

<b>Committee:</b> Overview & Scrutiny	<b>Date:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Ann Jackson, Chair of Working Group,  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Vicky Allen Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer		<b>Title:</b> Removing Barriers to Youth Employment – Progress Report of the Scrutiny Working Group  <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> All	

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report follows up from the scrutiny review removing barriers to youth employment which went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2013. This report reviews the progress against the original recommendations.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the report findings
2. Consider whether further scrutiny into youth employment is required at this time, and should therefore form part of the work programme.

## 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The “removing barriers to youth employment scrutiny report” went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2013. 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. The 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?
- 3.3 The scrutiny review found that the way in which the apprenticeship framework has been established has not helped to make this route into employment either clear or attractive. Many schools, parents and young people themselves have misconceptions about apprenticeships. The review found that the council has a key role to play in providing clear and accessible information which is widely available and publicised. In addition it found that there is a clear need for businesses in the borough to further support young people's career choices and employability by increasing the opportunities for pupils and school leavers to gain access to mentors and by improving their work experience offer.
- 3.4 The scrutiny review welcomed the good work already being undertaken as part of the Employment Strategy and its sub-groups. The review group felt that the council should support this good work by establishing itself as a facilitator and coordinator of apprenticeships, spreading good practice and coordinating the supply and demand in order to maximise benefits for the borough's young people.
- 3.5 The report made 8 recommendations which were agreed by OSC. The body of this report outlines the progress against these recommendations.

#### **4. BODY OF REPORT**

4.1 **Recommendation 1: Increase access to independent information advice and guidance for young people.** Service comment at action planning stage: The scrutiny report recognises the benefits reported by young people and schools that have arisen from the current Mayor's initiative to provide 1-2-1 individual careers guidance interviews with an action plan for all year 11 students. The funding for that project came to an end in July 2013. The service drew up three actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:

- Tower Hamlets Careers Service to provide independent impartial careers information advice and guidance
- Partnership agreements for delivery in schools and college outlining agreed delivery from institution and the careers service
- Ensure that there are links to external advisory services and independent information services are available on the re-designed web pages. Ensure that those services have access, via links, to information from the council on apprenticeships, skills and jobs

- 4.2 Comment from service: The Careers Service has continued to provide independent, impartial information advice and guidance to all maintained secondary schools in Tower Hamlets, Special Schools and the Pupil Referral Unit. The service also supports Tower Hamlets residents with Special Needs who are educated at special schools outside the borough providing Careers Guidance and S139 Transition plans as appropriate. Schools also have the opportunity to buy in additional services from our costed service menu, and partnership agreements are now in place for all schools and Tower Hamlets College.
- 4.3 The website redesign has been completed and is pending imminent endorsement by the Apprenticeship Task Group at which point it will be uploaded onto the website – this will be completed by the end of this financial year. The content will include:
- Links to the Council’s Employment and Skills Centre (Skillsmatch);
  - National Apprenticeship Service direct links to relevant information and national apprenticeship vacancies;
  - Careers Services direct links to local apprenticeship vacancies, skills advice and careers advice.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Comment Increasing access to independent information advice and guidance was highlighted by the Young People Preparing for Adulthood Task Group as a way in enabling more young people to gain a better understanding of the wider variety of jobs and improve their knowledge of how to conduct themselves in the work place. More information on take up of additional services from the Careers Service by mainstream schools and by Free Schools and Academies would help OSC to assess whether young people are getting the additional support they need. Although not yet live, the imminent redesign of the employment and training section of the council’s website will make it easier for young people to proactively navigate through the system themselves. It should not be forgotten that skills advice needs to stress, signpost and offer work experience and workplace conduct training in order to ensure young people are as prepared as possible to succeed.
- 4.5 **Recommendation 2: Support the development of a universal mentoring scheme.** Service comment at action planning stage: Mentoring has been recognised as a useful way to help young people overcome barriers to progression, to develop their career management and employability skills and provide support to implement their careers guidance action plan. The service drew up three actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:
- Tower Hamlets Careers Service will bid to access ESF funding to provide mentoring support for young people ‘at risk of NEET’ and those young people already NEET

