

Item No. 7	Classification: Open	Date: 19 October 2023	Decision Maker: Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		Youth Employment Support	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Danny Edwards, Head of Economy	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission has requested information on work the council is currently engaged in to support young people into employment.
2. Southwark is a borough where young people are facing unprecedented economic challenges. While many young people do well, a large number of families, particularly in the most deprived areas of Southwark, experience unemployment, low pay and irregular, insecure work across multiple generations.
3. Southwark Council wants all young people in Southwark to be well prepared to pursue any career they choose, regardless of their background or circumstances and to have support available to them to help them move into employment.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Southwark Economic Strategy 2023-30

4. Southwark's emerging Economic Strategy will set out our approach to building a fairer, greener and more resilient local economy in support of the Southwark 2030 vision and ambitions for the borough.
5. The Economic Strategy 2023-30 is scheduled to be adopted by Cabinet in late 2023, alongside the Southwark 2030 vision and plan.
6. The strategy has been developed with the aim of continuing to encourage local growth in sectors that generate good jobs and wider value for our community, including supporting local young people to benefit from our growing economy.
7. The Economic Strategy includes a "Southwark Youth Deal" as a delivery theme.

Southwark Youth Deal

8. Through the Southwark Youth Deal, the council will endeavour to ensure all young people have awareness of and access to good quality career opportunities while in education and when entering the labour market, including through a digital information hub and a regular youth opportunities bulletin.
9. The council will provide additional engagement and support for young people from low-income families in the most disadvantaged parts of the borough, and other groups who are most at risk of being left behind including young carers and young people in care.
10. We will redouble our efforts to create quality apprenticeships, traineeships, paid internships and work experience opportunities for young people, with the broadest range of opportunities on offer at the borough's largest employers.
11. The council will also support young entrepreneurs to start their own business through the Southwark Pioneers Fund and other targeted programmes and will involve the Southwark Youth Parliament in developing new skills, employment and enterprise support for young people

Southwark Works Employment Support Service

12. Southwark Works is the council's longstanding employment support programme. It is formed of a network of providers who offer a range of tailored employment support services based on residents' underlying needs. This model aims to ensure that there is expertise available locally to deal with the range of issues that affect residents' ability to gain and sustain employment, whilst also providing a recruitment service for local employers.
13. The primary aim of the Southwark Works service is to support residents who face multiple barriers into meaningful, sustained and good quality employment. Acknowledging that many groups in the borough, including young people, are disproportionately affected by insecure work and poor pay progression, the Southwark Works service also focuses on continuing to provide support and training to clients who have found work with the aim of helping them to secure higher paid or more secure employment.
14. Employment support across the network of Southwark Works providers is available to young people from age 18.
15. Performance of providers delivering the Southwark Works contracts is measured across a range of indicators, including the number of clients starting and sustaining work, but also the number supported into apprenticeships, accredited training, paid internships and work experience placements.

Southwark Works support for Vulnerable Young People (including care leavers and those with SEND)

16. The Southwark Works programme also includes specific support targeting young people from age 16 who are considered vulnerable or have multiple barriers to employment.
17. There are three contracts delivered by specialist providers supporting young people with :
 - Learning difficulties
 - Involvement with the criminal justice system
 - Who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
18. These contracts seek to help increase vulnerable young people's employability; help them understand career pathways, pursue their interests and aspirations, build skills and confidence and support the transition between education and employment.
19. The providers delivering these contract for the council have experience or qualifications related to working with young people who have been in council care, have been supported by Youth Offending Services and have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Apprenticeships

20. Southwark is a long-term champion of apprenticeships within our own workforce and for our businesses and residents. Through our approach to social value across our supply chain we push for one apprenticeship opportunity to be created for every £1m contract spend. This approach is mirrored in S106 planning agreements, creating opportunities for our residents, including young people, across every major development in the borough.
21. To help our residents prepare for and secure these opportunities, our investments in Southwark Works and the Southwark Construction Skills Centre, and strong partnerships with local skills providers such as the Green Skills Hub at London Southbank University and employers such as the SC1 Life Sciences district provide clear apprenticeship pathways for local young people into good quality roles in key growth sectors of our local economy.
22. Building a skilled workforce across the economy is crucial to growth so we also support local employers to develop apprenticeships. The Passmore Centre at LSBU, built with a £5m investment from the council, has a remit to engage and support small Southwark employers to take on new apprentices and upskill their staff.
23. To ease the financial cost to small businesses we also transfer

apprenticeship levy where we can to benefit local SMEs.

