

A Joint Report of the Directors of Children and Families Services, City Development and Adults and Health Services

Report to Executive Board

Date: 16 October 2019

Subject: Improving Employment Outcomes for People with Learning Disabilities

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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

1 Main issues

- Leeds has demonstrated its commitment to improving outcomes for people with learning disabilities through the adoption of the 'Being Me' strategy. Delivery is underpinned by partnership structures including the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board, the Employment Task Group, internal work streams and a programme of work to better connect people to inclusive and flexible opportunities. However, employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities living in Leeds do not currently reflect the ambition and aspiration of the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and it is important that we accelerate and increase our efforts to improve these outcomes.
- The city has a broad range of services in place helping people with learning disabilities to overcome the barriers impacting on their opportunity to move closer to employment. Delivered by a range of organisations including the Council, the third sector, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and private sector organisations, many interventions are short-term funded and not all are of sufficient scale to effectively deal with the on-going demand for and complex nature of this type of support.
- Despite progressing the city's learning disability partnerships and practice, a range of challenges remain on a number of levels for individuals, their families and carers, for employers and consequently for the city. It is important that we monitor the progress achieved against the Being Me strategy and ensure that we continue to deliver change

that improves outcomes, particularly around employment. A number of key actions will add to the ongoing work to deliver the Being Me priorities to accelerate and consolidate progress, focusing on the proposal to establish a dedicated Hub and commission further targeted employment support for adults.

2. Best Council Plan Implications

- The activities delivered by the Council and its partners set out in the report contribute directly to our ambitions to enable all of our residents to benefit from a strong economy in a compassionate city. In particular, this range of activity contributes to the Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21 outcome for everyone in Leeds to earn enough to support themselves and their families and the Best Council Plan priorities around providing employment support and supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities. It also supports our ambitions to be a city where all children and young people can grow up to lead economically active and rewarding lives.
- These activities also contribute to the achievement of the calls to action in the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan, the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to increase labour market activity and productivity through a more representative workforce and improved workplace health.

3. Resource Implications

- Many of the ongoing activities described in the report are resourced by the Council and its partners. The proposal to develop a Hub for people with learning disabilities will include a wide group of stakeholders across the education, health and care and employment support sector and will deliver a reinvigorated approach to improving employment outcomes. Feasibility work is being progressed and it is anticipated that this will inform funding bids to external agencies and along with partner resources which will enable the Hub to be operational by summer 2020. The proposal for additional targeted employment support for adults is funded through an approved externally funded programme.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- i) Note the work undertaken to date and the progress achieved against the priorities in the employment strand of Being Connected in the Being Me Strategy
- ii) Support the continued engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to improve employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities and note the opportunities presented through the ongoing work to develop a Hub for the city and additional targeted employment support for adults with learning disabilities.
- iii) Note that the Chief Officer Employment and Skills will work with Chief Officer Human Resources, the Deputy Director Adults and Health and the Deputy Director Learning, Children and Families to support the continuing work to improve employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report responds to the resolution made at the Council meeting held on 10 July 2019 requesting an update on the work being undertaken to improve the employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities in Leeds.
- 1.2 The city's Being Me strategy, refreshed in 2018, helps to co-ordinate the efforts of the different organisations that support people with learning disabilities and their families and carers in Leeds. This report provides an update on the implementation of the relevant sections of the Being Me strategy along with additional actions that the Council will take with partners to contribute to the improving employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

2 Background Information

2.1 Council Resolution

- 2.1.1 At its meeting on 10 July, the Council resolved that it recommits to further enhance the lives of those with a learning disability by: -
- providing a strong focus in assisting all those with a learning disability the opportunity of work through the on-going establishment of the Learning Disability Hub and a targeted Jobs Fayre.
 - welcoming a deputation of residents with a learning disability to address Council on what they would like to see the Council do to assist them further.
 - asking the appropriate Scrutiny Board(s) to evaluate the work we are doing to create meaningful jobs across the city for those that want one, by:
 - Creating a greater number of meaningful employment / jobs within the Council.
 - Exploring how we can further work alongside the Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN) and others to ensure those jobs have the support mechanisms needed to help individuals with a learning disability to 'get into' and 'stay in' employment.
 - Increasing the employment figures for people with learning disabilities.
 - Using its influence to encourage its partners in the public, private and the third sectors to do the same.
 - Supporting the Yorkshire Evening Post campaign 'Let's work together'.

