

Committee: Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Group

Date: 27th June 2018

Wards: ALL

Subject: Routes to employment for vulnerable cohorts - six month review

Lead officer: Director for Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration.

Contact officer: Sara Williams, futureMerton, Programme Manager for Business and Economy

Recommendations:

- A. The Panel review the attached action plan (Appendix 1) detailing progress on the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel's Action Plan: vulnerable cohorts into employment task group recommendations report presented 17th January 2018.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a six month review of the agreed action plan to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny (CTPOS) Panel to demonstrate how the recommendations of the routes to employment for vulnerable cohorts Task Group have been implemented.
- 1.2 It is also to provide a response to member questions where it was agreed that the officer will explore further why it's not possible to ensure through standard contract terms that contractors and service providers offer apprenticeships for Merton residents.
- 1.3 To provide some case studies of the support delivered by Children Schools and Families (CSF) Youth Inclusion team to deliver opportunities for work experience and employment programmes for some of our vulnerable young people.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. At their meeting on 21st October 2015, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel decided to dedicate a task group activity to look at the support provided for vulnerable cohorts. Initially, the Panel took a broad approach considering:
- The housing and health offer for care leavers and looked after children to prevent homelessness and unemployment; and
 - Educational attainment for disabled children and young people.

- 2.2. However, the Panel, as a result of its initial research, determined that the task group should focus more specifically on the support provided for vulnerable cohorts to progress into employment. By vulnerable cohorts the Panel agreed that this should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The report and recommendations resulting from the task group review was presented on 20th March 2017.
- 2.3. The response and action plan were presented back to the Panel on 10th January 2018. The Panel requested a review six months into the action plan. The updates can be found on Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1. At the time of the January 2018 report the Panel were advised that Merton has 190 looked after children and care leavers of which 60 are not in employment education or training (NEET) There were 420 SEND young people of which 34 were seeking employment.
- 3.2. There were also 210 looked after young people and care leavers above statutory school age and 64 NEET'. The net target group equated to 158 young people requiring support with employment.
- 3.3. The Panel set out seven recommendations around supporting the vulnerable groups agreeing that this should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 3.4. Many of the actions focus on Merton as the employer as well as Merton's ability to support residents through local procurement contracts. Partners support is recognised through the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership, in particular the partnership work carried out through the Economic Wellbeing Group (EWG).
- 3.5. Merton reviews opportunities to up skill and generate jobs for local people through major procurement contracts on a case-by-case basis, given that not all contracts lend themselves to providing these types of opportunities. For example, we will be seeking the use of local labour supply and/or apprenticeships when we go out to tender for our Highways contract later this year. We will also seek such opportunities when going out to tender through the Council's newly formed, wholly owned, Housing Company. Some examples of case by case work undertaken are included in Appendix 1 (Recommendation 2).

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options offered at this stage.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 The actions were discussed between officers in human resources, Looked After Children Permanency and Placements, Education Inclusion, Joint Commissioning and Partnerships, Commercial Services, futureMerton and Public Health.

- 4.2 The EWG were consulted during the Scrutiny Review and have been kept updated on proposed recommendations. The EWG Indicator Set acts as a list of the activities being delivered by the partners which supports routes to employment for the vulnerable clients concerned.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The Action Plan was presented in January 2018 and the Panel requested an update in June 2018. Please see the attached Appendix 1 for proposed dates on reporting outcomes/outputs back to Scrutiny.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposals were made in the main with the expectation that the actions can be implemented using existing resources. However, there are financial implications to implement Recommendations 2, 5 and 6.
- 6.2 The Panel should note that the cost to cover salaries (circa £14k per apprentice) and any necessary financial support for the target groups is required to meet Recommendations 2 and 5.
- 6.3 Any changes to the way in which we procure which has a cost implication to the Council (as suggested under Recommendation 6) will need to go to Procurement Board for approval prior to being considered by any other panel / forum.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The council has extensive legal duties with regard to LAC and care leavers – more to be added.

7.2 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

Supporting these vulnerable groups into employment is in line with the Council Human Rights, Equalities and community cohesion requirements. The Council acts as the corporate parent for looked after children and care leavers and as such has a responsibility to provide parental guidance in seeking and obtaining employment.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Reducing unemployment can lead to the reduction in crime.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1 - CYPOS Panel's Action plan: vulnerable cohorts into employment – six month review.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 CYPOS Panel's Corporate Parenting Report found [here](#)
- 11.2 CYPOS Panel's monitoring of the recommendations made by the task group on routes into employment for vulnerable young people which you can view [here](#) (February 2017)
- 11.3 CYPOS Panel's Action plan: vulnerable cohorts into employment task group recommendations report found [here](#) (January 2018)
- 11.4 Apprenticeship funding: rules and guidance for employers version2 published May 2017 found [here](#)
- 11.5 Adult Skills and Employability 2013, Recommendation 3 ([here](#)) and Post 16 Career Pathways 2012 [here](#)