

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 3rd July 2012

Agenda item: **10**

Wards: All Wards

Subject: Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Career Pathways– draft report

Lead officer: Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor James Holmes and Councillor Agatha Akyigyina, Co-Chairs of the Post 16 Career Pathways Task Group

Forward Plan reference number: 1140

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Children and Young People O&S Panel considers and endorses the report arising from the scrutiny review of post 16 career pathways, attached at Appendix 1.
 - B. That the Panel agrees to forward the review report to Cabinet for approval and implementation of the recommendations, by means of an action plan to be drawn up by officers and relevant partners working with the Cabinet Member(s).
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present the draft scrutiny review report on post 16 career pathways to the Children and Young People O&S Panel for endorsement and seek agreement to forward the report to Cabinet for approval and implementation of the review recommendations.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 At the first meeting of the 2011/12 Municipal Year, the Children and Young People O&S Panel agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of post 16 career pathways, with a view to making recommendations to improve the type and number of opportunities available to young people to increase their chances of employment.
- 2.2 The Children and Young People O&S Panel agreed the task group membership and that the review report would be considered at it's meeting on 3 July 2012.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Children and Young People O&S Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 Appendix 1 of the task group's report gives a list of whom we spoke to and the equalities impact assessment is provided at appendix 2. The task group also raised awareness of the review through the channels outlined at paragraph 2.2 in the final report.

5. TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The Children and Young People O&S Panel established the task group and are receiving the draft final report for the Panel's approval at this meeting held on 3rd July 2012.
- 5.2 The Panel should consider and approve this report to forward to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 24th September 2012 for consideration.

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this covering report. However, it is envisaged that the recommendations in the attached report may have resource implications should 'champions' in relevant teams across the Council be identified. This would result in additional work being undertaken to deliver the recommendations and therefore require additional resource to be found to manage this alongside existing responsibilities. This cannot be costed at present until the number of staff required and time commitment to deliver the recommendations could be established. However, any specific resource implications will be identified and presented to Cabinet prior to agreeing an action plan for implementing the report's recommendations.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None for the purposes of this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory implications of the topic being scrutinised.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the review process and is available at appendix 2 of the final report.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None for the purposes of this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the crime and disorder implications of the topic being scrutinised.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Draft review report on post 16 career pathways.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 None for this report.



London Borough of Merton

Report and Recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review on Post 16
Career Pathways

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

April 2012

Task Group Members

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Cllr Karin Forbes
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We would like to thank all the officers and external witnesses who have taken the time to provide written and verbal information and discussed ideas with us.

All contributors are listed in Appendix 1 of this report.

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Executive Summary

We set this task group up in order to undertake a review of how outcomes could be improved for young people in the borough, in particular through educational or vocational opportunities, post 16 years of age, to ensure successful entry into employment.

We have made seven recommendations aimed at improving the opportunities and resources available to young people to ensure they develop the necessary skills and are able to experience roles first hand, in their journey from school to employment.

We also felt during this review that it was important for responsibility to be taken by young people to access the opportunities available as part of their career development. We would encourage young people to achieve good attendance rates at school and understand other behaviours that are expected in the workplace. We are conscious that for some young people, progress into further and higher education is affected by attendance issues and acknowledge the work that the Council undertakes to tackle poor attendance in schools.

Equally we would encourage young people to participate in any special careers orientated sessions and research opportunities available, engaging with education professionals, parents and carers and local businesses, utilising the support available.

The recommendations made are listed in full overleaf and relate to the relevant stakeholders that the Task Group felt the Council should look to encourage to engage acting as champions, to ensure improved outcomes for young people:

- Local businesses;
- Schools;
- Young people; and
- Parents/carers

List of Task Group Recommendations:

The recommendations aim to support all young people in Merton in their career choices, including those with special educational needs, looked after children, young people with disabilities, and those seeking vocational or academic based career paths. The recommendations also include young people not in education post 16 years of age.

The recommendations would require the Council to appoint champions to encourage the engagement of, and further develop existing working relationships, with schools and businesses. In addition, the recommendations aim to encourage greater communication with young people themselves to increase the number taking personal responsibility for their career development.

We acknowledge that the take up of recommendations for schools, businesses and young people themselves need careful consultation and engagement with those impacted. However, we would encourage these stakeholders to engage in this process to facilitate improved outcomes for young people in the borough and increase opportunities for employment.

