



**REPORT TO
ECONOMY SKILLS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY BOARD**

10 October 2019

Subject:	Unified careers offer for 15-29 year olds
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Danny Millard - Cabinet Member for Skills and Employment
Director:	Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	 
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DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider how the Council’s unified 15 – 29 careers and employment ‘offer’ supports young people more effectively during their transition to adulthood.
2. Note the report and make any comments and recommendations as necessary.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on careers advice for 15-29 year olds.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL’S VISION

- 2.1 The benefits for Sandwell’s 2030 vision for all age careers service are:

Ambition 3 – Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.

Our young people will get a better understanding of potential work and progression routes

Ambition 4 – Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.

Our young people are better motivated to commit to education and acquire the skills and qualifications they require for a successful working life and, as a result, are likely to achieve more.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Connexions leads the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to young people in education, employment and training. All local authorities have broad duties to promote participation and specific duties in relation to RPA (Raising the Participation Age).

3.2 The Employment and Skills service leads on the Council's activity in relation to employment support (for the unemployed and those looking to further advance) and specialist employment support for people with disabilities and mental health. The service also supports local employers to recruit jobs and apprenticeships.

3.3 In late 2018 the Council commissioned Cambridge Education to carry out a review of education which included Connexions and the Employment and Skills team's two services that would identify a range of possible options to deliver a preferred model of provision.

- i. This year the LGA asked government that local areas must be required to put in place all-age, locally responsive careers advice and guidance services, which can offer high quality independent advice and guidance to support people to make the right decisions at key stages in their lives.
- ii. Careers advice and guidance should be embedded and available to support adults and people of all ages at pivotal stages of their learning and working lives.
(source <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/employment-and-skills/work-local/radical-overhaul-careers-advice>)
- iii. While data and digital information resources can help with making a career choice (social media is cited as an influence) young people are inspired by anything that gives them an idea of what it would be like to have a particular job. (source www.careersandenterprise.co.uk). However, developments like the

internet, mobile phones and Facebook, new careers are developing at lightning speed to satisfy the demand technology created.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 In April 2019 both services were co-located in the same office to bring together the Connexions service, tracking and NEET engagement services with the services offered by the Employment and Skills service, to provide a coherent integrated offer to young people and adults.

4.2 All the Council's delivery teams hold the recognised Matrix national quality standard for information, advice and guidance (IAG). To achieve the Standard, organisations will need to demonstrate that they provide a high quality and impartial service.

4.3 Challenge for schools

Ofsted is increasingly giving CEIAG a higher priority in school inspections how leaders, managers and governors plan and manage careers advice, so all learners are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. All Connexions Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) therefore is provided in an impartial manner — no bias or favouritism towards a particular education or work option, as they explore the whole range of education or training options — including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways. Advice is always given in the students' best interests. This is measured/tested through the Matrix Quality Award. (Connexions hold the Matrix – Excellence standard).

4.4 Support for NEETS/unemployed aged 15 – 29

The Youth Employment Initiative (known as Black Country Impact) for young people aged 15-29 who are NEET or at risk of NEET is no longer commissioned in isolation. This has resulted in young people benefiting from the full range of adult employment opportunities and employer engagement opportunities that take place across Employment and Skills arena.

4.5 Black Country Impact

Black Country Impact provides a personalised programme for young people aged 15-29 years who are NEET, sometimes marginalised and often further away from the labour market, to enable them to engage in provision, secure positive out-comes and sustained engagement in further education, employment or training.

The programme also focuses on supporting young people into pre-apprenticeship programmes, inclusive apprenticeships and helping young people to upskill in English and Maths so that they can compete for the apprenticeships which are available. Tailored pathways are developed for individuals to support them with their specific needs and career goals.

4.6 The Sandwell programme has engaged with nearly 1500 NEET Participants. The table below shows progress to date.

Target	December Target (total programme)	Actual	Percentage
Unemployed participants	3888	3777	97%
Unemployed participants – who are in education or training, gain a qualification or are in employment upon leaving	906	925	102%

The programme is due to finish in December 2021. An application has recently been submitted to request an extension until December 2023.

4.7 Progress to Higher Education

Access to university for young people with top GCSEs is low, but Sandwell ranks well in all other higher education measures, though West Midlands Combined Authority local authorities generally dominate these statistics.

		Rank within WM (out of 14)	Rank within WMCA (out of 7)
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	67%	11	6
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	4	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	65%	4	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	15%	4	4

(source Impetus July 2019 – The Employment Gap in the West Midlands)

4.8 Preparing for the world of work/events

- National evidence suggests that high quality encounters with employment have a real impact on the likelihood of a young person getting a job and the amount they earn. (source www.careersandenterprise.co.uk). The council therefore continues to offer 300 work experience places per annum. In 2020 it is planned to expand the current offer.
- Sandwell now has two Careers Hubs covering Primary and Secondary working together with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks

and ensuring that careers outcomes are improved for all young people.

