

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 14 October 2013

ITEM 6(g)

Title: Employment and Skills Strategy

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Ian Grayson

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: Jean Griffiths Head of Children, Young People and Learning (Tel: 643 8783)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

To seek Cabinet's authorisation to take forward the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy and to develop a comprehensive action plan based upon the five priorities set out in the report.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Head of Children, Young People and Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, to put in place and take forward with partners the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy and the associated comprehensive action plan.

1.3 Forward plan:

This report is listed in the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting on the 14th of October 2013.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework

The North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy has direct links to the Council's Plan-"Our North Tyneside" 2014-2018 and the associated 2013-14 Action Plan. The priorities contained within the plan that this strategy links to are:

- We will ensure that our full-time vocational courses contain activities and experiences which allow our students to develop entrepreneurial and enterprise skills alongside their primary qualifications.

- We will, where practicable, expand the number of pre-Apprenticeship courses on offer to provide young people and adults who lack the skills to directly participate on an Apprenticeship Framework.
- We will establish Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) training facilities to support both the skills needs of employers and the aspirations of local young people.
- We will launch a new borough wide programme across schools and major employers to provide better work experience opportunities, improved access to apprenticeships and strengthened information, advice and guidance on careers.

The North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy is in line with the Authority's Policy Framework for Children and Young People as outlined in the North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan Update 2012. In particular:

Theme 2: Learning and Participation and Personal Development

2.1 Raising aspirations and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people

Theme 3: Transition, Progression and Employment

3.1 Support youth employment for 16-24 year olds

3.2 Deliver a borough wide employment and skills strategy

1.5 Information:

Context

Many of the recent government policy changes in the Employment and Skills arena have highlighted a requirement for local partnerships to come together with the private sector to address pupil attainment, low skill levels and increasing unemployment.

In North Tyneside there are areas that continue to be in the most deprived 25% of all areas in England, particularly in the South and North West of the borough. Whilst unemployment levels in North Tyneside continue to grow and are higher than the UK average, youth unemployment i.e. ages 18-24 is 4% higher than the UK average.

Whilst skill levels are improving and low numbers of residents have no skills there is low numbers qualified above NVQ level 4. This is at a time when the private sector demand for skilled personnel at this level continues to grow.

National policy is focussed upon strengthening vocational pathways, particularly Apprenticeships. The surrounding labour market growth and demand includes the Manufacturing and Engineering sector. Yet North Tyneside has low levels of participation (29.2%) in the important STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and maths).

In addition North Tyneside recorded an 18% drop in university applications in 2012, the 13th largest drop nationally.

The funding for skills provision is led by the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. In recent years the flexibility and levels of local funding has reduced. This has led to greater competition between providers and created challenges in partnership working.

The North Tyneside Employment and Skills Board has been established to support and improve partnership approaches to address the issues highlighted above. The Board is part of the wider Strategic Partnership and CYPL Commissioning Executive Board and incorporates the Private sector.

North Tyneside's Employment and Skills Strategy

The Employment and Skills Board agreed to develop and implement a set of clear activities that addressed the key priorities to raise pupil attainment levels, improve progression routeways for young people into sustained careers, increase adult skill levels and address unemployment levels.

The Employment and Skills Strategy sets out the partnership's vision for a joint approach to addressing the priorities. The implementation of the plan will support joint working across the partnership that will deliver greater impact for the resources available. This will ensure that the Borough's young people and residents learn, achieve and progress in their chosen careers.

The strategy sets out 5 key priorities:

1. To improve pupils preparation for the world of work;
2. To increase the numbers and quality of Apprenticeships created at all levels;
3. To create a fit for purpose physical infrastructure to support vocational pathways;
4. To increase and improve Employer Engagement in the skills agenda; and
5. To address age 19+ long term unemployment

Next Steps

Partners will work together to develop a comprehensive delivery plan, which sets out in detail how each of the five priorities will be addressed. An Employment and Skills performance and quality assurance framework will be developed as part of this process. This will enable partners to measure progress towards the desired outcomes.

Governance

The Children, Young People and Learning Partnership has overall responsibility for the Employment and Skills Strategy that will be implemented and directed by the Employment and Skills Board. An annual progress report will be presented to the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership's Commissioning Executive Board, with exception reports provided as appropriate.

1.6 Decision options:

1. To agree the actions proposed to implement the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy.
2. To decline to accept the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy and require officers to submit detail of an alternative proposal.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet is recommended to agree the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy. It is clear that a partnership approach led by members of the Employment and Skills Board will deliver greatest impact and best value for money.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 - The North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy 2013 - 2016.

1.9 Contact officers:

Jean Griffiths: Head of Children, Young People and Learning 0191 643 8782
Shona Duncan: Principal Manager Employment and Skills 0191 643 6065
Anthony Gollings: Financial Business Manager 0191 643 8071

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information and reports have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author.

- North Tyneside Employment and Skills Board – Terms of Reference – April 2013
- North Tyneside Children and Young People’s Plan Update 2012
- North Tyneside State of the Area 2012 Event Report

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The North Tyneside Schools, Learning and Skills services are aligned to available funding. No additional funding is required to deliver the resultant action plan.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications of implementing this strategy.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

The Employment and Skills Board members have been consulted and have influenced the Employment and Skills Strategy and are committed to implementing it.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues linked to this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy notes that help and support will be promoted and available to all residents and young people to assist with their skill achievement and progression into work irrespective of their personal circumstances and will ensure openness of access to assistance.

2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risks directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

Increasing access to employment and increasing the numbers of people employed are noted as a positive intervention to prevent levels of crime and disorder.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no specific issues of environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager Policy, Partnerships, Performance and Communication

Report authors...

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