Recommendations	Stakeholder/Responsible Team
<p>Recommendation 1 That the Council support the further development of existing links between businesses, schools and universities to support post 16 career pathways.</p>	<p>Procurement Team Future Merton Policy, Partnerships and Strategy CSF – TBD</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 That the Council, engaging all relevant departments, seeks to increase the number of apprenticeships and opportunities available to young people through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendering process; • Community Plan; • Regeneration Plans for Merton; • Family Poverty Strategy and Action Plan; and • Existing links with schools 	<p>CSF Other teams to be determined</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 That the Council act as a point of contact for voluntary and community sector groups seeking to engage with the apprenticeship and citizenship opportunities available, using appointed champions in the council, where possible.</p>	<p>CSF Other teams to be determined</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 That the Council audit and bring together the range of initiatives currently delivered across the borough to ensure a cohesive service is offered online and ensures improved access to information for young people, parents and carers and schools.</p>	<p>Policy, Partnerships and Strategy Team CSF</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 That schools be encouraged by the Council to build upon the existing positive collaboration between institutions to further improve the vocational offer at sixth form.</p>	<p>CSF</p>

<p>Recommendation 6 That a dedicated officer be identified to develop relationships with local businesses to increase the support and opportunities available to young people.</p>	CSF
<p>Recommendation 7 That the Council look to develop a mutually beneficial partnership approach with local businesses to encourage them to offer apprenticeships, sponsor school events, advise on career paths, undertake a mentoring role and to sit on school governing bodies.</p>	CSF Other teams to be determined

Final Report of the Post 16 Career Pathways Task Group

1. Introduction

Purpose:

- 1.1 The Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting on 15th June 2011, agreed to establish a Task Group review of post 16 career pathways and appointed a small number of Members to the Task Group.
- 1.2 At the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel meeting on 21st September 2011, Terms of Reference for the Task Group review were agreed. The Task Group Members aimed to ensure the best career outcomes for young people in the borough.
- 1.3 The Terms of Reference for the review were as follows:
 - To investigate the progress made at the new sixth form provision in secondary schools which opened in September 2010;
 - To investigate the vocational opportunities in the borough and links with local employers to encourage apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young people; and
 - To investigate the advice given to young people on post 16 opportunities in the light of the significant reduction in the Connexions Service
- 1.4 Other areas considered for exploration are outlined below, however, the Task Group had a limited amount of time and were only able to undertake research into the terms of reference outlined above.
 - To determine the provision of careers support and guidance for Looked after Children;
 - To determine current practice in relation to post 16 career pathways and the provision available to young people with special educational needs, disabilities, English as an additional language, or those who have come into contact with the youth justice service;
 - To identify statistical evidence of successes and the pathways of those not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16-19;
 - To identify best practice in other boroughs and what lessons could be learned or good practices adopted by Merton;
 - To identify what else needs to be done to improve careers outcomes for young people by the Council;
 - To identify the role and activities of partners/local businesses in improving career outcomes for young people;

- To identify the role of schools and parents/carers in improving career outcomes for young people;
- To identify how new sixth form provision can be further developed and the good work to date can be built upon; and
- To identify whether career pathways can be improved to help mitigate the continuing economic challenges ahead.

2. What the Task Group Did

2.1 The Task Group held a number of meetings during the course of the review at which a wide range of evidence was considered, and the public were invited to attend to contribute their views, as outlined below with corresponding recommendations that resulted from these discussions.

Publicity

2.2 The Task Group publicised this review in the following ways to encourage community engagement and comments from residents that could be used to shape the recommendations made:

- Community Forums;
- Twitter and Facebook items;
- Coverage in the Local Guardian; and
- Item in My Merton magazine.

2.3 The Task Group also ensured community engagement in this review by co-opting a member of the public onto the Task Group and welcomed Julie Hutchinson to contribute to the meetings and discussions.

Consultation

2.4 Task Group Members spoke to headteachers and also benefited from having two young people attend several task group meetings giving their views on some of the issues discussed.

3. Background

3.1 The Task Group heard that careers information and advice was legislated for within Section 68 of the Education Skills Act 2008. We were informed that the Education Bill currently going through parliament would clarify whether statutory duties may extend to year 8 pupils for schools.

3.2 Merton had established new sixth form provision in September 2010 with different schools taking different approaches to careers advice and guidance. Many schools developed strong links with local employers and employed dedicated staff to advise on career options. Other colleges had begun to extend its curriculum to reflect the changing needs of the upcoming school population.

4. NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

- 4.1 We heard that the Council are responsible for a number of targets in relation to reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). The reduction of NEET statistics involved the Council tracking the outcomes of young people leaving school, and commissioning NEET reduction projects.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Office publishes Merton's performance against NEET targets. There are five different NEET categories at present, with different classifications dependent upon the length of time a young person has been out of education, employment or training. We heard that the longer this is the case, the more difficult it becomes to help and find options for the young person and that they may become an 'entrenched' NEET, leading to long term unemployment. The numbers of vulnerable young people in each category vary, for example, there are not many teenage parents in Merton compared to the rest of London. Due to the absence of opportunities in the employment market, recession and other factors, SEN/LDD young people are over represented in the NEET category.
- 4.3 In Merton there are currently 242 NEET cases with 996 'not known' outcomes for 16 – 19 year olds. We heard that this was due to young people being trained, employed or educated out of borough in the main. Whilst it is difficult to get data, other London boroughs NEET figures vary from 10 % to 50%, with Merton at the better end of the scale at 17%.
- 4.4 Most of the young people that fall into the NEET category in Merton are aged 18 and white. Some were teenage mothers, but in some of these cases the mother would have made a choice not to partake in education, training or employment in favour of being with the child, or due to problems associated with childcare arrangements.
- 4.5 At the time of this review the formula for calculating performance had changed which did not allow for a like-for-like comparison to be made for Merton. However, the percentage of NEETS is lower than before. A recent increase in the volume of NEET's has been the result of an increased cohort size and due to a change in data collection methods.
- 4.6 We learned that there are ongoing initiatives run by the Council that seek to help young people into work. For example, the department are engaged in professional networks to actively create links with organisations that could help Merton's young people improve their chances of securing work. In addition the Council provide a coordination service for young people's ESF projects.

Apprenticeships –

Recommendation 1 - That the Council support the further development of existing links between businesses, schools and universities to support post 16 career pathways.

Recommendation 2 - That the Council, engaging all relevant departments, seeks to increase the number of apprenticeships and opportunities available to young people through the:

- **Tendering process;**
- **Community Plan;**
- **Regeneration Plans for Merton;**
- **Family Poverty Strategy and Action Plan; and**
- **Existing links with schools**

5. The National Apprenticeship Scheme

- 5.1 We received a presentation on the National Apprenticeship Scheme that was set up following the Leach Report in 2009 and caters for young people aged 16 and over. The Scheme aims to increase the number, quality and range of apprenticeship opportunities available to young people.
- 5.2 The National Apprenticeship Scheme is a dedicated and responsive scheme which assists employers, potential apprentices and parents via a helpline and website and is growing rapidly with a 60% increase year on year of available apprenticeships.
- 5.3 Success rates for completion of apprenticeships stand at 73% nationally. The figures for Merton in 2011 show that 220 apprenticeships were started, a 50% increase on the previous year, with an annual success rate on a par with the national average for starting and completing apprenticeships.
- 5.4 Apprenticeships offer a combination of experiential, work based learning and theoretical learning. This can be provided on a 4:1 day basis (4 days in employment, 1 day in college for example), with some apprenticeships providing a block of education with the provider.
- 5.5 The website enables learners to register on the site which will result in their details being forwarded to potential employers. The website carries all the apprenticeship vacancies available with 10,000 vacancies in England at present, 1500 of which are in London and 40 available in Merton. The average weekly wage for these vacancies in Merton is £110pw, a little above the national minimum wage. Published materials are also available for young people to access.
- 5.6 We heard that the organisation administering the National Apprenticeship Scheme did not have the resources to support IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) events due to a reduction in staffing and due to the closure of the Connexions Service. Work-based learning alliances to offer impartial advice around apprenticeships are currently being explored as a way to address the gap.
- 5.7 However, we learned that apprenticeships are not always suitable for assisting in reducing NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures, as the young people concerned might not yet have attained the level of education required to succeed. What is also difficult is that the

scheme does not support graduates due to the achievement of a higher level of education than that offered by the scheme.