2.2 National Context

- 2.2.1 Improving Lives: Future of Work, Health and Disability, 2017 remains the government's key steer for improving employment rates among the disabled population. Reflecting a ten-year programme of change, it set out a vision to see one million more disabled people in work through improvements within and across three settings: Welfare, Workplace and Healthcare. The report was non-specific in relation to disabled populations and therefore included limited reference to people with learning disabilities in particular.
- 2.2.2 The report acknowledged that getting into and staying in work, with in work support is crucial to ensuring retention, with 1 in 10 disabled people falling out of work each year compared to 1 in 20 for non-disabled people. It acknowledged the key role of other sectors beyond welfare, workplace and healthcare notably education and the care system, noting that the lowest employment rates are for people with neuro diverse conditions such as learning disability or autism. A study by NHS Digital in 2016 concluded that 65 in every 100 people with learning disabilities would like a paid job but the national statistics for being in employment are unacceptably low – an estimated

5%, rising to circa 14% for those with autism. The employment rate for people with learning disabilities is markedly less than that for those with any disability and those without a disability.

2.3 Local Context

- 2.3.1 Language within the field of learning disability is complex, reflective of the conditions it seeks to describe. The terminology varies across populations, being different and more detailed for those up to the age of 25. It also varies between agencies, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, for example. There are also preferences in using language that seeks to simplify and streamline and preferences for being accurate and specific. For example with autism, some use this term, others prefer to acknowledge that there is a spectrum and include that in the description. Some are neutral about including the condition within the wider 'learning disability' but given almost 80% of people with an autistic spectrum condition have no other learning disability, there is also a preference for being specific.
- 2.3.2 It is arguable that unlike some other groups who experience disadvantage in accessing the labour market and who have proactively shaped the language, for example black and minority ethnic, disabled people, the groups at the heart of this report have not yet been given the power or support to be so clearly self-defining. For the purposes of this report, all references to learning disability assume the broadest and most inclusive view of these conditions and disabilities.
- 2.3.3 The city has demonstrated its commitment to improving outcomes for people with learning disabilities through the adoption of its Being Me strategy. This is delivered through partnership structures including the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board, chaired by the Council, the third sector led Employment Task Group and a programme of work to better connect people to inclusive and flexible opportunities. However, employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities do not currently reflect the ambition and aspiration in the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and it is important that we accelerate and increase our efforts to improve these outcomes.
- 2.3.4 Leeds has a broad range of services in place helping people with learning disabilities to overcome barriers impacting on their ability to move closer to the labour market. These services commissioned by organisations including the local authority and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are primarily delivered by the third sector. Many of these delivery organisations face challenges around their capacity to effectively respond to the on-going demand for and the complex nature of this type of support.

2.4 Current Position – Young People

- 2.4.1 Leeds Preparing for Adulthood Strategy 2017 – 2022 focuses on aspiration and opportunity for young people and support during their transition into adulthood, to reach their full potential. One of the 4 key priorities is around enabling and empowering young people to take part in employment, learning or training opportunities and key actions supporting this priority include: increasing the number of supported internships, ensuring study programmes include employment, increasing the number of job coaches and developing relationships with employers.
- 2.4.2 In Leeds almost 14% of children have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and for 1.9% of pupils these are sufficiently significant to be supported through a statutory, multi-agency 'Education Health and Care Plan' (EHCP). This proportion is

well below the national average (2.9%) and that seen in similar areas (2.98%). However, the volume of EHCP's has risen significantly over the last year with an 80% increase in assessments in the last 5 years. EHCP plans ceased for 49 pupils with learning disabilities or autism as the primary need in the 2018/19 academic year. 14 (33%) of those pupils have employment as their recorded destination.

