



CAI.53 16.17
Challenge & Improvement Committee
Date: 4th April 2017

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Subject: Youth Unemployment: Concluding Report

Report by:	Director of Resources
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Purpose / Summary:	To present to Members a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee in respect of their enquiries into the issue of youth unemployment and to identify possible actions the Committee could recommend Prosperous Communities undertake to address the issues that have been raised.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members

1. Provide feedback on the information provided;
2. Identify any additional actions that could be taken;
3. Determine a definitive set of high and medium priority actions to be **RECOMMENDED** to the Prosperous Communities Committee, for further consideration and implementation if supported.
4. Support the holding of the event for young people and for Members of the Committee to attend.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial: None FIN 149/17

Staffing: None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: None

Risk Assessment: None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
*Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.*

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

Background

1.1 At the Challenge and Improvement Committee meeting of 22nd February 2016, Members received a [briefing report](#) on the subject of youth unemployment.

1.2 This provided Members with:

- i. An overview of the issue
- ii. A definition of youth unemployment
- iii. Detail of the then current and historic rates of youth unemployment (both locally and nationally)
- iv. An analysis of potential contributory factors
- v. Case studies of interventions taken by other local authorities
- vi. Concluding remarks and potential solutions

1.3 Members took on board the content of the paper and determined to set work in motion to take a focused, structured look at the issue.

1.4 At the following meeting of the Committee on 5th April 2016, Members received a [further report](#) setting out a structured, chronological approach for consideration. This proposed that a series of bodies be invited to the Committee, starting with education through to careers advice (or equivalent), employers' bodies and finally the Department for Work & Pensions and/or supporting job scheme/training partner agencies.

1.5 The approach was intended to map the 'journey', interventions and approaches taken at differing stages by agencies to identify and remedy the issues that face the youth of the District in obtaining required qualifications, work skills and experience which support sustainable, rewarding employment.

1.6 Members supported the suggestions and work commenced. Hence, over recent committee meetings, Members have received presentations from a number of agencies involved in addressing and affected by the issue of youth unemployment.

1.7 The agencies that have attended are:

- i. Lincolnshire Careers Service
- ii. Queen Elizabeth High School
- iii. Gainsborough Academy
- iv. Lincoln College
- v. Community Learning in Partnership (CLIP)
- vi. Lincoln & Gainsborough Adult Training
- vii. Department for Work & Pensions
- viii. Rand Farm Park

And written submissions have been received from:

- i. Cherry Willingham School
- ii. North Lindsey College of Technology

- iii. John Leggott VI Form College
- iv. Bishop Burton College
- v. Eminox

1.8 Each attendee has set out their views on the causes of youth unemployment, the role they play in alleviating it, the issues they face and further actions or assistance that are required to provide additional support.

1.9 Additionally, each agency has welcomed the opportunity to attend and the interest shown by the Committee in the subject matter.

1. Introduction

2.1 This report provides Members with:

- i. Background on the role the West Lindsey Employment & Skills Partnership currently plays in this arena
- ii. Contextual information relating to youth unemployment
- iii. A summary of the issues raised by each of the attendees
- iv. A series of actions for Prosperous Communities to consider in order to attempt to address the issues identified and alleviate the current situation

2. Role of The West Lindsey Employment & Skills Partnership

2.1 The West Lindsey 2014-2034 Economic Growth Strategy, sets out the long-term vision for West Lindsey to become *“a resilient and diverse rural district which has embraced sustainable growth whilst retaining its quality, heritage and character for the benefit of all”*.

2.2 The West Lindsey Employment and Skills Action Plan provides the delivery focus for local partners in terms of the resources and activities required to collectively achieve the overall vision. It identifies a series of deliverable individual projects, and sets out subordinate activities, together with associated costs, resources, timescales, deliverables, and who is responsible for each, linking back to the objectives in the Economic Growth Strategy.

2.3 The overarching purpose of the Employment & Skills Partnership is to act as the **designated, time-limited, partnership body responsible for driving, overseeing and promoting all aspects of the delivery of the respective action plan, and achieving associated objectives.**

3.4 It is also intended that the very process of forging new relations and working closely together to make a difference and deliver beneficial local outcomes, will in itself lead to new learning, insight and joint initiatives, and provide a useful platform and legacy for future action in its own right, as well as being a good reason to get involved.

