

Scrutiny Working Group (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Session 3 – Inquiry into the implementation of the Inclusive Growth Strategy

26 November 2018

Attendees

Truswell, Cllr Paul (Chair)
Shazad, Cllr Mohammed
Field, Cllr Sarah
Carlill, Cllr Peter
Harrison, Cllr Carmel
Dye, Cllr Katie

Wynne, Sue
Roodhouse, Eve
Allman, Mark
Montgomery, Ian
Bolam, Fiona
Lawrence, Elizabeth
Tinsdale, Gerard

Pentelow, Sandra - Scrutiny Advisor

The following information was considered by the Scrutiny Working Group:

- a) Area 1 Presentation – proposed implementation framework
- b) Report – Connecting our disadvantaged communities to opportunity through access to employment and skills
- c) Appendix 1 – Employment and Skills Summary Programme Offer
- d) Appendix 2 – Employment and Skills, Headline Performance Data
- e) Appendix 3 – Targeted Support and Achievement 2018/19 (April 2018 – September 2018)

Area 1

Introduction

Members were presented with an overview of the projects underway, proposed partnerships to support delivery and mechanisms for reporting, measuring outcomes and timescales.

Questions and comments raised by members of the Working Group.

- Clarity was sought regarding the future of the Sustainable Economy and Culture Board. The Working Group asked that sustainability remains at the forefront of the inclusive growth work, to narrow the gap in economic and health inequalities. The working group was advised that this would be built into measurement and focus on sustainability would remain. Similar feedback has been received from other sources.

- Clarity was sought regarding the integration of strategic approaches in the priority neighbourhoods. Reassurance was provided that there is engagement with priority neighbourhoods work.
- With regard to Delivery Partnerships the working group suggested that there is representation from one of the major Bus Operators such as First, as transport is an important area for inclusive growth and access to employment opportunities.

Area 2

Introduction

Members were provided with an overview of the Council's Employment and Skills support services provided to support adults into work, and businesses to meet their skills needs. It was explained that the city is now at 80% employment and information and data was provided which demonstrated how services are targeted to support those furthest from the labour market into jobs, and to improve skills, with particular focus on support for ESA claimants and in priority neighbourhoods.

The Working Group were also advised of the benefits of physical activity for physical and mental wellbeing and leading to employability, and the opportunity to use the wider workforce across the Council, such as Leeds Active and Housing Services, to connect with people and to provide outreach, signposting and support. The importance of staff seeing themselves as part of a wider network was also stated.

Questions and comments raised by members of the Working Group.

- Clarity was sought regarding the level of staff knowledge regarding the support available to residents. In response the Working Group was advised that a plain English accessible diary of services is available, something that can be carried by staff. Also looking at apps and calendar of events which can be downloaded by customers.
- The Working Group explored adult learning programmes and family learning programmes provided in schools and children's centres
- Clarity was sought regarding how social media is used to reach parts of the community at optimal times such as school pick up times. It was recognised that this could be improved.
- The Working Group discussed the facilities and resources potentially available to provide extended support to Council tenants.
- The working group were advised of the work with other providers to connect with people in local areas, with some providers co-locating in Holbeck and New Wortley. A piece of work has been done with DWP so that they can better connect with people resident in priority neighbourhoods. Work opportunities were available with the NHS which were promoted in the priority neighbourhoods. A number of people were interested and they have been supported to apply and also supported in other areas.
- Clarity was sought regarding the numbers of young JSA claimants. The Working Group was advised that youth unemployment has declined year on

year but without the universal credit figures the working group will not see the full picture. Further data will be provided to the working group. A contract has been established for the ESIF programme which will provide £4mil of investment into the city over the next 3 years which will be focused on young people aged between 16 – 25.

- Concern with public transport was raised particularly connectivity for people needing to get to places of employment during unsocial hours. The cost of bus travel was also considered prohibitive for those earning minimum wage. The Chair highlighted that it is worth having discussions with bus companies to try and secure bus routes that meet localised need. Opportunity to explore Bus services and franchising will be available on the 12th of December 2018.
- Clarity was sought regarding work pathways and the 12 week mandatory process, funded by the Council. The working group was advised that this scheme is linked into the Council Tax support scheme and has been running for the past 4 years. This provides a package of support for people who have been in receipt of JSA for more than 6 months to assist them back into work. If people did not engage there was a risk of having Council Tax support removed. The support is provided to a range of people with different abilities, therefore capacity has been built into the Hubs to meet demand. The programme provides intensive support over the 12 weeks.
- Concern was expressed for regarding the support available for those on zero hours contracts or holding multiple part time jobs, to help them into more substantive better paid work. The Working Group was advised that work is being done with WYCA to enable people of all ages to employment information, advice and guidance, so that they can see the potential progression pathways. Department for Education have launched a pilot career learning programme, therefore work is being done to speak to employers about services, skills training and subsidised adult learning loans to upskill the existing force.
- Clarity was sought to identify the work that is being done to support Young People in Pupil Referral Units to employment. The working group were advised that work is being done with a number of partners to bridge the transition gap. Assurance was provided Young People receiving alternative education would be included in the model.

Anchors Programme – The Working Group were advised of the 5 work streams focusing on employment, supply chains, capital assets, service delivery and corporate and civic strategy. It was felt that the two work streams where the greatest impact could be achieved was employment and procurement.

Recruitment practices are being reviewed, and what more can be done to target priority neighbourhoods particularly with regard to apprenticeships. The apprenticeship levy is in place within the Council with £5mil of levy committed. Staff networks are being reinvigorated with regard to 'Healthy Workplaces'. Overall there are good foundations in place but some additional work to do.

With regard to procurement, analysis of spend is routinely collated however there is further work to be done to understand and drill down into sector information and

where it is spent. More will be done to have more routine engagement with suppliers and providers. It is currently adhoc and inconsistent. Actions plans are needed with regard to supply chains gaps, some are known and some unknown. Tenders with a value of £100k are assessed for employment and skills obligations, which are then targeted to those furthest from the market. The Centre for Local Economic Studies (CLES) are working with the anchor institutions regarding procurement spend analysis. The outcomes of this from that work from a Council perspective will be brought to the next meeting in January.

Questions and comments raised by members of the Working Group.

- Clarity was sought regarding the use contract clauses regarding the inclusion of living wage obligations within the procurement system. The Working Group were advised that Legal and Procurement services are exploring this further.

Conclusions –

- a) The items considered and the views of the Working Group will be included in the evidence base for the inquiry.
- b) That the outcome and analysis of the CLES study will be brought to the next inquiry session in January 2019.
- c) There were no suggested recommendations arising which would require consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board at the meeting on the 09 January 2019.