

Sustainable Development Select Committee		
Title	Work and Skills Strategy 2016 - 2018: update on Progress	
Contributors	Head of Strategy; Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration	Item 4
Class	Part 1 (open)	24 January 2017

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents and updates the committee on the progress of implementing the Work and Skills Strategy: 2016-2018.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee note the progress to date on the Work and Skills Strategy 2016 - 2018.

3. Policy context

- 3.1 The Mayor acknowledged his continued commitment to issues around employment in his AGM speech in March 2015:

“[Lewisham] is a place where people want to live – somewhere that offers proximity to employment in Central London or Docklands, somewhere that has good links to the transport network within the city and beyond, somewhere that offers a great quality of life with good schools, parks and public services. Lewisham isn’t an employment hub but as technology makes it possible to work differently and the success of London creates new demands we can see our residents and local businesses seizing the opportunities which are opening up. Cultural and Media businesses are growing and the presence of a successful University with a worldwide profile furthers strengthens the offer that Lewisham has.”

- 3.2 This vision ties in *with Shaping Our Future: Lewisham’s Sustainable Community Strategy*, and in particular with two priorities:

- dynamic and prosperous - where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond and
- ambitious and achieving - where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.

4. Background

- 4.1 The original 2013 – 2015 work and skills strategy was developed following the Work and Skills Summit Meeting held in April 2013 and agreed by Mayor and Cabinet on 8th June 2013. It was developed by officers in conjunction with partners including Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme providers, Lewisham and Lewisham Southwark College and the four main housing providers. The objectives of the strategy were:
- To enable more excluded residents to access and benefit from services;
 - To enable more excluded residents into sustained employment;
 - To increase opportunities for progression in employment;
 - To derive greater value from existing employment-related expenditure and services.
- 4.2 The 2013 – 2015 strategy was revised in the autumn of 2015. The refreshed Strategy, (now 2016-18) went to Sustainable Development Select Committee on 22nd October 2015.
- 4.3 The refreshed Work and Skills strategy for 2016 – 2018 has been attached to this report as Appendix A.

The strategy includes an update of the evidence provided in the 2013 – 15 strategy and a number of actions under the following 6 headings:

- Develop strong partnerships across all sectors
 - Develop improved labour market intelligence
 - Maximise social value opportunities with employers and enterprise
 - Improving local skills training to equip adults for work opportunities
 - Deliver employment support for those with the most complex needs
 - Encourage residents in employment to progress
- 4.4 At the time of the Committee meeting in October 2015, the residents of Lewisham were starting to see signs of the economic recovery that was being reported across London following the economic recession of 2008 with 74.8% of residents reported as in employment (i.e. those who have done some paid work in the reference week (employee or self-employed); those on government-supported training and employment programmes; and those doing unpaid family work in the period from January 2014 – December 2014. This had risen from 70.3% in the same period of 2012 and it was above the London average of 71.2% at the time.¹
- 4.5 The number of residents on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) had dropped steadily from 5% of the working age population (10,047 residents) to 2.9% (5,762 residents) over the period of the previous Work and Skills Strategy. However this was still above the London and national averages of 2.1 and 2% respectively.²
- 4.6 The most recent employment figures available (November 2016) shows that there continues to be a downward trend in the claimant count across all age groups over the last year except for the 50plus which has been creeping up. In addition there

¹ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157254/report.aspx?town=lewisham>

² *ibid*

continues to be more men claiming JSA but the figures for women are higher for ESA, Carers allowances etc.

- 4.7 Welfare reform continues to have a transformative and profound impact upon Lewisham residents. Universal Credit roll out started in December 2016 in Lewisham
- 4.8 As confidence returns and the number of job opportunities across London continues to rise, Lewisham needs an appropriately skilled labour force to compete for these opportunities. We will continue to target our most vulnerable residents to ensure that they are able to benefit from growth and opportunities in Lewisham and across London.