- 5.8 We heard that a number of level 2 apprenticeships were available at present. Level 2 is an intermediate level and the equivalent to attaining 5 GCSEs, lasting a year from August 2012. Level 3 apprenticeships are equivalent to 2 A levels, and levels 4 and 5 are the equivalent to a foundation degree, for example, with a link to chartered status in certain professions such as accounting.
- 5.9 There are no current targets set or statistics available to measure follow on destinations for apprenticeships. However, regardless of the employment status of the young person at the end of the apprenticeship with that particular company or organisation, it is felt that valuable 'real world' work experience and a useful qualification are gained and would certainly enhance the opportunities available to that individual in the future.
- 5.10 The government fully fund the cost of training for 16 – 18 year olds in the scheme. For those aged 19 and over, the government funds up to 50% of the training, with the provider/employer funding the difference. We were informed that only a very small number of employers are known to not be providing sufficient quality in their placements, and these have been investigated.
- 5.11 A positive development is that apprenticeship vacancies are expected to double after the current campaign was completed (Apprenticeship Week 2012). However, at present it is estimated that there are around 14 young people competing for each apprenticeship vacancy.
- 5.12 We explored how the volume of apprenticeships and opportunities may be increased in Merton. Officers advised that networking with small businesses as well as large employers in the borough was the first step, with the local authority setting a good example also. This could potentially be done by incorporating apprenticeship requirements into new contracts in the Council. Links with organisations, such as Job Centre Plus, could also be investigated enabling a co-ordinated approach to apprenticeship opportunities across the borough.
- 5.13 The funding grant for small businesses for apprenticeships is £15,000. There was no cap on this, as yet, unrestricted funding for the under 25 age group, with limits being imposed from 25 years and older. This should be encouraging to employers who may not have previously entertained the idea of offering apprenticeships to young people in their organisations.

6. Apprenticeships – The Merton Model

- 6.1 We invited the Joint Head of Learning Development & Diversity to provide an overview of the Merton Apprenticeship Scheme. Merton has developed and offers a good package to apprentices, offering training, help with curriculum vitae writing, and general preparation for employment after the apprenticeship. Merton pays apprentices the equivalent of £12,000 pro rata in comparison with other employers who pay as little as £2.50 p/h. As a large employer, Merton does not receive funding for apprenticeships.

- 6.2 In addition networking opportunities are available to apprentices at development days with their counterparts at Sutton Council
- 6.3 We were pleased to hear that some of the opportunities and successes of the scheme had been the uptake in apprenticeships in the Customer Services and Benefits section and that four apprentices had secured full time employment last year with the Council. It was recommended by officers that the possibility of writing apprenticeship placements into contracts when procuring goods and services could be explored and, as the Council workforce is remodelled, Merton should look for ways to incorporate apprenticeship opportunities into new staffing structures.
- 6.4 In addition, as well as looking at apprenticeship opportunities, Merton is looking at how to expose people to work in other ways, for example, a pilot scheme for internships is currently being considered, with expenses to be paid and focused on specific project work. We were also informed about the possibility of work placements being offered without pay as opportunities to gain experience. The graduate programme, linked to the national graduate development programme, is still in operation, albeit with a limited number of graduates due to funding.
- 6.5 Other initiatives focus on supporting looked after children into work and questions were being asked about whether to prioritise these young people when considering recruitment/apprenticeships with prioritisation given to looked after children.

7. Apprenticeships - Merton Chamber of Commerce

- 7.1 We invited the views of the Chief Executive of Merton Chamber of Commerce who had been involved with assisting young people into employment since 1984 and felt able to describe the current crisis for young people.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive felt that the council and local employers needed to collectively approach this issue of youth employment, as despite engaging in apprenticeships, young people have no guarantee of work upon completion. The importance of giving young people the opportunity to experience real work, working 9 – 5pm, to be punctual and to gain skills required in the working environment could not be overstated. Experience had shown that most employers feel that young people do not come to them equipped with the right aptitude and attitude for employment.
- 7.3 The Merton Chamber of Commerce had given many opportunities to young people through the provision of work experience and internships with local employers. In addition, the Merton and Sutton Young Enterprise Board had plans to roll out a Young Enterprise scheme in schools in Merton, giving young people the chance to gain experience of what it is like to set up a business. Levels of involvement by young people in Sutton exceeds that of Merton and it was agreed that more needs to be done to encourage schools in Merton to get involved. However, We noted that there is a cost to rolling out this scheme.

8. Examples of good practice

Recommendation 3 - That the Council act as a point of contact for voluntary and community sector groups seeking to engage with the apprenticeship and citizenship opportunities available, using appointed champions in the Council, where possible.

