

ADULT SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY TASK GROUP- MARCH 2013

NAME OF SCRUTINY PANEL: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

NAME OF SCRUTINY REVIEW/TASK GROUP: Review of Adult Skills and Employability

DATE OF FINAL REPORT: June 2013 – Review for March 2016

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	RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	PROGRESS UPDATE NOV 2014
1	<p>Recommendation 1 That Cabinet engage the councils apprenticeship group, and work closely with the Economic Well Being Sub Group (EWG) to utilize existing good practice, to increase the number and diversity of apprenticeships available to adults from 18 years onwards (and beyond 24 years of age) to increase employment opportunities for adults.</p>	<p>Officers sit on both the Sutton and Merton Apprenticeship Forum and the Economic Well Being Group (EWG) and so information and good practice is shared between the groups. Representation includes officers from Children, Schools and Families who work with NEET's and looked after children. There are also training providers, JCP, RSL's, Merton Chamber of Commerce, Grenfell and Commonsense Trust representatives.</p>	<p>Sara Williams futureMerton</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Economic Well being Group (EWG) and joint apprenticeship groups continue to work together to support employment and particularly apprenticeship opportunities. Members of the EWG are actively involved in the review of the Skills and Employment Action Plan. The priorities set for the current plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for older unemployed residents • Supporting those on ESA • Support for those in work on low pay

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		<p>The Employment and Skills Action Plan (2013-14) sets out reducing youth unemployment/NEETs as a priority</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for long-term unemployed • Support for lone parents • Support for carers • Support for care leavers • Support for ex-offenders <p>Support for Care Leavers and Ex offenders, was previously delivered by The Vine Project, who went into administration in November 2015. We recommissioned this programme in January 2016, and this has now been awarded to Grenfell training.</p> <p>The remaining programmes are due to finish 30 June 2016.</p> <p>To date the programme has sustained 21 sustainable job outcomes</p>
2	<p>Recommendation 2 That Cabinet identifies and establishes 100 new apprenticeships in the borough for adults of all ages within the next 12</p>	<p>The EWG can encourage employers to employ apprentices by promoting the benefits of apprenticeships. The EWG launched the “Take One”</p>	<p>Sara Williams futureMerton</p>	<p>Merton Chamber of Commerce (MCC) are now using the Take One and EWG model to promote a “Skills for the Workforce” pan London initiative which is to promote and support SME’s to participate in the Apprenticeship</p>

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	months.	<p>initiative led by Merton Chamber of Commerce. This is a programme of engagement with local businesses to encourage them to take on one new person as an apprentice, for work experience or employment.</p> <p>The number of apprenticeships placed can be reported back to Scrutiny within an agreed timetable.</p>		<p>programme and to offer opportunities to young adults. The Council have provided funding to the Chamber to continue Take One for this financial year and 2016/17.</p>
3	<p>Recommendation 3 That the Council, engaging with all relevant departments increase the number of apprenticeships available for adults through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendering process; • Community Plan; and • Regeneration Plans for Merton 	<p>Merton’s Skills and Action Plan (2013-2014) sets a priority action of increasing employer demand and take-up of apprenticeships. This will be actioned by using suppliers and the Councils procurement policy to increase the number of apprenticeships through suppliers and contractors.</p>	<p>Kim Brown Joint Head of HR Policy Development</p>	<p>Discussion has started between the EWG and the Council’s procurement department to work with the EWG to develop a supply chain event for local businesses to understand how to bid for council contracts. Naomi Martin from Commonsense Trust and co chair of the EWG raised a question at the Full Council meeting in February 2015 asking whether Merton Council was making full use of the Social Value Act 2013 which <i>“has the potential to transform the way public services are commissioned, requiring public bodies to consider choosing providers based on the social</i></p>

			<p><i>value created in an area and not on cost alone” (see http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/advice-services/topic/the-social-value-act). This has also prompted the need to consider how relevant departments will work together to encourage apprenticeships and local employment via the council’s tendering process. The EWG will continue to encourage the council to consider ways to improve the tendering opportunities.</i></p> <p>A discussion was held with personnel to allow those who had completed their apprenticeship in the past 12 months to be given priority when entry level opportunities were being recruited in the council. Unfortunately, due to how the data is managed once an individual finishes their apprenticeship this has not been able to take place.</p> <p>FutureMerton are in discussions with the current apprenticeship co-ordinator to look at how we can provide a joined up approach to include adults within the household as well as the individual completing the apprenticeship so that we are able to provide them with opportunities within the council and also the borough.</p>
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				<p>In addition we are looking at adult apprenticeships within the council or looking at changing some apprenticeship roles to entry level opportunities.</p> <p>We have been in talks with CITB to deliver a client based approach, which will increase the number of apprenticeships and work experience placements provided at construction/ building stage. A test project has been identified, which will be used as a pilot. Further information to be provided once agreed.</p>
4	<p>Recommendation 4- That Cabinet considers establishing an information portal for use by partner organisations to facilitate greater information sharing, working with the Economic Well Being Sub Group.</p>	<p>A portal has not been created but information is shared through the EWG minutes. Information amongst members on good practice, bid opportunities and share information is regularly discussed. This is serviced through futureMerton. Meetings take place every 6 weeks. A portal would require a dedicated officer to manage and update.</p>	<p>Sara Williams futureMerton</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>A newsletter was produced during 2014 but this was halted for a while whilst a review of the employment and skills activities took place at the end of 2014. One of the recommendations of the report was to produce a communications plan which celebrates the successes and provides an update on contacts and programmes available. This is due to be published at the end of March 2016.</p>
5	<p>Recommendation 5 That Cabinet support/endorse adult</p>	<p>The EW Group has been recognised for the</p>	<p>EWG</p>	<p>The new Action Plan sets out an action to reduce unemployment and up skill residents in the borough by continuing to</p>

