

**Report of** Head of Service Employment and Skills

**Report to** Inner West Community Committee

**Date:** 16 July 2014

**Subject:** Establishment of an Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. This paper sets out proposals to establish a new West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board with appropriate and collaborative partnership arrangements to drive forward a new employment, skills and welfare work plan under the direction of the Executive Member Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills and supported by the West North West Area Leadership Team.
2. A West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare operational group has been operating for eighteen months. A recent report to the Area Leadership Team outlined key achievements, however, it is now time to refresh these arrangements, build on effective practice elsewhere and consolidate employment, skills and welfare matters within one dedicated forum.

3. The proposals contribute to key objectives set out in the Best Council Plan 2013-17, namely to 'promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth by improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses' with a specific focus on helping local people to acquire skills and move from out of work benefits into employment.

## **Recommendations**

The Inner West Community Committee is asked to note the contents of the report; and endorse the establishment of a new West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board.

## **1.0 Purpose of this report**

To seek endorsement from the Inner West Community Committee for the proposal to develop a West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board.

## **2.0 Background information**

- 2.1 Supporting people on their journey into work across West North West, remains a priority, not only to increase the employment rate and stimulate economic activity levels but also to mitigate the deterioration of skills, confidence and health and well-being that can occur with prolonged periods of unemployment and benefit dependency.
- 2.2 The Council's Executive Board received a report in June 2013 on the issue of welfare, benefits and poverty. In response to these issues, a new approach under the identity of Citizens@Leeds has been developed to ensure a focus on inclusive, locally provided citizen-based services delivered through a community hub approach. There is significant opportunity to capitalise on the Hub model to develop more integrated and local support services to help people move from welfare into employment.
- 2.3 The Council now has a robust mechanism in place to better plan for and respond to the training and employment opportunities that will emerge from new developments through the Council's Planning and Procurement functions. There is also a range of activities established across Leeds and working well at a local level including Jobshops; Work Clubs, the Apprenticeship Hub; Adult and Community Learning provision and the Head Start programme. In combination, these interventions complement and add value to the core offer currently available through Jobcentre Plus.
- 2.4 A WNW Employment, Skills and Welfare operational group has been operating for eighteen months. A recent report to the Area Leadership Team outlined key achievements, however, in light of the above, it is now time to refresh these arrangements, build on effective practice elsewhere and consolidate employment, skills and welfare matters within one dedicated forum.

## **3.0 Main issues**

- 3.1 The Board will not duplicate but add value to and ensure better alignment of those arrangements already in place to steer this agenda. It is proposed that the Board, Chaired by Councillor McKenna, will be made up of key partners with responsibility for providing a coordinated, effective response to employment, skills and welfare issues across West North West with a particular focus on those neighbourhoods with the highest rates of unemployment and poverty. Within this Community Committee, amongst the highest ranking areas of multiple deprivation are the Wyther Parks, Raynvvilles and Edinburghs in Armley; the Broadleas and Landseer's in Bramley & Stanningley and Broad Lane, the Vespers and the Hawkswoods in Kirkstall.

- 3.2 The primary focus of the Board will be to increase employment and improve skill levels and ensure that effective support is provided for local people to access work and training opportunities that will arise in West North West and across the city. In order to address particular areas of concern, where specific, focused and sequenced activities are required, a sub group model will be utilised. An example of this could be around young people who are NEET or initiatives for specific communities, those with English as a second language, for instance. The Board's approach will be owned by all key stakeholders, shaped by the priorities identified in the Employment Skills and Welfare Plan, reflect ward priorities and those across West North West in a manner that can:
- guide newly unemployed people back into work as soon as possible
  - prevent newly unemployed people becoming long term unemployed and benefit dependent; mitigating the deterioration of confidence, skills and health
  - help people take the necessary steps to re-engage with the labour market, increasing their employability and opportunities to find work
- 3.3 Membership would include:
- Elected Member Community Committee Leads for Employment, Skills and Welfare
  - LCC Employment & Skills
  - Citizens and Communities
    - WNW Area Support Team
    - Welfare and Benefits Service
  - Housing Leeds
  - Children's Services/ Targeted Service Leads
  - IGEN
  - Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus)
  - Ingeus and Interserve
    - BARCA
    - Better Leeds Communities
  - FE Provider
  - Other key stakeholders as determined by the Employment and Skills Service and the Area Leadership Team
- 3.4 In order to prepare for the Board, in support of a proposed inaugural meeting in September, the following tasks and timeline are proposed:
- Task and Finish Group to prepare the draft Plan – August
  - First draft of the WNW Employment Skills and Welfare Plan – September
  - Inaugural Board meeting – September
  - Consultation and finalisation of the Plan – October
  - Final WNW Employment, Skills and Welfare Plan signed off by Board following consultation with the Community Committee Leads for Employment, Skills and Welfare and the Executive Member Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The approach was endorsed by the Area Leadership Team on 6th May 2014. The Community Committees across West North West will be kept up-to-date on the establishment of the Board and the development and implementation of the Employment, Skills and Welfare Plan.
- 4.1.2 The Inner West Employment, Skills and Welfare Area Lead Member was consulted on the proposals in April 2014. The Area Lead Members for Employment Skills and Welfare for Inner North West, Outer West and Outer North West were also briefed in May 2014.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Subject to approval of the proposals outlined in this report, equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues will be fully considered as part of the development of the West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Plan.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The proposals contribute to key objectives set out in the Best Council Plan 2013-17, namely to 'promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth by improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses' with a specific focus on helping local people to acquire skills and move into employment.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The proposals create an opportunity for resources and investment in West North West Leeds aimed at improving skills, increasing employment opportunities and moving people from welfare into work, to be better aligned and more effectively targeted to make best use of public resources and to meet the needs of local residents.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the proposals in this report. The report is not subject to call in.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 There are no risks identified at this stage associated with the proposals set out in this paper.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report sets out proposals to create a West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board supported by the Employment and Skills Service and the West North West Area Leadership Team, to help more local people to acquire skills and move into employment.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Inner West Community Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and endorse the establishment of a new West North West Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhoods Board.

## **7.0 Background documents**

- 7.1 None