

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 26 November 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Supporting young people transition from school to college and work	
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## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee notes the information contained in this report regarding the work of the Council and its partners in supporting young people transition from school to college and work.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Introduction

2. Young people's economic sustainability is essential to their successful transition to adulthood. Levels of young people not in education, employment or training in Southwark have fallen to their lowest level. Challenges remain, however, with more young adults in their twenties unable to secure or remain in employment, and a growing cohort of young people who disengage not only from the labour market but also from support services and their communities. We also need to tackle high levels of exclusions from school and other barriers to learning and employment. Our ambition is to:
  - Identify, engage and support all vulnerable young people into learning and employment
  - Work with schools, education providers and colleges to develop appropriate curriculum models that prepare young people for the world of work.
  - Work with businesses and the community to develop employment opportunities.
3. Southwark's new Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2012–20 was agreed at Cabinet on 20 November 2012 and sets out the context for how the Council is supporting businesses and residents, including young people, access employment. Very significant shifts in national government policy since 2010 have transformed the operational context for interventions to address labour market failures and support for business start-ups, growth and survival. Government expectations are based on private sector growth to provide additional job opportunities and growth out of the recession, while simultaneously, the Work Programme is expected to reduce dependency on work-related benefits and thus support the national welfare reform programme. This changing landscape makes it ever more important for the council to work with partners, and we can still change much by doing so.
4. The four main ambitions of the new Economic Wellbeing Strategy are:
  - Employment – narrowing the gap with the London employment rate
  - Southwark – the place of choice to start and grow a business
  - Thriving town centres and high streets
  - Promoting financial wellbeing and independence
5. As part of this, the strategy will commit the Council to working with partners to:

- help residents find the right advice, support and skills to overcome barriers to work – ensuring the right access points and progressive pathways, which continue through age 19 and beyond
- get more employers engaged, helping more young people with work experience, tasters and getting the softer skills essential for the workplace, and mentoring towards careers and business ambitions
- promote and support opportunities for work-based learning, specifically working with schools, academies and colleges
- make the best use of apprenticeships
- develop progression routes to skilled jobs, working with end-users in developments and regeneration schemes
- establish leadership, influence and support to drive improvement in standards of vocational learning & relevance to the jobs market, making skills provision more likely to have a job at the end of it
- get the best service for our residents from national/regional provision, working specifically with Jobcentreplus and the work programme
- work with our regional partners to improve dialogue with employers and access to jobs London-wide.

### **How the Council's work supports employability in partnership with schools, external agencies and private providers**

#### **6. Youth Fund**

- (i) Southwark Scholarship Scheme pays university tuition fees for up to six talented young people from Southwark each year that are facing financial hardship.
- (ii) Southwark Educational Maintenance Supplement (SEMS)
  - One of the first schemes of its kind to be introduced in the country following the government's decision to phase out the national Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).
  - In 2011/12, more than 1,000 students in need of financial support benefitted from the £300,000 that the Council allocated to SEMS.
  - Covers the cost of academic books, travel expenses and any other necessary costs.
  - Funds were distributed via more than 30 schools, colleges and training providers in and out of the borough.
- (iii) Southwark Employment Training Scheme
  - Helps young people improve their job prospects by offering work placements and training in conjunction with local businesses; the programme has supported nearly 400 young people with advice, training and work placements in a variety of sectors including, IT, customer service, gardening, community organisations and retail.

#### **7. Education teams**

- (i) The 14-19 Team supports all schools, academies and other providers to develop a curriculum offer that best meets the needs of all young people aged 14 to 19. The team offers accreditation advice for voluntary organisations that are developing projects to support young people into work and training.

## (ii) **Advice, Support and Guidance**

- The Education team gathers information to aid progression of young people NEET (not in employment, education or training) by maintaining and further developing links and joint working with key partners including schools, academies and colleges, training providers, employers, charities, housing services, welfare and benefits services, national apprentice service, Jobcentre Plus and the national careers service among others. Focus is on providing labour market information, raising awareness of the pathways and opportunities available and developing strategies to enhance the employability of young people
- The Connexions Service provides local access to drop-in services for young people particularly those that are vulnerable and who are NEET removing barriers and encouraging engagement with learning and training, for example through careers fairs.

## (iii) **Education Business Alliance (EBA)**

- Youth Fund Projects:
  - The EBA is working with a range of partners to find work experience placements for school, college and university leavers, young people coming to the end of their studies and potentially becoming NEET
- Work Experience
  - Work experience offers the opportunity to develop employability skills for Year 10 students. A survey of 380 students that had been out of school and working with businesses for two weeks found that;
    - i. 54% were offered the opportunity of further contact when they were looking for work in the future.
    - ii. 37% were offered some additional form of paid work.
    - iii. 12% were offered a part-time or holiday job.
    - iv. 6.5% were offered part-time after school employment.
    - v. 8% of employers encouraged students to contact them when they were looking for full-time employment after they had left school.
    - vi. 5 students had apprenticeship opportunities identified to them.
    - vii. 8 volunteering opportunities were offered by charities on an on-going basis.
    - viii. 1 student was offered a prestigious mentorship with a Partner from a City Law firm.

- Business Mentoring

The recruitment of business mentors, who work with young people to complete a range of activities, including: college application and UCAS advice, general GCSE mentoring, maths and language mentoring.

## 8. **Southwark Apprenticeship Programme**

Southwark Council is committed to working with partners to provide apprenticeship opportunities so that people can fully develop their potential.

- Over 160 people from wide-ranging backgrounds and age groups have joined the apprenticeship scheme.
- Working within Southwark Council or with one of its partners, apprentices are given a contract of employment for a minimum of 12 months.
- They receive support from the central apprenticeship team, line managers and learning provider assessors and tutors. Coaching and mentoring support is also provided to ensure all apprentices are empowered to succeed in their placement.

## 9. **Section 106**

As well as running our own apprenticeship programme, Southwark Council negotiates new, local apprenticeships as planning obligations on major developments, where we are able to, an example of this is the Shard:

- i. Working with Sellar the Council has invested Section 106 funds in improving vocational learning facilities at Southwark College.
- ii. The Council continues to invest in supporting young people to access entry level positions in and around the Shard and it provides the higher level skills needed to help young people progress in their careers.