- Commission voluntary sector to provide mentoring support as part of the 'youth offer – getting young people working' project.
- Utilise business mentors to support young people in developing their employability skills

4.6 Comment from service: The Careers Service won the ESF contract to work with NEET young people with whom we provide Careers Guidance, employability support, mentoring, submission and placing support with aftercare to ensure the young person sustains the placement. The service was also successful in securing a contract to deliver the "Youth Contact" which provides careers guidance, employability support, mentoring, submission and placing help as well as aftercare for young people on the NEET register who have 1 GCSE or fewer. The Pre-NEET contract for the North London Partnership which includes Tower Hamlets was won by Reed in Partnership.

4.7 The service has commissioned three voluntary sector organisations to deliver mentoring as part of the "Youth Offer". The focus of the "Youth Offer" is to target and support the following target groups / areas in order to ensure that groups / areas that have been identified as a priority / or have a high NEET figure will be tackled:

1. Young people continuously refusing support
2. Young people from workless families
3. NEET & Unknown is high within particular LAP / geographic area

4.8 The three local voluntary sector groups who have been commissioned to deliver the Youth Offer are:

- City Gateway – delivering LAP 1 & 2 contract
- Society Links – delivering LAP 3 & 4 contract; and
- Streets of Growth – delivering LAP 5 & 6, and the LAP 7 & 8 contracts

4.9 The contracts have been signed by all delivery providers who are now in the delivery process. The contracts will bring significant advantages for NEET young people within the above localities with each locality aiming to achieve the following targets by March 2015:

- 15 young people tracked on a monthly basis until March 2015 (225yp)
- A minimum of 10 hours of employability & / or personal development courses
- 30 NEET young people supported over 16 months (mentoring, submission, placing and aftercare support)
- 60% (18) young people engaging into an Employability / Personal Development Course
- 35% (11) of young people securing Jobs and apprenticeships
- 85% (25) of young people securing Education, training or employment

- 4.10 Working in partnership with the voluntary sector groups will bring additionality to delivery as each provider works a unique range of young people, services and opportunities available within their own service, which will be accessible by NEET young people participating as part of the Youth offer.
- 4.11 Scrutiny Comment The review group felt that mentors were fundamental to supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes, especially where those mentors come from a work background that the young person is interested in joining. The “Youth Offer” contract provides much needed support for NEET young people, and OSC may be keen to review whether the targets outlined above are achieved. It was also stressed that the council work towards a universal mentoring scheme as this would increase positive results and young people’s success across the board and also help bridge the drop off in attainment at post 16.
- 4.12 **Recommendation 3: Work with the Education Business Partnership and businesses to improve the work experience offer for young people at school.** Service comment at action planning stage: Work experience is recognised as a practical ‘hands on way for young people to develop their employability skills’. Previous projects such as the NEET work experience project have proved successful in helping young people develop their skills and obtain sustained employment. The service drew up three actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:
- Work with the Education Business Partnership to promote the benefits of work experience to schools
  - Link work experience to transition into Apprenticeships / Traineeships building on the Carillion pilot project
  - To exploit relationships with local businesses from work on the council’s enterprise strategy to maximise the work experience opportunities for local young people. This must however take a realistic view of the current economic climate and their commercial priorities
- 4.13 Comment from service: The EBP is a key partner on the Apprenticeship Task Group and works closely with the Careers Service to promote the availability and quality of work experience placements for school-aged young people. The Economic Development service is working with Procurement to ensure that work experience placements and training opportunities are being embedded within the procurement processes as part of the Economic and Community Benefit package, and in line with the recommendations of the Fairness Commission in delivering a Business Charter which includes commitments to support local work experience placements. EBP is cited as a key contact both pre and post tender, to provide advice and guidance to businesses to help increase the number and ensure the quality of their work experience offer.