- 2.4.3 SEND pupils are most likely to go to a sustained destination within a further education college. Of the 1,075 pupils with SEND leaving Key Stage 4 in 2015/16, 75% went onto a sustained education destination in 2016/17; the highest proportion (40%) sustained their destination at a further education college. The majority of pupils that attend a Leeds SILC remain in the sixth form Post 16 until they are 19. The small numbers of Key Stage 4 pupils means that a data breakdown below 'staying in education or entering employment' is not available due to the Department for Education's suppression rules.
- 2.4.4 Leeds City College is a key provider in the city and has the highest number of high needs learners nationally, supporting a total of 3,000 learners of all ages. Enrolments for the 2019/20 academic year include 1,690 young people aged 14 -25 years identified as SEND or having an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The College delivers a Foundation Study Programme promoting Independent Living, Community Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing and Employment Opportunities for learners from age 14. Each of these course options has a progressive and differentiated curriculum to meet individual needs. Predictive data is available for 60% of this current cohort which indicates that 83% will progress to another course within the college, 7% into employment and 10% will secure another positive outcome such as life skills and a move to independent living.

2.5 Current Position – Adults

- 2.5.1 Available data relating to the learning or employment status of adults with learning disabilities is not wholly accurate and there are discrepancies between sources. DWP estimate that of the 21,193 Universal Credit claimants in Leeds, 1,059 (5%) have a declared learning disability.
- 2.5.2 There are 2,123 people in receipt of long term support from the Council's Adults and Health services, who have a primary support reason of learning disability. 163 of this group are in paid employment, predominately part time. This represents 7.7% of the cohort for 2018-19, continuing an improving trend from the last two years when the rates were 6.7% and 6.1%. For comparison the 2017-18 England rate was 6.0%. Nationally and locally the care and support needs for the majority of people in this cohort means that they are not seeking paid employment.
- 2.5.3 Local authorities are required to complete the national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework which includes the measure 'Proportion of adults with a primary support reason of learning disability in paid employment'. The provisional 2018/19 outcome of 163 (7.7%) is the highest recorded in Leeds and has shown continual year on year improvement for the last two years, 6.7% and 6.1% respectively. The result is above the 2017/18 averages for Yorkshire & Humber (7.4%), comparator authorities (4.4%) and all England (6.0%). Comparative performance figures for 2018/19 are not yet available.

3 Main Issues

3.1 Being Me Strategy – Being connected

- 3.1.1 The Being Me Strategy has three key themes: Being Well, Being Safe and Being Connected. The Being Connected theme is sub-divided into Social, Travel and Employment. Executive Board received a report including all aspects of the strategy's themes in 2018. This report will focus on the Employment theme.
- 3.1.2 To achieve the Being Connected - Employment priorities, the Learning Disability Partnership Board committed over a three year period to focus on the following areas:-
- **Better Connections** with Local Employers – engaging employers and promoting inclusive recruitment
 - **Stage 2 of the Being Me Project** – Adults and Health services support to individuals to secure employment
 - **Skills for Work** – the provision of training programmes to support individuals to secure employment
 - **Experts by Experience** – listening and working with service users to shape and deliver services
 - **Employment Task Group** – to build partnerships that support collaboration and enable the sharing of information and best practice.

Progress in implementing each of these areas is summarised below.