5 Reflections of progress made during 2016

- 5.1 A great deal of progress has been made in implementing the actions set out in the Work and Skills Strategy Action Plan 2016-18. Our main success over the last year has been the Pathways to Employment Programme.
- 5.2 The Pathways to Employment programme is run jointly with London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. Now in its second phase, the success of the first pilot and our continued work has meant that Pathways is now seen as the accepted model of good practice in providing employment support with individuals with complex needs. The Work and Pensions Select Committee's 2015 welfare-to-work report highlighted Pathways as a model of excellent practice, recommending its key principles be adopted on a national scale, and the Work and Health programme starting in 2018 currently being commissioned by DWP is based on its principles.
- 5.3 Over the next year we will continue to work on our long-term ambition of a joined up locally co-commissioned employment, skills and welfare system. We will be working with DWP and the successful provider for Work and Health Programme to make sure that the programme works for Lewisham residents.
- 5.4 We will also be working with the GLA to implement a devolved skills system and we will be working together on construction skills as well as pursuing new opportunities to join-up employment support and mental health.
- 5.5 The Partnership we have established through delivering the Lewisham Work and Skills Strategy with Jobcentre Plus, GLA, DWP, housing providers especially Phoenix and Lewisham Homes, employment support organisations, neighbouring boroughs and others gives us strength to tackle future challenges and a platform to take on devolved responsibilities.
- 5.6 A summary of the progress made against the specific actions in the Work and Skills Strategy 2016 – 18 Action Plan can be found attached as Appendix B

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Under S1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do unless it is expressly prohibited.
- 6.2 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.4 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed above.
- 6.5 The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 6.6 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

6.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- [The essential guide to the public sector equality duty](#)
- [Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making](#)
- [Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities](#)

6.8 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The projects outlined in this report are being funded from the existing Revenue Budget or by the named partners.

7.2 Where appropriate and possible, additional funding will be sought from the European Social Fund, the Job Centre's Flexible Support Fund or other grant funding sources to implement the aims of the strategy.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications

8.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

9. Environmental Implications

9.1 There are no immediate environmental implications arising from this report.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 Our vision and ambition for our borough is that:

“Together we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live work and learn.”

This is underpinned by hard-edged principles for:

- **reducing inequality** – narrowing the gap in outcomes for citizens

- **delivering together efficiently, effectively and equitably** - ensuring that all citizens have appropriate access to and choice of high quality local services

10.2 The Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) for 2012-16 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

10.3 The Council equality objectives through the CES include:

- **improve** access to services;
Take reasonable steps to ensure that services are inclusive; responsive to risk; physically accessible and provided through the most efficient and effective channels available.
- **close** the gap in outcomes for citizens;
Take reasonable steps to improve life chances for citizens by reducing outcome gaps that may exist within the borough as well as those that may exist between the borough and elsewhere.
- **increase** participation and engagement.
Take reasonable steps to remove barriers that may exist to engagement and help residents (especially those who are under-represented) to participate in local decision making and influence local decisions.

10.4 The strategy addresses the Council's equality objectives as it includes measures to improve access to services for our most vulnerable residents particularly through the implementation of the Local Services Support Framework. The core aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for DWP/the Council and other partners to work to reduce the number of residents on the JSA register, this supports our equality objectives as increased number of residents will participating in work related activity.

11. Background Papers

Short Title of Document	Date	File Location	Contact Officer
Mayor's Annual Report, 2013	20 th March 2013	Online at: http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s23617/Work%20and%20Skills%20Strategy%20Appendix.pdf	Fenella Beckman
Sustainable Development Select Committee	22 nd October 2015	Online at: http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s39194/03WorkAndSkillsCoverReport221015.pdf	Fenella Beckman
Mayor and Cabinet	09 th December 2015	Online at: http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s40224/Works%20and%20Skills%20Strategy.pdf	Fenella Beckman

11.1 If you would like further information on this report please contact Robyn Fairman, Head of Strategy, on 020 314 6635.

Appendix A – Work and Skills Strategy 2016 – 2018

Appendix B – Work and Skills Strategy action plan