

Reducing Unemployment in Gedling Borough Scrutiny Review

Conclusions and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

The working group welcomed the valuable engagement being undertaken with local schools in order to promote careers advice and vocational development. Members noted however that those schools with Academy status were proving more difficult to bring on board, and recognised that the role of Members as School Governors could be helpful in this respect.

The group was also pleased that the Council has embraced and is widely promoting the national apprenticeship scheme and providing additional financial incentives to local firms, and would like to see more detailed tracking information on the progression route of both GBC and other local apprentices as it was felt that the Council and Employment and Skills group needs to be demonstrating continuous improvement in retention and/or ongoing positive development for those individuals.

Members endorsed the targeting of Economic Development initiatives through the priority localities of Netherfield and Colwick, Newstead and Killisick, however considered that the potential role of the voluntary sector has not yet been fully explored. Scope was identified for the possible use of community facilities such as the Newstead Centre for business start-ups, and for the establishment of robust support and referral mechanisms to vocational training, jobseeker services and business start-up advice with specialist registered charities and other well established voluntary and community organisations, particularly in the priority Localities. One example given was the social care pathway qualification previously delivered by Framework. Young unemployed people had been referred to Framework and trained to NVQ 1 in social care however Framework had lost their funding due to low referrals to the scheme. It was deemed important by Members to ensure that the referral pathways remain strong and that the voluntary and community sector might have a key role to play in this respect. The development of social enterprises could also be further explored, particularly where community organisations might wish to engage in the delivery of pathways to employment.

In examining recent Nottinghamshire County Council employment bulletins and specifically the employment and training destination statistics of Gedling residents, Members observed that there is a growing increase in NEETs in Carlton, Carlton Hill and Carlton Valley, which appears to coincide with the Carlton Academy ceasing to provide the BTEC. Members enquired whether there were plans to establish a Job club in Carlton, and were advised that subject to transport, Carlton residents could potentially access the Netherfield Jobclub provision. Under the TravelRight initiative, which the Council has signed up to, the Travel Scheme co-ordinator is looking into extending the scheme into Carlton Valley to help address the access needs of Carlton residents to jobseeker services. Members proposed that this situation be kept under review.

Members noted that social care is a now significant employment growth area, particularly in Gedling, which has a higher than average aging population. The group proposed that the Council considers launching a PR campaign aimed at changing the perceptions of young people and adults about the role of carers. The campaign

could include case histories of those who had progressed to health sector jobs via social care, additionally highlighting the intergenerational benefits to communities. A Carers award category could be included as part of the proposed 'Pride of Gedling' Awards Scheme. Members also saw great potential for apprenticeships and training placements in social care within the local voluntary and charitable sector, and further proposed that Gedling Homes be encouraged to take up the apprenticeship scheme for social care and other related work.

Members concluded that the Council is pursuing the right set of priorities in responding to the current economic situation in Gedling. By focussing on youth unemployment, small business sustainability and the building of skills for growth sector employment, the Council is targeting its limited resources and maximising partnership approaches effectively and the approach is demonstrating some early positive results.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

In forming a set of recommendations, the working group focussed upon sharing their local knowledge in order to enhance the Employment and Skills group network, making suggestions for inclusion to a forward plan and funding strategy that would help extend work with schools, strengthen the role of the voluntary sector, use of local community facilities and increase social enterprise development, and put proposals forward for a PR campaign and partnership training and apprenticeship approach to address care sector employment.

Having considered all evidence, Members now make the following recommendations to the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development:

1. In creating a seven-year EU (and other) funding strategy, consideration should be given to:

- An initiative to build on work with schools, targeting children from 12 -13 years of age upwards with access to careers advice and bridging skills to employment.
- Development of outreach/referral links and voluntary sector placement agreements with local voluntary organisations, establishing a conduit to mainstream training and employment opportunities.
- Considering the feasibility of using local community facilities such as the Newstead Centre and St Georges Centre as business incubation units and venues for employability training.
- Social Enterprise development linked to the Localities initiatives taking account of the above, with advice and support from Social Enterprise Link.

2. Improve access to jobseeker services, jobs, training and employment for Newstead residents, especially young people, by:

- Recognising where they currently attend school and college and access jobseeker services, which include Mansfield and Sutton in Ashfield, and raise awareness of more local alternatives.

- Making contact with the schools for which Newstead is part of the catchment area, specifically the Annie Holgate Academy and the National Church of England School, and linking those schools into the work of the Gedling Employment and Skills Group.
 - Approaching Kirkby College and West Nottinghamshire College to join the Employment and Skills Group network, as Newstead young people attend those colleges.
 - Examining how well served Newstead is in respect of inter district and cross borough travel.
3. **Help to address the Education and Employment needs of Forces and Ex Forces residents** within the Employment and Skills group delivery plan, with specialist Forces Employment Support agencies such as **Remploy Veterans** represented on the Employment and Skills network.
 4. Continuing to monitor rising youth unemployment in Carlton and seek out opportunities to extent job-seeking services to young residents of that area.
 5. The partnership to undertake medium term tracking of the destination of individuals taking up local apprenticeships, to help support the continual progression of those young people that we have invested in.
 6. The Council and Employment and Skills partnership to consider creating and specifically promoting an employment, placement and training scheme in Social Care to raise the profile and importance of care work. This would increase take-up of jobs and training in that sector, foster intergenerational respect and understanding, address the needs of our aging population and engage the voluntary sector.
 7. Consideration to be given to ways in which organisations such as Gedling Homes, NNE CCG / Park House Clinic and Schools could be linked up to create work experience, mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for young people in social care, repairs and maintenance and business administration/customer service.
 8. Consider linking a PR campaign about the importance of Social Care to a Carers category within the proposed 'Pride of Gedling' Community Award scheme.
 9. Create high visibility links to ring fenced job opportunities, placements and apprenticeships on the Council's website.
 10. As part of the skills audit of Members planned following the May 2015 local election, details of Councillors appointments to School Governing Boards to be gathered and shared with the Employment and Skills group to enable

Members to support and advocate the work of the group. **(Refer to the Elections and Members Services Team).**

11. Continuing to influence those schools with Academy status to engage with the services being offered through the Employment and Skills Group.