- 4.14 The Carillion pilot at the Tommy Flowers Centre (Pupil Referral Unit) has provided vital work experience to a vulnerable group of young people. The 'Youth Apprenticeship' (as named by the PRU) consists of one day a week work experience on site with Carillion, primarily in professional kitchens, with some office and construction work experience provided. The work experience contributes to students' studies, and builds to 2 days or more towards the end of the year. At the end of the programme, students will have the opportunity to experience an interview for an apprenticeship, or a full apprenticeship. It is an extremely competitive process – a necessity from the employer's perspective – which helps to increase the aspirational value of apprenticeships for students. This programme was developed to address the following issues:
- A two week work experience placement is not sufficient to be a truly helpful experience for students; the sudden shift to the pace in an adult 'world of work' is a shock for most and can put students off;
  - Providing a two week work experience placement is not an attractive proposition for many employers; it is felt to be an added annoyance to many, where they have to 'find something' for the young person to do; and
  - The EBP is able to offer 'extended work placements' of one day a week for 3 months plus, however this offer is expensive and schools cannot afford the offer.
- 4.15 Whilst the PRU has the flexibility to offer this type of programme, it is recognised that it is often not the case for mainstream schools who are more constrained over timetables.
- 4.16 Scrutiny Comment: The review group heard from young people whose negative impression of the work experience they had undertaken had led them to believe that apprenticeships would be the same. The review group were keen therefore to see the benefits of work experience promoted. It was also suggested that the council draw up some typical job descriptions for work experience to progress with larger and smaller employers, with standardised formats for attainment and final outcomes. This would allow the young people and the business to feel the undertaking was worthwhile. Providing aspirational opportunities to students and commitments from large businesses in Canary Wharf on offering more work experience are also being worked up as part of the Fairness Commission next steps. Progress on the activity to exploit relationships with local businesses from work on the council's enterprise strategy to maximise the work experience opportunities for local young people is covered in 4.33-4.36 of this report
- 4.17 **Recommendation 4: Increase employment opportunities of young people through introductory work experience.** Comment from service at action planning stage: This work has already begun through the activities in the Employment Strategy. The service drew up two actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:

- Commitments from employers to provide work experience opportunities will be introduced more comprehensively into the council's planning and procurement processes (following legal advice) to ensure an increase in available opportunity for workless residents including young people
- Review contracts and liaise with employers of existing contracts to prepare them for offering opportunities when their contracts are renewed. Initial interventions will start from September 2013

4.18 Comment from the service: The service is working through procurement processes to embed the provision of local labour, work experience placements for schools and longer term work experience placements, apprenticeships; and other training and mentoring services as part of all council procured services (see 4.34-4.37). Current contracts for which this is being embedded include Health and Social Care, Highways Maintenance and Improvement Works, service deliver, consultancy contracts. Work is ongoing between the Procurement and Economic Development Services to refine policy and processes which embeds this expectation.

4.19 Scrutiny Comment: Scrutiny recognises the work being undertaken through the procurement processes to embed work experience and apprenticeships into council procured services, but notes that there is currently less opportunities with medium and large organisations that operate in Canary Wharf or the City Fringes (see 4.16). It is hoped that the work of the Employment and Enterprise Task Group and the follow up of the Fairness Commission recommendations will enable more opportunities in these areas for young people.

4.20 **Recommendation 5: Improve online information about apprenticeships and other employment opportunities.** Service comments from action planning stage: As part of the Employment Strategy, it is recognised that fast easy access to current opportunities is essential. This work has already begun through activities within the Apprenticeship Task Group as part of the wider Employment Strategy. The service drew up three actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:

- Redesign of the council's web pages to include a more accessible set of information around employment, skills and training, which will include comprehensive information on apprenticeship for different audiences including pupils, teachers, parents, businesses, young people and training organisations
- Leaflets (online and paper) on applying for and securing positions, the range of educational and training opportunities available and employment rights. There will be links available to the range of local support available from Skillsmatch, the Careers Service and Youth Service as well as links to national organisations that can support
- Develop an Apprenticeship bulletin which will go on schools intranet to inform young people, their parents / carers and teaching staff of the

opportunities and support available. A url link will be sent by text / email to young people on the NEET register to highlight current opportunities for them

- 4.20 Comment from service: The new web pages are divided in four target audiences aimed at: young people interested in Apprenticeships, employers, schools and colleges, training organisations. The new web page content is awaiting imminent approval and will be live by the end of the financial year.
- 4.21 As mentioned in 4.3 above, the website includes hyperlinks to:
- Employment & Skills Centre (Skillsmatch) pages (which provides skills training, advice on CV, services for employers).
  - National Apprenticeship Services (general information for young people and employers).
  - Careers Centre pages (which contains advice for parents, young people and local catchment area apprenticeship vacancies).
  - Skills Funding Agency (advice for training organisations).
- 4.22 A separate Tower Hamlets Carers Service website includes interview tips, interview skills, tough interview questions, employment rights and a parent's guide to post-16 opportunities. Paper copies of the information are utilised in schools and with young people using the Careers Centre. An Apprenticeship Bulletin detailing opportunities in the local area is now in place and has been posted on the Tower Hamlets Carers Service website. This information is also circulated to schools. The Bulletin is updated every 2 weeks with latest opportunities.
- 4.23 The Apprenticeship landscape, and its partners, is constantly changing. It should be noted that there is no guarantee as to whether this website can be managed effectively in the future. As such the website can only direct users to websites that are effectively managed.
- 4.24 Scrutiny Comment: Communicating the apprenticeship route was a fundamental recommendation arising from this review. It is recognised that the revised web content is due to go live imminently, however it is somewhat frustrating that this has taken so long to achieve. We are again failing our young people by not focussing on this vital and essential part of the service, which was highlighted by them as the main problem in accessing opportunities. The careers service website, containing new content about apprenticeships can be found here: [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/jobs\\_and\\_careers/careers\\_service.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/jobs_and_careers/careers_service.aspx)
- 4.25 It is acknowledged that there is a resource implication to managing these web pages, in order to ensure that it is kept current and would want to see this managed as a priority for the service.



4.26 **Recommendation 6: Raise awareness and improve the perception of apprenticeships in schools.** Comments from the service at action planning stage: It is recognised that whilst there are a range of exciting opportunities being developed (including Higher Level Apprenticeships) apprenticeships are not always seen by all teaching staff, young people and their parents / carers to be on a par with academic options and a good progression route for many young people. With the increase in tuition fees for Higher Education, it is important that all groups are aware of the apprenticeship route as another way into higher learning and earning. This work has already begun through activities within the Apprenticeship Task Group as part of the wider Employment Strategy. The service drew up two actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:

- Work across the Apprenticeship Task Group to ensure access to information is maximised and that the profile and benefits of apprenticeships are promoted within schools, particularly amongst education staff
- Carry out a number of briefing / INSET sessions for school staff to raise their awareness of the Apprenticeship route and the opportunities available. There will also be inputs for parents / carers at parents evenings and sessions directly working with young people setting out the routes available, opportunities and how to secure these

4.27 Comment from service: Access to information that raises the profile and promotes the benefits of apprenticeships to schools has been completed, through the newly designed web pages which will become live by end of March 2014. There is a dedicated officer whose job is to promote this work within secondary schools. The SLA post-16 Project Officer has carried out a range of training sessions for school staff on Apprenticeships including information on advanced and higher apprenticeships. There has been direct delivery to young people at assemblies, class sized group sessions and in individual careers guidance sessions with students. Information on Apprenticeships is also included in presentations to parents eg. 6<sup>th</sup> form open evenings.