- Connexions have seconded a member of staff to the Careers Enterprise Company to work as an Enterprise Coordinator. Each Enterprise Coordinator works with clusters of schools to connect them with employers and careers providers to support the school meet the Gatsby Benchmarks. (Gatsby benchmarks can be found at www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks)
- Sandwell Council promotional events for all ages range from Job fairs; Careers fairs; recruitment events and workshops where residents can learn about a particular topic to help them with their career. In addition, most weeks there are events for 16-29 group in the West Midlands.
<https://careersinspiration.co.uk/West-Midlands/Events>

4.9 Working with Employers

- The Employment and Skills team provide a job brokerage service for local employers. This includes advertising for vacancies, sifting applications and delivering briefing sessions to provide the most suitable candidate for the vacancy.
- Employment advisors provide post-employment support and mentoring in the workplace which can improve sustainability of the opportunity by resolving any issues.
- Employers are provided with advice and guidance on employing apprentices and the service is also able to transfer apprenticeship levy funds to provide financial support for the qualification.
- Support and advice is also provided on employing people with disabilities, including reasonable adjustments and funding applications for access to work.

4.10 Jobs of the future

- Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) is vital in ensuring that careers advice and guidance (for both school pupils and adults) reflects an understanding of what business and jobs are available in the locality. Each Sandwell Town has its own map which provides information on the demographics, the location of schools & strategic employers, local apprenticeship vacancies and business skills required.
<https://www.blackcountryskillsfactory.co.uk/school-resources/local-labour-market-intelligence/local-town-maps/>

- By 2022 it is anticipated there will be a shift to higher level occupations requiring increasing numbers of individuals with degree or equivalent qualifications and skills. It is expected 44% of the demand for employment will be at degree or equivalent by 2022 and 15.9% will be at higher degree or doctorate level. (Source: Black Country Area Review January 2017).
- Recent debates about the future of jobs have mainly focused on whether or not they are at risk of automation (Arntz et. al., 2016; Frey and Osborne, 2017; McKinsey, 2017; PwC, 2017). Studies have generally minimised the potential effects of automation on job creation. Some low-skilled jobs, in fields like construction, are less likely to suffer poor labour market outcomes than has been assumed in the past. https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the_future_of_skills_employment_in_2030_0.pdf
- Apprenticeships have been developed over recent years to ensure that there are a range of standards to meet employment needs. They have been recognised as a significant development tool within businesses to provide the required training whilst gaining the relevant employment experience. As a result of the Apprenticeship Levy, we are now able to fund a wider range of apprenticeship opportunities at all levels, to new and existing staff and at any age.

4.11 Online platforms

- Students can use BBC Bitesize Careers to explore job profiles across a wide range of sectors. Each profile features a young person in the early stages of their own careers who explains what it's like to do their job, what route they took to get there, and which curriculum subjects were most useful to them. Job roles are grouped by curriculum subject, helping students understand the links between school and the world of work. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>
- The National Careers Service is free and impartial online information, advice and guidance to help adults make decisions about careers, courses and work. Whilst available to any individual aged 13+, National Careers Service focuses on supporting six priority groups to get into work. These include: young people aged 18-24 who are not in education, employment or training; those unemployed for more than 12 months; low-skilled adults; single parents; unemployed adults over 50; and adults with special educational needs or who have a disability.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 The Council sits on the LEP Board which leads on the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The SEP is built upon the three pillars of 'People', 'Place' & 'Business'. The 'People' pillar is concerned with raising employability, education and skills.
- 5.2 The Black Country SEP is underpinned by the Black Country Performance Management Framework (PMF) which provides a clear framework to monitor progress and the changes required to achieve the 30-year Vision. Within each priority key measures of success are monitored; specifically, Sandwell will help the SEP meet a number of range of its KPIs including reducing the number of people with no qualifications, reducing the number of 16-17-year olds classed as NEETS, raising the number of local jobs and increase the total employment rate.
- 5.3 The West Midlands Combined Authority Regional Skill's Plan is built on the concept of a 'family of SEP's including the Black Country. A priority action set out in the WMCA Skills plan relates to 'Skills for growth and employment for all'.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not applicable

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Black Country Impact programme was appraised by strategic finance as part of the risk assessment procedure.
- 7.2 The Connexions Service school based Personal Advisors promote and support the use of the Gatsby benchmarks to enable schools to be externally assessed against a Quality award. Each secondary school will be allowed to use up two days of their Connexions Personal Advisor time to help them achieve the award. If a school requires more allocation than the two days, then the Connexion Service will charge them for it. PWC has estimated that it would cost a school just over £50K the first year to fully implement all eight Gatsby career benchmarks (if no activity is currently happening)

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Recently the Council has formed an Employment and Skills Partnership of key strategic partners within the employment and skills sector to have an oversight of the Sandwell challenge, the provision available in the local area and provide a platform for more collaborative working. Findings

from the partnership including the Sandwell local perspective will be shared with the WMCA for future shaping of policy and provision.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 There is equality of access/opportunity and equality of outcomes on the Black Country Impact programme.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 All the information contained in this report is in the public domain.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 Not applicable

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 The Youth Employment Initiative has already been extended until December 2021 and we have applied to further extend the project until December 2023.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 Research from education and employers shows that young people who have four or more workplace encounters while at school are 86 per cent less likely to be 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) and, on average, will go on to earn 18 per cent more than their peers who did not. Source - The Careers & Enterprise Company.

13.2 Being NEET is associated with poorer physical and mental health. Someone who is NEET as a young person has a greater chance of depression in early adulthood. He or she is also more likely to use drugs and alcohol. This means that being NEET imposes a significant burden on the healthcare, social care, and criminal justice systems. Source Man Group plc Charitable Trust.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 None

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 A further update for Scrutiny is planned twelve months from now.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17 APPENDICES:

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