My Voice London

- 8.1 We received a presentation on the successes resulting from 'My Voice London', which was founded as part of the Local Education Authority 21 years ago and became a registered company in 1993 and then a registered charity in 1998.
- 8.2 We heard that the charity aimed to provide support at key points in young people's lives to enable them to play fulfilling roles as engaged, economically active members of society. Funding for this charity had declined from £350,000 year on year and stopped completely last year. This had resulted in a shift in focus for the organisation, which now relies on short-term grant funds for specific projects. In working with young people requiring additional support, My Voice London has rolled out a number of projects delivering a mentoring scheme and helping young people use public transport to increase their independence.
- 8.3 We learned that the organisation relied heavily on volunteers, with around 50 – 83 volunteers offering their time to ensure projects can be delivered that it works very closely with local agencies to further its organisational aims.

Micro Society Project

- 8.4 Another scheme of note that interested us was the 'Micro-Society' project that had been very successful and had been taken up by every primary school in Croydon. This project aims to help young people in South London to achieve their full potential by ensuring they make the most of their educational opportunities and preparing them for adult and working life. Their programmes address the needs of all young people, but focus particularly on the most disadvantaged.
- 8.5 We were pleased to hear that, whilst relationships with businesses took a while to develop and be built, this was felt to be of benefit as it allowed schools to have a greater understanding of the company concerned. It also enabled schools sufficient time to prepare and reap the benefits that the project would afford them and their students.
- 8.6 It was explained that equality issues would need to be taken into consideration if businesses were attached to particular schools. In addition, how projects could be funded would need to be investigated. Lack of sufficient funding meant it was not possible to develop long-term plans and develop new projects. However, we were advised that European funding was available to support employer/school links and could be explored.

- 8.7 Ursuline High School, which was previously a Business and Enterprise Specialist School, gave an example of the scheme in action. Links developed with businesses by the school had been shown to improve student motivation. Students developed their understanding of the opportunities available to them beyond school and the relevance of education to their future success.
- 8.8 The Ursuline has departmental links with 150 external organisations that are embedded into the curriculum and school development plan. These links are developed with the aim of enhancing students learning in the subject, as well as opening their eyes to opportunities in the future.
- 8.9 The Fast Career's Networking Session provided by Ursuline to Year 9 students enabled employers from 35 organisations to share opportunities with young people. This session enables all Year 9 students to talk to employers and ask about different careers and key skills required when deciding upon GCSE options. Surveys undertaken by Ursuline found that 80% of students found this event helped them to link their GCSE options to their career choices.
- 8.10 In addition, Ursuline invites professionals to speak to the students within different areas of the curriculum to support student learning. For example, KS4 and KS5 science students received a presentation from an engineer and had the opportunity to discuss career development and the skills and qualifications required for that role.
- 8.11 Several of the projects delivered by Ursuline were externally evaluated and identified as examples of best practice, resulting in an Excellence in Education Award in 2011 from the Centre for Education and Industry at Warwick University.
- 8.12 We reviewed some of the available research and found a study undertaken by the Employers and Education Taskforce. This study stated that links to businesses were beneficial for students as every additional employer engagement activity resulted in an increase in the future salary earned by those students when in employment.

The East London Business Alliance – ELBA

- 8.13 We found the East London Business Alliance to be an example of good practice and welcomed a resident with professional experience at this agency to contribute to the review.
- 8.14 The East London Business Alliance (ELBA) is a mainly private sector funded regeneration agency that has been running since 1989, and continued to grow for the past eight years, with a new team, new vision and new website being developed. ELBA creates links between employers and potential employees, enabling the business to exercise corporate social responsibility. The businesses become members of ELBA and pay an annual subscription dependent on their size. They then offer to engage with the local community by, for example, offering work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, tours and open days, and possibly a graduate entry position for a local person.