24. This comprehensive local strategy has supported over 2,000 new apprenticeships over the past 4 years we are continuing to seek out new ways to support our residents and businesses.

Internships

25. The Southwark Council Delivery Plan 2022-26 contains a commitment to *create 250 paid internships for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds*. Measuring disadvantage is not an exact science as granular and verifiable information about students' socio-economic background is, in practice, limited. Therefore young people (aged 16-24) who meet (a) and any one of (b), (c), (d) or (e) are eligible.

- a) Educated at state school; and,
- b) looked after by the local authority;
- c) first in family to attend university in the UK;
- d) eligible for free school meals;
- e) having disabilities and/or special educational needs.

26. Paid internships can be a great way for young people to gain skills and relevant work experience whilst receiving appropriate remuneration. By supporting young people from less advantaged backgrounds into high quality paid internships, the council is seeking to help address some of the inequalities that still exist with unpaid or low paid internships, which continue to act as a barrier to those who are less well off, and improve the social mobility for those who may not have the family or social networks to help them to get a 'foot on the ladder' with good employers.

27. Cabinet has approved a strategy to deliver the paid internship target principally via three schemes: (1) Schools; (2) Graduates; and (3) Council.

28. For the *School scheme*, sixth form students aged 16-18 who attend St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Michael's Catholic College, City of London Academy Southwark or Southwark Virtual School, are supported by Career ready, who provide mentors, masterclasses, experience days and other support to help them to secure paid internship opportunities. Career Ready has secured internships with a range of employers including: British Land, Citibank, Demica, Silicon Valley Bank, and BP.

29. For the *Graduate scheme*, undergraduates or recent graduates (graduated within one year) receive a range of support to secure sought-after paid internships or in some cases, graduates roles. To date, participants have received support via upReach, a locally-based social mobility charity to secure internships at a range of good employers such as: Civil Service Fast Stream, Coutts, Citibank, Bloomberg, Unilever, Wellcome Trust, LSBU, Financial Conduct Authority, AstraZeneca, GSK and many others. From September 2023, we have appointed Gradcore to provide support to eligible Southwark candidates and to work with local

businesses, including SMEs, to create further paid internship opportunities.

30. For the *Council scheme*, an internship programme was set up to offer valuable career development opportunities within the council. January 2024 will be our sixth cohort after successfully placing over 50% of interns from 2023's cohort into employment. The council's programme runs for up to 12 weeks and incorporates three key elements: Paid work experience in a team within the council; Master classes host by the Organisational Development Team; and a group project.

Southwark Local Offer and Southwark Information, Advice and Support Service

31. The Local Offer provides information about supported employment services, apprenticeships, traineeships, supported internships, training and employment opportunities available to young people in the local area.
32. The SIAS (Southwark Information, Advice and Support) service provides support to young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) including advice and guidance related to further education, training and career options.

Education Business Alliance

33. The Education Business Alliance (EBA) bring schools and businesses together through engaging projects, preparing young people for the world of work.
34. The EBA work closely with schools to deliver work related learning activities and skill developing projects, and in partnership with a variety of businesses across a diverse range of industries to provide young people with a realistic picture of the job market, understanding of employers' requirements and authentic experience of the working culture. It also provides an opportunity for employees to give back to their community through volunteering and provides training and organises DBS checks for all business clients interested in volunteering.
35. The EBA coordinate and manage 1500 student work experience placements, host an annual careers fair reaching 200 students with 10 employers. 60 students participate in the Young Enterprise Project, 46 students have MFL mentors in secondary schools, 50 students engage with employers virtually, and every year 16 visits are arranged for secondary school students to visit businesses offices, allowing the young people to gain an insight into a real live place of work.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
N/A	N/A

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Danny Edward, Head of Economy	
Report Author	Patrick Doherty, Principal Strategy Officer	
Version	Draft	
Dated	05 October 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team / Scrutiny Team	13 October 2023	