

Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on 20 January 2012

Electoral Division affected: 'none'
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Progress in the development of a Youth Employment and Employability Strategy for Lancashire

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on progress made to deliver Lancashire County Council's Corporate Youth Employment and Employability Strategy.

Since the Task Group report 'Young People: Employment and Employability Against the Backdrop of Economic Recession and Recovery' in June 2010, there have been a number of actions taken, most notably the development of a Corporate Skills Framework which was agreed by Cabinet in September 2011.

The Corporate Skills Framework sets out the key priorities for action together with appropriate core performance indicators and forms the overarching strategy (see Appendix 'A') which will underpin the County Council's activity.

Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the report and consider how it wishes to monitor future progress.

Background and Advice

- 1.1 Following the O&S Task Group report 'Young People: Employment and Employability Against the Backdrop of Economic Recession and Recovery' the committee recommended that the County Council should lead in developing a Youth Employment and Employability Strategy for Lancashire, pulling together the totality of the current effort and , jointly with local partners, identifying opportunities to deliver more effectively and efficiently both:
 - An active, vibrant and productive youth, able to study and learn workplace skills; and
 - A strong, sustainable local economy.

- 1.2 The County Council, working in local partnership, is committed to ensuring that every child and young person in Lancashire matters, whatever their background or circumstances. This commitment includes ensuring that support is in place for every young person to achieve economic well being, to enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.3 Within Lancashire's Children and Young People's plan (CYPP) there are 8 key priorities that set specific targets in pursuit of the above outcomes. Most relevant here, perhaps, are the priorities to "perform well in education at all stages regardless of background or circumstances" and "children, young people and their families are enabled to achieve their potential and prosper, regardless of their background or circumstances".
- 1.4 Alongside this the Corporate Economic Framework approved by Cabinet in May 2010 identified Skills as one of its priority areas. This led to a request in November 2010, for a comprehensive employment and skills framework to be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet.
- 1.5 In order to develop one overarching strategy that would be applicable, not only to those aged 18 to 24, but to the wider Lancashire population officers from the Directorate for Children and Young People and Economic Development worked together to produce the first Corporate Skills Framework. This reflected the importance of cross Directorate involvement and service delivery to achieving the Framework's identified objectives.
- 1.6 The Corporate Skills Framework was underpinned by extensive research and an internal consultation exercise to better understand the key issues in relation to raising the skills base of Lancashire's residents and the full extent of activity taking place in support of this agenda across all of LCC's services and key partner organisations.
- 1.7 The County Council's Corporate Skills Framework was presented to and agreed by Cabinet in September 2011. The Framework was constructed to guide the County Council's actions over the first three years and builds on the progress already made within the County Council which impacts on this agenda. This includes: the closer working between the Directorate for Children and Young people and the Adult and Community Services Directorate regarding complex families; linking the Young peoples Service to the Early Support Strategy, the continuing development of the Working Together with Families initiative, the County Council's internal workforce planning solutions and the restructure of the County Council's Economic Development Service.
- 1.8 As national youth unemployment continues to increase the Coalition Government has responded with a range of initiatives designed to improve skills and employability and increase the number of opportunities available to young people seeking education, employment and training. Central to the Government's agenda is a private sector led recovery and an increase in the number and level of apprenticeships.

- 1.9 The approach taken by the County Council, endorsed through the Skills Framework, is in line with national agenda, with a demand-led, individual-focused emphasis. To support this, there has been a refocusing of existing mainstream services within the Council to address key priorities, whilst introducing new resources to deliver the change required.
- 1.10 Cabinet has recently proposed to invest significant new resource via increased/more intensive support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and enhanced opportunities for young people through County Council initiatives and with private employers. This includes: a new £10m apprenticeships programme to help young people into work, supporting employers to take on apprentices and creating further professional apprenticeships within the county council; an investment of £5m over five years to support the costs of young people travelling to education, employment and training and £6m for the extension of the Youth Zone programme to provide young people with more activities and opportunities to access information and guidance.
- 1.11 Alongside these new national and local initiatives, there has been the establishment of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – an initiative driven forward and secured by the County Council. Whilst there has been considerable analysis undertaken to better understand the skills issues in Lancashire, the LEP will play a central role in improving our understanding of the type of skills and training needed within the private sector workforce now and in the future.
- 1.12 Within this changing environment the role of the County Council, as a strategic leader within Lancashire, is increasingly important to the achievement of our ambitions for all of Lancashire's children and young people. The County Council is well placed to bring key partners and policy agendas together, to better address the County's skills issues, adding value and building capacity where appropriate.
- 1.13 This report covers the Cabinet Member responsibilities held by County Councillor Mark Perks, portfolio holder for Young People and County Councillor Michael Green, portfolio holder for Economic Development, Environment and Planning.
- 1.14 A full list of acronyms used throughout this report can be found at the back page of Appendix 'A'; page 17.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Delivery against the Corporate Skills Framework outcomes will improve the economic prospects for Lancashire's children and young people.

Risk management

The increasingly negative impact of the economic climate on youth employment necessitates an ongoing review of priorities and delivery to support young people make an effective transition into employment, education or training.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
N/A	N/A	N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A