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	employment and skills activities being delivered through the Partnership's Economic Wellbeing (EW) Sub Group.	achievements to date. There is a proposal for the Group to apply for Flexible Support Funds to support adult employment and skills activities.		work collaboratively to raise money and bid for government funding including ESF. The EWG have been awarded Flexible Support Funding . This will fund a programme of 6 x 10 people on a 6 week programme, they must be referred/signed off by Job Centre DWP plus. Customers would have an employment interview to create a personal plan to determine the support required. Programmes will start in early 2016. The Delivery Group would meet as sub group and meet monthly. Duration of project is 10 months.
6	Recommendation 6 That Cabinet endorse the provision of tailored support programmes in local libraries to support writing applications, CV's, and accessing online resources for interview practice etc, building upon the good practice that already exists in libraries, as part of the councils assisted digital strategy.	There is a Citizen Advice Bureau website which is facilitated through the libraries and this provides guidance on job-ready activities such as applications and CV writing. The Council are working closely with JobCentre Plus and the voluntary sector to deliver programmes of on-line activity to support unemployed residents. In our libraries we now have support programmes.	Anthony Hopkins Head of Library & Heritage Services	On going All libraries provide employability support workshops on a weekly basis and events have recently been added to further broaden the offer. An online training package is currently being rolled out to staff to further improve their skills in providing employability support for customers.
7	Recommendation 7	The brief for the Inward	Eric Osei,	On going

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	<p>That Cabinet agree to debate and consider the Councils inward investment Strategy by December 2013.</p>	<p>Investment Strategy and Action Plan (IISAP) is being prepared.</p> <p>Cabinet and the Adult Skills & Employment Task Group will be consulted on the IISAP.</p> <p>When completed the IISAP will include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merton’s offer for attracting inward investment (from foreign and UK companies) • Place marketing (marketing & promotion of Merton as a place for inward investment) • Specific projects for attracting inward investment –and the type of investment the borough can realistically attract 	<p>Business Growth Officer</p>	<p>IIBR Strategy and Action Plan completed 30 Sept 14. It sets out in a clear and practical manner what LBM and its partners should be doing to attract new companies. (both domestic and foreign companies) as well as supporting existing firms (business retention and aftercare). A business event targeted at Merton’s large, medium size and high growth companies was held on 13 November 2014.</p> <p>Since 2014 futureMerton have commissioned activities that have enabled us to prepare an inward investment offer. However, we struggle with premises availability and the announcement of Crossrail which has meant our original programme has had to be affected. We still encourage inward investment activities as part of the business support programmes and hope to have an online brochure and website by the end of the 15/16 financial year.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Recommendation 8 That Cabinet undertake an appraisal of the</p>	<p>A futureWimbledon Conference took place on 17th October 2013.</p>	<p>Paul McGarry futureMerton</p>	<p>Wimbledon and the SW19 offer will be a major element of the overall Inward Investment and Business Retention</p>

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	<p>opportunities for exploiting the SW19 brand to attract investment to the borough, working with the Wimbledon Business Improvement District, to develop a partnership led strategic vision for the borough.</p>	<p>Information collected from businesses and developers at the event will be included in the Councils overall Inward Investment Strategy and Action Plan (IISAP). futureMerton work closely with LoveWimbledon (Wimbledon BID) and the Head of Sustainable Communities sits on the BID Board so partnership is well established and any ideas on promoting SW19 within our forthcoming IISAP are/will be in consultation with LoveWimbledon.</p>		<p>Strategy (IIBRS). On going FutureMerton planned to commission a Master Plan for Wimbledon in 2015 to guide investment and manage growth for the next 15 years, considering the potential of Crossrail2 as a catalyst for growth. The Council and LoveWimbledon are almost at the point to commission the works to start early next financial year.</p>
9	<p>Recommendation 9 That Cabinet consider the feasibility of offering business rate incentives and more flexible packages to attract investment into the borough.</p>	<p>futureMerton and Revenue & Benefits have developed policy and eligibility criteria for the new Business Rate “Discount” scheme. The proposals are pending approval. In addition, advice on business rate (including rate relief) is advertised on</p>	<p>David Keppler, Head of Revenue & Benefits.</p>	<p>On going A scheme is in place offering business rates discounts to those that meet the eligibility criteria. Details are on our Merton web pages. Businesses submit an application and are awarded if they meet the criteria of the scheme.</p>