4.28 Training is now available to staff in schools and four schools have been particularly conscientious in seeking this continuous professional development. However there is still work to do in promoting this agenda as some schools still have trepidations about the value of Apprenticeships compared to higher education and are reticent to engage across the board. The council is trying to tackle this issue through the work of the Apprenticeship Task Group and other partnership groups. Ofsted is now beginning to focus on the progression of all students, but performance is still measured by how many students progress to higher education.

- 4.29 Support to schools has begun, focussing on progression opportunities. In 2012/2013, three 'Introduction to Apprenticeship' events took place: Bow School 14th March 2013 and 24th October and at Central Foundation School 3rd July 2013. A targeted event looking at the different levels of Apprenticeship is planned for 26th March 2014 at Central Foundation School and there is an Apprenticeship Fair on 25th June 2014 at Bow School (new site).
- 4.30 Scrutiny Comment: Scrutiny recognises the difficulty of shifting perception about Apprenticeships when comparing with Higher Education options, especially as schools gain more independence from local authority control. With the embedding of the Apprenticeship agenda nationally, and the improved information on the council's web site, and greater and successful take up, it is hoped that there will be a shift change in teacher's perceptions which will in turn influence pupils and their parents.
- 4.31 **Recommendation 7: Support businesses to improve the quality of the opportunities they offer so they can become accredited apprenticeships.** The service made the following comment at action planning stage: The work has already begun to support businesses to improve the quality of the work placement opportunities they offer and that they develop more accredited apprenticeship opportunities. This is being done through activities within the Apprenticeship Task Group as part of the wider Employment Strategy. The service drew up two actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:
- Working across the Apprenticeship Task Group partners with particular influence from the National Apprenticeship Service as the government agency for this work, the apprenticeship agenda will be presented to Tower Hamlets businesses and engage with the agenda and promote the use of accredited apprenticeship opportunities
  - To identify training route-ways for growth sectors in the borough and promote apprenticeships as part of the offer for those sectors
- 4.32 Comment from service: A new web page aimed at supporting employers to hire young Apprenticeships from Tower Hamlets will be live by the end of the financial year. Handbooks and guidance are being developed as part of the work on the new Business Charter to educate businesses on the practicalities of recruiting apprentices. The current Business database holds details of 3,000 local organisations and the Service will be expanding this database to 7,000 over the next 12 months. In addition, a localised marketing campaign for the borough has been developed with the GLA which targets SMEs, promoting the economic benefits of recruiting Apprentices, such as staff retention rates.

- 4.33 The council is increasing the number of Apprenticeships available to young people in Tower Hamlets through obligations being embedded in the Economic and Community Benefits package for all Procurement contracts. This is an ongoing process. A pre-apprenticeship training course has been developed by the Economic Development Service to support young people to be ready to apply for an Apprenticeship position.
- 4.34 A number of training route-ways for growth sectors in the borough have been already been identified, and this work is ongoing. These three key growth sectors are construction, Health and Social Care, and IT. Currently proposals are being developed for Health and Child Care in partnerships with Public Health. A dedicated construction desk has been set up and is working with developers and contractors in the borough to identify innovation in construction methods that need to be incorporated into training provision to allow local residents to compete successfully in the construction labour market. This work is ongoing. Work is also ongoing to secure opportunities in the ICT sector via Tech City and the Olympic Park.

Where there are obligations for organisations to provide job, experience and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents, the council's Employment team work directly with each individual business to outline the options available to them on engagement recruitment and selection processes. The service will also offer pre-employment or pre-apprenticeship training for the clients to ensure they are suitably prepared for the vacancy available. Our advisers will discuss the needs of the business particularly around apprenticeships and the relevant training that needs to be associated with their sector or job offer. Where necessary the council meets with the business and the National Apprenticeship service to explain the terminology of a full term apprenticeship and the rules and procedures that are required to be followed in order to claim free training elements and any subsidies currently available.

Additionally where individuals are looking for apprenticeships in certain sectors which at that time do not exist, the Employment team will actively market the individual to local businesses in that sector with an additional wage subsidy to lower the cost to businesses of taking an apprentice. This has limited places available but has been successful in creating 20 new apprenticeships.