3.5 In West Lindsey, the partnership is currently made up of 12 organisations that operate within the district. These are outlined below:

- West Lindsey District Council
- LAGAT Training Services Ltd
- The Foyer Federation
- DWP
- ACIS Housing Association
- Hill Holt Wood
- The Princes Trust
- CLIP Community Learning
- Riverside Training
- Gainsborough College
- Voluntary Centre Services
- The Gainsborough Academy

3.6 In addition to the 12 core partners, the partners are provided with additional support from key stakeholders including local employers, the County Council and Greater Lincolnshire LEP.

3.7 The Partnership have worked together to deliver or contribute to a number of activities and projects across the West Lindsey area and these include:

- Careers event at the Gainsborough Academy that benefited all students and resulted in 100% of Year 11 students with a destination at aged 16 (no NEETS!)
- Disability Confident Event at Gainsborough Old Hall that attracted over 40 employers and provided information and advice about the support available to help them recruit and retain people with disabilities.
- Commissioned two evaluation surveys through the Princes Trust Talent Match programme to obtain feedback from 18-24 years olds that are furthest from the labour market. The first survey focussed on apprenticeships and revealed a number of challenges for young people particularly around low pay and travel costs. The second was specifically about travel and this highlighted the challenges of some young people to access employers in more rural locations.
- The Partnership will be supporting CLIP Community Learning to deliver CareerNet - an ESF funded programme worth £400,000 that is aimed at 18-24 year olds in Gainsborough and Market Rasen with inspiring events and motivational speakers about jobs and careers within the Greater Lincolnshire area.
- An Employment & Skills event will take place in June 2017 and will bring together the key local schools, employers and providers within Gainsborough to share information and advice on a range of different employment and skills support. In addition we will launch an initiative that will earmark Gainsborough as an Apprenticeship hub.
- Partners will continue to develop the mentoring scheme within The Gainsborough Academy that has successfully contributed to a positive NEET return and plans are in place to extend this into Gainsborough College.

3. Context

4.1 West Lindsey generally has an above average employment rate at almost 80% and individuals with higher level qualifications are also above the regional average. However these figures mask a recurring issue within our key market towns.

4.2 Youth unemployment affects young people aged between 18 and 24. The data supplied below shows that during the period April 2016 to January 2017, the rate of youth unemployment has fallen in the District by 1% point to 4.1%. This compares favourably with a 0.2% point fall in rates for England and the East Midlands. However the rate of unemployment remains significantly above the figures for both England and the East Midlands, where rates of 2.5% and 2.2% prevail.

Unemployment Rates (18-24)			
Region	Apr 2016	Jan 2017	% Change
England	2.7%	2.5%	-0.2%
East Midlands	2.4%	2.2%	-0.2%
West Lindsey	5.1%	4.1%	-1.0%

4.3 The West Lindsey related data has been broken down to show absolute numbers by Ward. This shows that as at January 2017, across the District, there were 65 fewer unemployed young people than in April 2016. This represents a decrease of 20%.

4.4 However, of the overall total, 150 (57%) reside in the three Gainsborough Wards, emphasising the particular issues Gainsborough faces.

18-24 Claimant Count	Apr-16	Jan-17	Change
Bardney	10	5	-5
Caistor and Yarborough	10	10	0
Cherry Willingham	10	15	+5
Dunholme and Welton	15	5	-10
Gainsborough East	75	45	-30
Gainsborough North	55	55	0
Gainsborough South-West	65	50	-15
Hemswell	10	5	-5
Kelsey Wold	5	5	0
Lea	0	5	+5
Market Rasen	20	20	0
Nettleham	0	5	+5
Saxilby	5	10	+5
Scampton	5	5	0
Scotter and Blyton	15	5	-10
Stow	5	5	0

Sudbrooke	5	5	0
Torksey	5	10	+5
Waddingham and Spital	5	5	0
Wold View	10	5	-5
Total	330	265	-65

4.5 A note of caution has to be applied to the data supplied as it only relates to official statistics i.e. those recorded as unemployed. Hence there may be an element of under-recording due to the unidentified numbers of young people termed NEETS (young people not in education, employment or training) and are not captured in official statistics.