3.2 The Council as an Employer

- 3.2.1 As an employer, the Council is keen to ensure that its workforce represents the communities it serves and acts as an exemplar to others. Data from August 2019, shows that 6% of the Council's workforce have declared a disability (901) and 157 people from that group (approximately 1%) have declared they have a learning disability or cognitive impairment. It is optional for staff to disclose equality information and around 10% have not declared whether they would consider themselves disabled and the HR service is encouraging staff to update their records.
- 3.2.2 The Council has a long history of supporting staff with disabilities and has an active disability staff network, which has recently relaunched as the 'Disability and Wellbeing Network' (DAWN). DAWN is actively working to support people with learning disabilities in the Council and building relationships with organisations in the city to support the work of the HR and Employment and Skills services.
- 3.2.3 The Council is currently applying for DWP's Disability Confident Level 3 standard. The Disability Confident scheme validation encourages and supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace at Levels 1 - Committed; Level 2 - Confident Employer; and Level 3 - Confident Leader. Each Disability Confident Level must be completed before moving onto the next and Level 3 commitments and actions are designed to support organisations acting as champions for Disability Confident within local and business communities and encouraging and supporting other businesses in their supply chains and networks to become Disability Confident.
- 3.2.4 The Council's recent review of its recruitment process and the development of a new approach to be implemented over coming months has supported change and has the potential for further improvement. A guaranteed interview scheme exists for disabled

candidates who meet the essential criteria in the Person Specification and this has been given greater prominence through the new recruitment system. The pack issued following receipt of an application, highlights the offer of support to people if they need help. The HR service is also proactively encouraging recruiting managers to consider more inclusive assessment methods, rather than a standard interview, to support people who may not be able to give their best in traditional approaches.

- 3.2.5 A review is also underway to improve how the Council manages, promotes, co-ordinates and secures positive outcomes from its work experience offer. Led by the HR service and supported by the Employment and Skills Service, the key purpose of the review is to ensure that the Council improves the consistency, quality and accessibility of work experience and placements and better connects those furthest away from employment. This will identify new opportunities and build on the many placements that are offered across a range of services and better connect these with the city's key employment support programmes and providers.
- 3.2.6 People with learning disabilities will be one of the groups prioritised for support through this new approach to work experience. A 'one front door' approach will be promoted to all organisations supporting this priority group so that more individuals are able to take advantage of the offer than is currently the case. The review also includes a focus on improving the quality of work experience placements by developing good practice models and exploring ways of tracking progress into work so that impact can be measured. The new approach will be launched early in the New Year.
- 3.2.7 Leeds Museums and Galleries service funded by the Eranda Rothschild Foundation has created STEM career experiences aimed at children with SEND. The current programme will run until December 2020 and covers the following key activities:-
- **Careers fairs** - Presentations and attendance at school careers fairs representing both STEM and arts/ heritage careers and the job roles available in museums, from conservation and curators to ICT, front of house and running the shop.
 - **Outreach** - For pupils with SEND who are less likely to enjoy, or benefit from, a placement, outreach sessions can be delivered in school with museum objects which the pupils will be free to explore and learn from. There is also the option of a sensory workshop which is for pupils with more severe needs.
 - **Career Taster days** -A one day experience which allows groups of up to 15 pupils to take part in activities revolving around museum jobs. This includes archaeology, conservation and displays.
 - **Placements** - For students aged 16 and over, one day placements at the Discovery Centre, Armley Mills and Leeds City Museum. Longer placements of 1 day a week for an extended period of time are being explored.

3.3 Better Connections with Local Employers

- 3.3.1 In April 2018, the Children and Families Directorate awarded Lighthouse Futures Trust a one off grant of £50,000 to partner them in growing Supported Internships across the city and a specialist recruitment offer. The Light House Futures Trust has significantly expanded the Employer's Network, which was initiated in 2017 and which now has 70 members on the database including KPMG; John Lewis Partnership; Sodexo; Johnson and Johnson; ITV; Pinsent Mason Law; Morrison's; Anchor Care; and Yorkshire Water. This will support up to 30 interns from October 2019. A feasibility study exploring the potential for a dedicated recruitment service, Talent Recruitment, focusing on young people with learning disabilities is due to report in the autumn.