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		the Council’s website as well as the new futureMerton brochure on business support and finance for Merton businesses.		
10	Recommendation 10 That Cabinet, in consultation with local businesses, considers the viability of offering additional courses/training that meet employer demand and may increase the employment opportunities of residents in the borough. The Task Group acknowledges that any delivery model and the courses that will be delivered are part of a wider Cabinet decision on the outcomes of the Public Value Review being undertaken of Merton Adult Education. (MAE)	Business consultation training needs exercise to be undertaken. MAE have engaged with the Tesco South Kensington and New Malden branches regarding IT and ESOL training for staff	Jill Iliffe Service Manager for Adult Learning and Anthony Hopkins Head of Library and Heritage Service	Significant networking has been undertaken to capture training needs. Partnership work with Wimbletech has assisted in providing bespoke training to start-ups and assisting with grow on space for more established companies. Room letting facilities have been developed for local businesses and make use of online facilities such as Google search. Partnership work with Tesco resulted in some bespoke provision for Tesco employees by Merton Adult Education. Any new collaborative work will be drawn into the provision of new providers of adult education services starting from 2016/17 academic year.
11	Recommendation 11	Discussion underway with	Jill Iliffe	. Due to the service review new higher

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	<p>That Cabinet explore the possibility of offering an enhanced set of courses and qualifications that are more attractive to employers for example, offering bespoke training to local companies or diplomas that enable students to graduate and move into the second year of a degree programme.</p>	<p>the Higher Education Funding council regarding degree programmes.</p> <p>Consultation on the types of courses required will be integrated in the survey in point 10.</p> <p>Bespoke Adult Social Care courses being developed for launch in the new year. The service has undergone a staffing re-structure whereby new commercially focused sales roles have been established.</p>	<p>Service Manager for Adult Learning and Anthony Hopkins Head of Library and Heritage Service</p>	<p>level courses have not been developed but will be picked up as part of the new service provision.</p> <p>Higher level courses in Early Years have been successful, attracting learners who move into employment or better employment as a direct result.</p> <p>There is an increased focus on employability skills within all courses provided as part of government reforms of the adult education sector and this will be factored into the new provision and will be a key component of the new contracts.</p>
12	<p>Recommendation 12 That Cabinet support the development of the Merton Adult Education service as a commercial brand, alongside longer term work on further developing the reputation and provision of MAE.</p>	<p>Development and implementation of commercial business plans.</p>	<p>Jill Iliffe Service Manager for Adult Learning and Anthony Hopkins Head of Library and Heritage Service</p>	<p>This work has been superseded by the move towards a commissioned service. Merton Council will work with providers to ensure that there is increased take up of courses with new courses developed to meet demand.</p>
13	<p>Recommendation 13 That Cabinet consider setting up a virtual Merton</p>	<p>MAE will develop further for possible implementation in 2015</p>	<p>Jill Iliffe Service Manager for</p>	<p>There are a number of well-established online learning providers. The focus of the new commissioned service will</p>

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	Business School that will support Merton residents and existing and prospective businesses.		Adult Learning and Anthony Hopkins Head of Library and Heritage Service	continue to be on class based activities whilst seeking to take advantage of new developments in the technology market in partnership with our providers.
14	Recommendation 14 That Cabinet agree to Merton Adult Education (MAE) becoming accredited to deliver higher level qualifications and to engaging local in the delivery of these courses.	Discussion underway with the Higher Education Funding council regarding degree programmes. Currently delivering the CELTA Cambridge higher level qualification	Jill Iliffe Service Manager for Adult Learning and Anthony Hopkins Head of Library and Heritage Service	Merton Council is exploring extending the curriculum offer to include Access Courses. ABE Accreditation to deliver Higher Education Qualifications has been prepared, submitted and approved, a range of leadership and marketing courses now on offer.
15	Recommendation 15 That Council endorse the development and refresh of the Adult Skills Strategy and engage futureMerton and partners in this process to make the relevant linkages in terms of economic development in the borough.	The current Employment and Skills Action Plan (2013-2014) is being implemented. It is proposed that an update report be presented for the first years activities to Cabinet in December/January 2014. Taking forward a further Plan beyond 2014 could require additional funds to be provided for activities to	Sara Williams futureMerton	The Economic Well Being Group (EWG) worked with Shared Intelligence to review the existing Employment and Skills Action Plan and now have a revised plan for 2015-2017. Although youth unemployment/ NEET's will remain a priority for the forthcoming action plan, other groups are also being presented for targeted support. These are shown under recommendation 1.

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		support the objectives and outputs.		
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Notes:-