4. Issues Raised by Presenting Bodies

5.1 Members heard a number of common threads from the attendees, which exacerbate the issue and hinder agencies in their attempts to provide support and remedies for the individuals affected. These included:

5.2 **Careers Service** – this presentation was offered against the backdrop of the cessation of the Lincolnshire County Council Careers guidance service from September 2016. Issues raised included the uncertainty over future provision and the general lack of quality and appealing apprenticeship/training places across the County. Due to reduced public funding there has been a reduction in the number of programmes on offer. A general lack of aspiration on the part of some young people was also regarded as a contributory factor. Inadequate data tracking and information sharing, so as to reduce the incidence of NEETS who ‘disappear’ from official records, results in an under-recording of the numbers affected.

5.3 **Schools** – Capacity and funding issues to effectively support careers advice were a common thread. There is a general lack of awareness within schools of the external provision and support that is available; along with the means to access and implement it. The focus on academic as opposed to vocational attainment, results in significant numbers of young people not being adequately prepared for the world of work. The absence of suitable employment and effective linkages to the employment market and employers in the local area was raised as problematic, along with lack of family support and role models. Travel costs for young people and the limited subsidies available were believed to have an adverse impact on peoples’ choices.

5.4 **Colleges/Training Providers** – Many of the issues raised by the schools were repeated. Additionally a fragmented approach was reported by the colleges/training providers who recognise the need for a brokerage service to match young people with suitable providers. The quality of careers advice provided by schools was questioned and the level of engagement and relationships with local employers were considered poor. Issues in tracking the onward journeys of young people and data sharing implications were also referred to.

5.5 **Employers** - A mismatch was reported between the skills available locally and those that employers require. Work experience was deemed to be

of poor quality and not extensive enough. Young people lack a clear idea of their preferred form of employment or career and seem to lack even a rudimentary understanding of the content of real jobs. In recent years apprenticeships have proved to be less successful than previously was the case.

5.6 **DWP** – Welfare reform changes with reviews of entitlement conditions and the continuing roll-out of Universal Credit (with full implementation due across West Lindsey by May 2018), form the backdrop against which the DWP support young unemployed people. A poor state of work readiness was reported as a significant issue, as was the problem of identifying ‘hidden’ NEETS who fall through gaps in provision, or are not adequately tracked.

5. Summary of Issues

6.1 The table below provides a read across of all issues raised and the bod(ies) that raised them. This illustrates the cross-cutting nature of many of the issues.

	Careers	Schools	Colleges/Training Providers	Employers	DWP
Lack of funding, capacity and awareness on the part of schools to deliver effective careers advice	√	√	√	√	√
Fragmentation	√	√	√		
Travel Costs for young people	√	√	√		
Data Sharing/Tracking of NEETS	√	√	√		√
Work readiness				√	√
Linkages and engagement with Business	√	√	√	√	√
Lack of role models, aspiration and support	√	√	√	√	√
Mismatch between skills required and skills available				√	
Focus on academic attainment	√	√	√	√	
Suitable employment	√	√	√		√

Poor quality of work experience, apprentice and training opportunities		√	√		
Reduced number of programmes on offer	√	√	√		

6.2 The key messages that are conveyed by the work undertaken with the various bodies that have made representations is that the problem of youth unemployment is multi-faceted and plays out on both a macro and micro scale. A number of cross-cutting issues have been raised and the Council must determine which it can most readily influence and identify those which require the Council to play alternative roles.

6.3 The recent changes in the provision of Career's Advice are a major concern due to potential issues surrounding the capacity and ability for schools to effectively deliver such advice to young people in a consistent manner across the District.

6.4 Within the education sector, the keen focus on academic attainment as opposed to vocational attainment is also regarded as a major issue. This results in a significant number of young people not experiencing the world of work while in education and therefore they are not work ready when they formally enter the employment market.

6.5 Effective linkages between all agencies and business are essential to support young people in determining their career aspirations and to ensure the skills available match those required by the labour market and the employment available becomes more suitable. A more holistic approach should provide some remedy to the issue surrounding the poor quality of work experience, apprentice and training opportunities. Use of meaningful data is also key to this and the Council can support via facilitating the production and sharing of appropriate market analyses.

