. The scrutiny review concluded that by taking a coordination role for the borough through the Employment Strategy, the apprenticeship system would become clearer for young people and more efficient in terms of reducing duplications of services across the borough.

**14. APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** Scrutiny review action plan

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**Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)  
(England) Regulations 2012  
List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

<b>Brief description of "background papers"</b>	<b>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.</b>
None	N/A