- 8.15 Business representatives are encouraged to take up positions of responsibility in the local community, and provide volunteers from their work force to complete a couple of days volunteering in the community each year. Networking events are hosted by ELBA four times a year, and businesses are keen to attend.
- 8.16 Approximately 2000 people have been helped into work, with a focus on the financial sector (due to the close proximity to Canary Wharf), by the agency and its 48 employees, 15 of whom focus on helping people into work. Emphasis is placed on the importance of finding work to ensure a happy home life and find a place to live, as well as a better lifestyle and ensuring independence.
- 8.17 The agency is run with financial support from the three local authority areas it functions in: Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney. These boroughs have high levels of deprivation and a high level of 'churn' (frequent changes in the resident population). ELBA works with people of many different nationalities, and due to the 'churn' in the boroughs, had started to specify that a length of local residency be required to enter the programme in Newham (currently 1 year with a view to this being extended to 2-3 years). For the good work it has undertaken, ELBA has won several awards for its work, including one from the Times Educational Supplement for helping to turn around a school in special measures.
- 8.18 We learned that a similar agency was formed in the borough previously when the Kingston and Merton Education Business Partnership was formed. However, this partnership ceased to exist due to the removal of government grant funding for the scheme.
- 8.19 We were pleased to hear that the Council had been approached regarding a potential bid with Fitness First in Phipps Bridge. This initiative seeks to help unemployed young men, some of whom have been in prison, get back into employment by working in a gym environment (this is being lead by Pre-vista).
- 8.20 Officers advised that, with increased resources, this type of project could be rolled out with other partners and there would be an opportunity for a consortium approach to be considered. Examples provided from other local authorities also highlighted how dedicated staff with responsibility for forging links with partner organisations enabled greater liaison and support with funding applications. This approach was found to be successful in other authorities with 4 million pounds worth of funding being secured over a 3 year period.
- 8.21 We were encouraged by officer's comments that there are opportunities to be more innovative to support and help vulnerable groups of young people. The Head at Cricket Green School provided an example of this. Fifteen years ago while working as the Director of the Emergency Department at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Erin Riehle was frustrated with the high turnover in entry-level jobs that involved restocking supplies. While working to identify a solution to eliminating the problem, Cincinnati Children's had adopted a major diversity initiative. Erin wondered if people

with disabilities could fill the entry-level jobs she had. She turned to the Hamilton County Board of Disabilities and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and asked if her idea was possible. Working in partnership the idea of filling a handful of jobs in a casualty department evolved into a comprehensive programme model.

8.22 Project SEARCH' has grown from one original programme site at Cincinnati Children's to over 200. The results so far are:

- 16 sites in the UK
- 12 Hospitals
- 2 Councils
- 1 Private Sector Business Services Company
- 2010: 4 sites – 21 Jobs (63%)
- 2011: 16 sites – 131 Jobs (43% since July)
- 5 sites have achieved over 60% job success, 1 has achieved 75% and 1 has achieved 100%
- National Average for people with learning disabilities in paid employment: 6.4%
- Project SEARCH listed as best practice in the 2010 Ofsted Review, Special Educational Needs Green Paper and the DWP Sayce Report

8.23 We heard that there was the potential for a similar pilot scheme to be set up in Merton in conjunction with libraries, or with local teaching hospitals such as St Georges. We welcomed the work that had been undertaken under the Cricket Green Project.

9. Careers Advice and Guidance

Recommendation 4 - That the Council audit and bring together the range of initiatives currently delivered across the borough to ensure a cohesive service is offered online and ensures improved access to information for young people, parents and carers and schools

9.1 We explored the available information for young people on career pathways and how accessible it is, particularly how the Internet and social networking sites had been utilised to encourage young people to review the information available.

9.2 We found that Careers information and advice available to young people in the borough was primarily provided through a national telephone helpline and website, and through Insight, and provides support to young people when they are making career choices. However, no one-to-one universal careers information, advice and guidance service is currently being provided in mainstream schools. We were pleased to hear that plans were in place to roll out virtual IT packages to support young people with their choices in schools, libraries and Insight.

10. Schools

Recommendation 5 - That schools be encouraged by the Council to build upon the existing positive collaboration between institutions to further improve the vocational offer at sixth form.