6.6 Poor role modelling and the raising of aspirations on the part of young people are substantial issues and were raised by all bodies.

6.7 Additionally, data sharing to track the onward destinations of young people, is also problematic. This leads to young people 'falling of the radar' and contributes to the unquantified number of NEETS.

6. Actions the Council Could Take

7.1 Taking the issues raised, officers have considered potential action the Council could take to improve matters. These have been set out for consideration in the table below and an assessment of the urgency of required action has been made against each issue.

Issue	Action	Priority
Fragmentation	Facilitate, or undertake the role	High

		of a brokerage/hub approach to bringing schools, colleges and employers together	
Data Sharing/Tracking of NEETS		Provide expertise in this area e.g. advice on data sharing agreements	Medium
Mismatch between skills required and skills available	Suitable employment	Ensure we are communicating up to date local labour market information/skills analyses that is qualitative and helps Members become community careers champions for local employers, large and small.	High
		Perhaps a couple of Member representatives on the West Lindsey Skills Partnership – more specifically non Gainsborough?	High
		Use procurement procedures to tackle youth unemployment by placing employment and skills obligations on contractors	High
Poor quality of work experience, apprentice and training opportunities		Pledge to make best use of apprentices	High
		Encourage employers to participate/sign up to youth friendly schemes	Medium
		Provide inspirational work experience and on-going commitment	High
Focus on academic attainment		Lobby government for a more proportionate emphasis be placed on vocational attainment	High
Work Readiness	Lack of role models, aspiration and support	Pro-active engagement with the new sponsor of Gainsborough Academy; Wickersley Academy Trust.	High
		Hold careers fairs and fund transport to ensure schools can attend	Medium
		More mentors – to work within the schools and Colleges that impact the district. (Cllr Sheila Bibb currently the only member that is mentoring.)	Medium
		Democracy Working Group progress implementation of Youth Council	Medium

Linkages/engagement with Business	Support with the promotion of Employment & Skills activities to rural areas where there may be hidden NEETS (those not claiming JSA or other types of income support)	High
	Support the town of Gainsborough to become a focal point for apprenticeships specifically in key sectors such as manufacturing, engineering, construction and the visitor economy.	High
Funding	Support a proposal for an operational budget that will provide assurance that we can deliver the activities outlined in the Employment & Skills Partnership action plan	High
Reduced number of programmes on offer	Council partake in and offer meaningful apprenticeship and training programmes	High
Lack of funding, capacity and awareness on the part of schools to deliver effective careers advice	Provide a source of expertise and liaison in this area	High
Travel costs for young people	Support rural transport initiatives.	Medium

7.2 Clearly any action the Council were to take to address the issue of youth unemployment would carry a number of considerations such as resourcing, capability, potential policy changes, and the creation of new partnership arrangements. These would have to be addressed in due course once Members determine which particular issues they wish to address. To assist in this, an opinion on the urgency of action has been provided for Members to consider as part of their further deliberations.

7. Experiences of Young People

7.1 It is considered worthwhile, that an opportunity be provided to hear the experiences of young people via the holding of an informal event, attended by a mixture of young people that are currently in education (school/college), training/apprenticeships, or experiencing unemployment. Facilitation of the event will be provided by officers and Members of the Committee. Trinity Arts Centre has been identified as a possible venue. Dates and times have yet to be determined.

7.2 To provide a degree of structure, a series of questions will be devised for the attendees to consider. These will be designed to draw out their experiences, issues they face and opinions on the assistance provided for

them, in their efforts to identify career paths and secure rewarding, sustainable employment.

7.3 The bodies that presented for the Committee will be contacted to see if they could identify and provide attendees.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Members are asked to review the summary of issues, potential remedial actions and associated priority ratings and:

1. Provide feedback on the information provided;
2. Identify any additional actions that could be taken;
3. Determine a definitive set of high and medium priority actions to be **RECOMMENDED** to the Prosperous Communities Committee, for further consideration and implementation if supported.
4. Support the holding of the event for young people and for Members of the Committee to attend.