- 3.3.2 A good practice guide for employers considering offering work experience and internships to young people has been developed by the Children and Families directorate. For positive and meaningful work experience placements and internships for those most in need it seeks to ensure that for example:
- planned consultation including support worker/teacher
 - offer is tailored to their individual needs and interests and ideally with flexibility in length and delivery
 - a range of options are available – tasters to extended placements
 - clear outcomes in terms of learning, development and employment
 - tailored support such as job coaching, work place buddy
- 3.3.3 For adults, nineteen different learning disability day opportunities are being delivered through third sector organisations funded through the Adults and Health directorate. Commissioners have worked with these organisations to ensure the projects are focused on the priority areas outlined in the Being Me strategy, including employment. The majority of the projects have tailored offers which support people to develop employability skills in areas including hospitality, retail and the environment. Delivering organisations also directly employ people with learning disabilities through their grant or contract funding.
- 3.3.4 The Council, Jobcentre Plus, Leeds City College and a number of other partners have delivered the Hidden Talents Employment Fair for the last three years. Focusing on adults with autism and building on previous success, with circa 200 people attending each Fair, this year's event in October, will host over 20 employers including Morgan Tindall, Hermes, Esh Group and the employment support provider The Prince's Trust.

3.4 Stage 2 of the Being Me Project

- 3.4.1 This is a strength based approach to supporting adults with learning disabilities into employment taken forward by the Adults and Health Directorate with specific areas of focus including Improving Social Worker capacity to signpost to pre-employment support; Risk enablement, Employment enablement; strength based providers and improving the capacity of individuals to engage in their reviews. Employment aspirations are also explored as part of the Service User Questionnaire which service users asked to complete before their review to inform the discussions and to ensure the focus is on what *they* want to talk about.

3.5 Skills for Work

- 3.5.1 Following the success of the pop-up shop for handmade crafts and gifts, the Compass House project, pupils from the Special Integrated Learning Centres (SILCS) will have this opportunity every 6 months, providing them with invaluable experience and the opportunity to develop new skills in a real, trading environment.
- 3.5.2 Over the last year, over a 100 skills courses exclusively for adults with learning disabilities have been commissioned by the Employment and Skills service through the Leeds Adult Learning Programme. 665 people attended courses that covered a range of skill areas from creative media and computer skills to programmes that develop skills for work including Life Skills, Welcome to Volunteering and Job Clubs. Many other learners who self-identified as having learning disabilities also engaged in the wider Leeds Adult Learning course offer. The specialist sessions focus on developing confidence, social skills and promoting independence. Learners have access to individual and tailored advice to help them secure supported volunteering opportunities or paid work. The intended destination data collated from learners in 218/19 indicated

that 70% plan further learning at the end of their course, 2% will seek part time employment, 2% will undertake volunteering and 26 % had no plans.

- 3.5.3 The Employ Me project delivered by Royal Mencap and supported by a grant from Adults and Health directorate is a specialist programme of support to help people with learning disabilities find work. In the last year this project has achieved 9 work trials, 14 voluntary work placements, 24 progressions into further learning and 18 progressions into paid employment.
- 3.5.4 The Adults and Health directorate has adopted a Test and Learn approach across a range of activities to discover and grow, sometimes small but significant, interventions that can make a real difference to the lives of individuals. Examples of this approach include spot-purchased day opportunities focusing on employment developed by a number of third and voluntary sector organisations in line with individuals' care plans and supporting a person with a learning disability through the training course to deliver travel training to enable her to become a deliverer. The skills and confidence gained by individuals have been transformational and there are plans to explore a sustainable funding solution to continue this model.

3.6 Experts by Experience:

- 3.6.1 Adults and Health is focusing on the frequency of and intelligence gained from conversations about employment with people with learning disabilities accessing services. This enables a better understanding of the barriers and uses that information and experience to support other people considering employment and employers considering recruitment of someone with a learning disability. HR colleagues will connect to the findings from the Experts by Experience work to help inform the council's approach to work experience and enable a check and challenge of the end to end recruitment process to improve workforce diversity.
- 3.6.2 CHANGE, a national charity, held an event in Leeds which was attended by over 100 people with learning disabilities. Working with partners Keyring, an accommodation provider and the Leeds Beckett University Business School, the event sought to collate a range of proposals to improve services for people with learning disabilities to present at their first ever national Summit. The key proposal was that the biggest difference in services and in the lives of people with learning disabilities would be if they, themselves were properly employed to co-develop and co-deliver their own services. The findings will be disseminated at an event scheduled at the end of October 2019. A number of partners, including the Council, will be represented to understand the outcomes of the research, the recommendations arising from recent practice and explore how these may be taken forward within organisations across the city.