- 10.1 We consulted with the Deputy Headteacher at Wimbledon College who informed us that, in his experience, more students were considering apprenticeships more seriously and asking questions about what was available to them in terms of options for the future. Wimbledon College has an established careers provision that traditionally had been based around A levels, but was now changing with a wider range of courses being made available to reflect the changing needs of the school population. However, whilst this development was welcomed, it was acknowledged by the Deputy Head that the challenge of reduced funding at 4% each year until 2015 still prevailed.
- 10.2 The merit of partnership schemes that would share expertise within the borough were highlighted, with consideration needing to be given to the physical practicalities of moving either students or teachers between different campuses. Whilst this was already being undertaken on a small scale and had been working well, we were informed that this approach is not without its difficulties if not carefully planned for.
- 10.3 We agreed that subjects, other than the more traditional or popular, could benefit from a federation approach, which might appeal to staff for increased recruitment and retention at schools. Raynes Park School was given as an example where photography courses are run in this way, with excellent facilities available for this subject.
- 10.4 We were informed that retention rates in any partnership arrangement would need to be sustained to ensure the sixth form remained financially viable. At present, Wimbledon College required a 65% retention rate. In this particular college the vast majority of the student population progressed on to university with 25% going on to Russell Group universities.
- 10.5 In addition, colleges and sixth forms provide advice on career paths and up skill staff to be able to advise students correctly about options and opportunities. It was suggested by the Deputy Head at Wimbledon College that providing staff CPD opportunities for sharing expertise within the borough would be more efficient than using external providers for training. It was also highlighted that a number of resources are available to support staff in providing advice, for example, the Growing Ambition website was highlighted as a useful resource in terms of how to approach careers guidance.¹

11. What can young people do to increase their chances of employment?

- 11.1 We acknowledged throughout the review that whilst every effort should be made to improve working practices, explore partnership arrangements,

¹ Information on Growing Ambitions can be accessed here: <http://growingambitions.tes.co.uk/>

and innovative methods of securing successful employment outcomes for young people, it was the young people themselves that should be encouraged to take responsibility for their future. The availability of careers advice and guidance at schools was critical to this.

12. The role of businesses

Recommendation 6 - That a dedicated officer be identified to develop relationships with local businesses to increase the support and opportunities available to young people.

Recommendation 7 - That the Council look to develop a mutually beneficial partnership approach with local businesses to encourage them to offer apprenticeships, sponsor school events, advise on career paths, undertake a mentoring role and to sit on school governing bodies.

12.1 We were keen to utilise the existing links with local businesses to ensure that young people had access to greater opportunities for training and employment. We felt that the role of businesses in improving the career pathways of young people in the borough should be highlighted and that every effort should be made by the Council to undertake a coordination role to encourage businesses to engage.

13. Concluding Remarks

13.1 Our recommendations impact on the Council and key stakeholders, seeking to build upon existing relationships with local businesses, schools and voluntary and community sector organisations. The recommendations cover:

- What work schools are undertaking that might be used as an exemplar to other schools and colleges in the borough;
- The need for a co-ordination role by the Council to ensure effective engagement of the identified stakeholders;
- Identification of the initiatives underway to identify opportunities for collaboration and sharing of expertise;
- The value of engaging businesses;
- Identification of Champions within the Council;
- Communication with young people to ensure that they acknowledge personal responsibility in their career development;
- The need for a cohesive and joined up offer that could be made available to young people to support and advise them in their career choices; and
- What the council can do to further improve career opportunities for young people in the borough

14. What Happens Next?

14.1 This report will be presented to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on July 3rd 2012 for the Panel's approval.

- 14.2 The Panel will then send the report to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 24th September 2012 for initial discussion and to seek agreement to the recommendations presented.
- 14.3 The Cabinet will be asked to provide a formal response to the Panel within two months of the submission of the report to its meeting in September 2012.
- 14.4 The Cabinet will be asked to respond to each of the task group's recommendations, setting out whether the recommendation is accepted and how and when it will be implemented. If the Cabinet is unable to support and implement some of the recommendations, then it is expected that clearly stated reasons would be provided.
- 14.5 The lead Cabinet Member (or officer to whom this work is delegated) should ensure that other organisations, to which recommendations have been directed, are contacted and that their response to those recommendations is included in the Executive Response and Action Plan.
- 14.6 The Panel will seek a further report six months after the Cabinet response has been received, giving an update on progress with implementation of the recommendations (anticipated April/May 2012).

Appendix 1

Joyce Harvie, Integrated Youth Support Commissioning Manager

Jan Martin, Head of Education

Julie Hutchinson, Director, Employment and Skills, East London Business Alliance

Kim Brown, Joint Head of Learning, Development and Diversity

Diana Sterck, Merton Chamber of Commerce

Gillian Morris, Chief Executive Officer of My Voice, London

Lisa Thefaut, Enterprise and Links Co-ordinator, Ursuline High School

Emma Day, Post 16 Careers Advisor, Ursuline High School

Phil Murphy, Deputy Headteacher, Wimbledon College

Alison Garland, National Apprenticeship Scheme

Temmy Elubode, Student, Ricards Lodge

Shri-Ann Bhim, Student, Ursuline High School

Paul McGovern, School Improvement Advisor, 14 – 19 Strategy

Appendix 2

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) template

Initial Screening



This form should be completed in line with the Equality Impact Assessment guidance available on the [intranet](#)
The blue text below is included to help those completing the template and should be overwritten.