It is essential that businesses meet the required quality standard for both employment and training strands of the apprenticeship and these are monitored as part of the training and by the National Apprenticeship service as a matter of course. Additionally the Service provides an in work support element to local residents gaining these opportunities so that any issues can be resolved quickly enabling the individual to stay in the job.

- 4.35 Scrutiny Comment: There is a lack of information provided about how the council has supported businesses to improve the quality of their opportunities so that they can become accredited apprenticeships. The Information supplied above has only become available as this report was being written, leaving concerns about its delivery by the end of the financial year. Please again see 4.16 and 4.36. The council needs to be instilling the work experience platform, and guiding businesses to provide the apprenticeships wanted to ensure work for the future.
- 4.36 **Recommendation 8: Clarify the role of the council in the apprenticeship agenda and build on relationships with providers through the employment and enterprise task group.** The service made the following comment at action planning stage: The local authority has a role in developing the number of Apprenticeships available working closely with businesses and the National Apprenticeship Service and ensuring the local community is aware of the opportunities available, progression routes to access these and support to secure Apprenticeships and long term work. The service drew up three actions to support the implementation of this recommendation as follows:
- Embed the role of the council’s Economic Development team as the facilitator of the Apprenticeship Task Group by working alongside the National Apprenticeship Service and other partners including Education Business Partnership and schools.
  - Develop an Apprenticeship Action Plan
  - The apprenticeship agenda as a whole is a key element of work activity within the youth employment objective of the Employment Strategy action plan. The Economic Taskforce Operational Group will be responsible for carrying out these activities. The inaugural meeting for this group is scheduled for September 2013
- 4.37 Comment from service: The Economic Development service facilitates the Apprenticeship Task group and has embedded Apprenticeships into the wider strategy for recruitment and brokerage tasks. Many of the tasks involved in this action plan are inter-related and will continue to be a focus for the work of the Economic Taskforce to drive forward on the challenges of wider unemployment, employment and opportunity creation. This work is ongoing.
- 4.38 The Council has supported the development of the apprenticeship agenda both internally and externally. As of Q3 of 2013/14 the council has facilitated 245 apprenticeships for local TH young people, in addition to an expected 2,000 starts borough-wide (based upon Ref: 12/13 2300 starts across the borough – National Apprenticeship Service data), via a range of programmes, including construction S106, creative industries, Decent Home, Agilisys, internal Workforce Development. Its key role is one of promoting both opportunity and quality. This work is ongoing.

The development meeting for the revised Economic Task Force took place in late 2013. There has subsequently been a further meeting in February to agree key strands of work for development and membership for the operational group. This includes private sector business, business network, education leads both secondary and further education, Community and Voluntary sector lead, welfare reform lead, housing forum lead, economic development lead, supply chain lead and health lead.

Key members of the group will expertise have now taken tasks to develop specific tasks associated with three core strands of work: employment; enterprise & business; and skills. The Apprenticeship agenda will be an integral part of each strand as a cross cutting area of work linked to targeting young people moving from education to the labour market; upskilling with the skills that businesses want and targeting disadvantaged groups and supporting them to access the opportunities that are generated.

The apprenticeship task group members will all be involved in the development of actions going forward and very specifically around further enhancements of all points contained within this scrutiny review.

It should be noted that an apprenticeship is paid employment and therefore employers are key to the generation of these opportunities.

- 4.39 Scrutiny Comment: A request was made to the Economic Service to provide information about the inaugural meeting of the Economic Task Force Operational Group. We had concerns that the links needed and recommended by the review had not been implemented, information on this has been supplied now. It is hoped that the work needed here can be done in time.

## **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 R2 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. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 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**

- 7.1 Around 27% 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.

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

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report. 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 mitigating actions.

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

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

## **11. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

- 11.1 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.

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

Brief description of “background papers”	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
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**12. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Review and Action Plan

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