3.7 Employment Task Group

- 3.7.1 The group, chaired by Tenfold, a charity which supports voluntary sector organisations who work with and for people with learning disabilities in Leeds, includes representation from the private, public and third sectors. It has taken a key role in sharing information and best practice, identifying the need for change and lobbying relevant organisations e.g. action on travel passes and delivery of the DWP Access to Work Programme. The Council's work experience review project will connect with the Employment Task Group to help consider the impact of the new approach on people with learning disabilities.
- 3.7.2 The Group's key area of work has been developing the proposal for a Learning Disability Hub. The initial concept of a virtual hub to gather and share information about the opportunities and services that are available in Leeds, primarily focused on

employment, was presented and discussed at a meeting in February 2019 and was positively received.

- 3.7.3 The main role of the hub would be information sharing i.e. gathering, collating and sharing information on employment support services, skills training and employment opportunities available, in Leeds, across public, private and third sectors. This will aim to provide better co-ordination across services and agencies by pulling information, networks, support and opportunities together in one place, to support access to employment. In the longer term this will support more effective alignment and the development of a more coherent city offer. Information and resources will relate to specific groups - people with learning disabilities, family members or carers and employers.
- 3.7.4 The hub will utilise a web based platform that seeks to co-ordinate existing support, rather than to create a new service or organisation. As the Maze, www.through-the-maze.org.uk provides signposting to general support, the Hub would focus on employment support as part of the current website or closely linked to it. There is broad support for the Hub to be hosted by a third sector organisation. This would maximise coherence across the sectors, offer flexibility and agility and build on the trusted relationships with existing stakeholders. The development and implementation of the hub would be overseen by a steering group - the Employment Task Group or a sub-set of it.
- 3.7.5 Feedback is being collated to inform a final project specification and the identification of a host organisation will be identified which does not deliver any of the services included within the Hub. Further actions will then include:-
- Identifying and securing long term funding
 - Developing and managing a costed work plan
 - Undertake existing provision mapping with partners
 - Overseeing the web design and production
 - Implementing a communications plan
 - Establishing a steering group
- 3.7.6 Subject to further discussion and confirmation of costs, grant funding can be made available from the Employment and Skills service budget to contribute to the hub development costs. It is anticipated that once established, the Hub would require a staffing resource for administration, development and promotion. Funding for these and a number of other revenue costs will be sought from a number of sources. The development and general operational costs will be identified and agreed following confirmation of the host organisation, their organisational capacity and their detailed project and resourcing plan.

3.8 Continuing Challenges

- 3.8.1 Despite the city's progress and success in partnerships and practice, a range of employment challenges remain on a number of levels:-
- For individuals and their families and carers:-
 - A lack of self confidence in, and or self-awareness of the skills, knowledge and experience individuals might need to get a job and the support available
 - The increasing use of online applications and psychometric tests can mean candidates with learning disabilities do not perform as well as other candidates, despite their ability to do the job
 - Concerns about the impact of paid work on benefit payments to the household

- Insufficient employer commitment to provide a paid job as an outcome from work experience or unpaid internships
- Lack of ongoing post-employment support
- For the Employer:-
 - A lack of awareness and understanding about the capabilities of an individual with a learning disability and the perception that employing people with learning disabilities is costly in terms of adjustments, productivity, impact on customers and or staff
 - Multiple approaches by multiple agencies may result in fatigue and reluctance
 - Lack of post recruitment support
- For the City:-
 - A growing number of young people with a diagnosis of autism or learning disability
 - A lack of sufficient specialist employment support staff and qualified job coaches
 - Impact of payment by results funding on the access to and support offered within some contracted programmes for people with learning disabilities
 - A number of third sector providers rely on very small staff teams and often struggle to meet the needs of candidates, family and employers simultaneously
 - Limited funding can increase competition over collaboration
 - Employer engagement by specialist organisations is un-coordinated and disparate. Each have links with a range of local employers across all sectors and in most instances, promoting their own service.