EqlA completed by: (Give name and job title)	Hilary Gullen, Scrutiny Officer
EqlA to be signed off by: (Give name and job title)	<i>Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services</i>
<u>Department/ Division</u>	Corporate Services, Democracy Services
Team	The Scrutiny Team
EqlA completed on:	4th July 2011
Date of Challenge Review (if you have one):	N/A
Date review of this EqlA is due (no later than 3 years from date of completion):	TBC

1. What are you assessing? (Tick as appropriate)

- Policy:** A policy is an adopted approach by the Council to a specific issue or position, usually in the long term. It provides a set of ideas or principles that together form a framework for decision making and implementation.² A policy may be written or unwritten, formal or informal. For example, the Corporate Equality Scheme.
- Strategy:** A strategy sets out the activities and actions that have been identified as most likely and cost-effective to achieve the aims and objectives of a council policy e.g. the Consultation Strategy.
- Procedure:** A procedure sets out the way in which practices and actions are to be undertaken at an individual level in order to achieve the policy in local situations, for example using a flow chart approach. Procedures also outline who will take responsibility on a day to day basis for decisions in the implementation of the policy.³ For example, this procedure for carrying out an EqIA.
- Function:** A function is an action or activity that the Council is required to carry out for example emergency planning arrangements.
- Service:** A service is a facility or provision made by the Council for its residents or staff for example the Library service or Translation service.

2. Title of policy, strategy, procedure, function or service

A Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Career Pathways, undertaken by scrutiny councillors on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel (supported by the scrutiny officer).

3. For functions or services only: Does a third party or contractor provide the function or
4. service? If so, who?

Not applicable.

5. Who is the policy, strategy, procedure, function or service intended to benefit?

Young people in the 16-19 age group.

6. Who else might be affected?

Schools and colleges, local businesses.

7. What is known about the demographic make up of the people you have included in your answers to questions 4 and 5?

The review will take evidence from 16-19 year olds in the borough, as well as officers from relevant departments such as Children, Schools and Families, careers specialists, school staff and representatives of local businesses.

² See the Council's Policy Handbook http://intranet/policy_handbook_final_agreed_nov_07-2.doc

³ As above

8. Have you already consulted on this policy, strategy, procedure, function or service? If so, how?

Yes – as part of the scrutiny review process – through attending witness sessions and hearing first hand evidence. The review was conducted from July 2011 to March 2012 by the Scrutiny Team and the outcomes of consultation and witness sessions is included in the review report.

9. How will you measure the success of your policy, strategy, procedure, function or service?

Once the review report has been approved, an action plan will be drawn up to take forward the agreed recommendations. Implementation of the action plan will be monitored at regular intervals by the Children and Young People O&S Panel and Cabinet.

10. How often will the policy, strategy, procedure, function or service be reviewed?

The review report will result in an action plan, to be monitored probably six monthly by the scrutiny panel.

11. When will the policy, strategy, procedure, function or service next be reviewed?

Once the action plan has been agreed, progress is likely to be reviewed in 2012-2013.

12. Please complete the following table and give reasons for where:

- (a) The policy function or service could have a positive impact on any of the equality
- (b) groups. The policy function or service could have a potential negative impact on any of
- (c) the equality groups.

Think about where there is evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, concerns or priorities in relation to this policy, strategy, procedure, function or service.

Equality group	Positive impact		Potential negative impact		Reason
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Gender (inc. Transgender)	✓				Improve career options for males and females
Race/ Ethnicity/ Nationality	✓				Raise awareness of opportunities available to 16-19 year olds from all ethnic groups
Disability	✓				Consult with special school staff to ensure good career information is available
Age	✓				This review focuses on 16-19 age group

Sexual orientation				✓	
Religion/ belief				✓	
Socio-economic status	✓				By enhancing career opportunities the socio-economic status of current 16-19 year olds should improve in the future.

13. Did you have sufficient data to help you answer the above questions?

- Yes**
 No

If there is a potential negative impact on one or more groups, or there was insufficient data to help you answer the above questions, you should complete a full EqIA

14. Is a full Impact Assessment required?

- Yes**
 No

EqIA signed off by:	Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services.
Signature:	
Date:	4 th March 2012