3.8.2 The city challenges are compounded by the mismatch in scale and resource. For example, the growing number of young people with complex needs and the increasing trend for parents to choose specialist over mainstream schools intensifies the pressure on the city's specialist resource. It is predicted that approximately 200 additional places will be needed each year. The current economic pressures and uncertainty for business can mean that adopting more inclusive recruitment practices beyond the historic and familiar feel more challenging and consequently less desirable. Together the above have the potential to detrimentally impact people with learning disabilities. These factors require us to redouble our efforts to improve outcomes by better collaboration, focus and action.

3.9 Further Actions

- 3.9.1 There are a number of issues which require further work to strengthen the implementation of the strategy. For example, there is a need to develop a better understanding of the respective services between care managers and frontline Jobcentre Plus staff. The Employment and Skills service has put in place a development programme with staff at the Council's Osmondthorpe Hub. Here Jobcentre Plus managers have delivered information sessions on benefits and the impact of current and imminent welfare transition programmes and arranged for care staff to visit local Jobcentres to refresh their knowledge and experience first-hand the service offer to customers. It is proposed that this is rolled out to a wider group of staff.
- 3.9.2 The Council's work experience and placements review offers an opportunity to explore how we can adapt our current processes to better support people with learning disabilities into employment. Areas to explore further include job carving and placement carving, reviewing the accessibility of the application process and whether there are opportunities to create volunteering or employment opportunities through peer support. Further work is required to fully understand the practicalities, funding and suitability of

these initiatives and how this could be managed within current financial and capacity constraints.

- 3.9.3 The Employment and Skills service has recently established the Employment Hub as the access point to a range of employment support services to all residents seeking work. Included within this is an ESIF 3 year programme within which there is capacity to provide some additional targeted services. Parties interested in working as a delivery partner over a 3 year period to provide specialist support to people with learning disabilities to secure employment will be invited to submit proposals in September.
- 3.9.4 The wider employer network of the Employment and Skills service includes many of the biggest organisations in the City that have previously engaged with a range of programmes to support priority groups of residents into work. The network provides the opportunity to explore with the largest employers in the city their current employment policies and practice and their capacity to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce representative of the communities we serve locally.
- 3.9.5 It is important that we measure and monitor the quality, effectiveness and impact of the interventions we deliver and promote as a Council. Aligned to the Ofsted Inspection framework, the adult learning provision for people with learning disabilities delivered by the Employment and Skills service is part of the annual cycle of service improvement planning. A review of services currently commissioned by Adults and Health will commence shortly. This will examine the extent to which they are successful in enabling people with learning disabilities to secure and remain in paid employment. The review outcomes will inform future commissioning. Further work is required to better understand the city-wide picture of provision delivered by partners, how this be better aligned to avoid duplication and cover growing and unmet needs; effectiveness and impact; share best practice and service user experience. The Employment Task Group and Hub could make a significant contribution to building and influencing the development of this information.

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The strategy was developed in collaboration with people with learning disabilities, family, carers, voluntary sector partners, the NHS and the Council. The specific groups consulted included: the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board, People's Parliament, the Carers' Reference Group, Forum Central voluntary sector partners, the Health Task Group, the Community Task Group and the Strategy Co-Design Team.
- 4.1.2 Ongoing activity against the strategy has maintained this scale of engagement. Stage 2 of the Being Me Project continues to engage with The Carers Network alongside people with learning disabilities. Activity to date has been informed by a wide range of partners from across the Council, other statutory partners, the third and private sector. Further work will be undertaken with stakeholders to enable them to inform and shape the content and delivery of the proposed Learning Disability Hub to ensure an integrated service is designed to achieve a step change in provision.
- 4.1.3 The Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment along with the Executive Members for Adults and Health and Children and Families have been consulted on the proposed approach to continue to build on the foundations of the Being Me Strategy.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The strategy seeks to impact positively on equality, diversity and inclusion by improving life chances, through work and meaningful, enriched activities. It seeks to improve outcomes for those who require greater levels of support to overcome barriers and improve their access to learning, leisure training and employment opportunities.
- 4.2.2 This is an update on the implementation of the strategy and does not include specific proposals for approval at this stage. All additional activities and programmes under development will be subject to an Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening to ensure that the proposals are reflective of the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The Being Me Strategy and the activities delivered by the Council and its partners set out in the report contribute directly to our ambitions to enable all of our residents to benefit from a strong economy in a compassionate city. In particular, this range of activity contributes to the Best Council Plan outcome for everyone in Leeds to earn enough to support themselves and their families and the Best Council Plan priorities around providing employment support and supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities. It also supports our ambitions to be a city where all children and young people can grow up to lead economically active and rewarding lives.
- 4.3.2 The activities set out in the report will also contribute to the achievement of the calls to action in the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan, the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to increase labour market activity and productivity through a more representative workforce and improve workplace health. Aligning the strategic objectives of inclusive growth and better health and wellbeing is a priority for Leeds. Improving employment outcomes for people with Learning Disabilities embodies this approach.
- 4.3.3 Climate Emergency
There are no direct adverse impacts on climate change arising from the activities outlined in this report. Web enabled services, primarily through the proposed Hub, will assist people to more efficiently and effectively navigate and access services, potentially reducing the need for unnecessary face to face visits and contacts. Providers of support services to people with learning disabilities are committed to developing electronic easy read material wherever possible to maximise access and digital inclusion.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 To date, much work has progressed within existing resources and is already delivering benefits in terms of building capacity and collaboration across the Council and its partners. Where external resource has been secured for specific programme delivery, every opportunity has been taken to build in targeted measures and outcomes for people with learning disabilities to move closer to employment and whom we seek to prioritise through this approach.

4.4.2 The alignment of existing services and provision is enabling the city to make better use of its local, multi-sector resource. The proposal to achieve closer working by sharing information and intelligence and aligning services through the Hub will have the potential to realise efficiencies and improved outcomes and ultimately reduced costs to public and other services.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.5.2 This report is eligible for Call-In.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 A fragmented approach to supporting people with learning disabilities into employment risks that public resources will not be deployed and targeted effectively. Activity will continue to be monitored and reviewed with key stakeholders to inform the evolving programme of work and continue building partnerships and collaborative approaches to realign existing resources and secure new resources where appropriate. The Learning Disability Partnership Board will shape and endorse activity, check progress and evaluate outcomes. The Employment Task Group will be instrumental in implementing activity and planning joint work to realise the Being Me strategy.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Being Me Strategy as a city wide framework has profile and is underpinned by and complemented by the work of a range of individual organisations and it is essential that it is maintained and developed. Good progress has been made to date in building connections to support people with learning disabilities and improve employment outcomes. Further collaboration to build a co-ordinated approach through a Hub model will provide additional and significant benefits.

5.2 Despite the ongoing challenges, the city has huge potential characterised by a clear strategic focus, willingness from the public sector and a small but experienced group of third sector partners with the passion to make a difference. There is a growing understanding amongst employers of the benefits that providing a good job for someone with a learning disability provides. However, there is work to do on simplifying the means to bring this about and the support to do so. Finally, Leeds has great pool of potential candidates who really want to work, but need some extra support to find and keep a job.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is asked to:

- i) Note the work undertaken to date and the progress achieved against the priorities in the employment strand of Being Connected in the Being Me Strategy
- ii) Support the continued engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to improve employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities and note the opportunities presented through the ongoing work to develop a Hub for the city and additional targeted employment support for adults with learning disabilities.

iii) Note that the Chief Officer Employment and Skills will work with Chief Officer Human Resources, the Deputy Director Adults and Health and the Deputy Director Learning, Children and Families to support the continuing work to improve employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 There are no background documents.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.