

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Planning, Housing and Economic Development Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2016</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	<b>Skills &amp; Apprenticeships Programme</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix 1: Economic Strategy Employment & Skills Action Plan		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Economic Strategy sets out the ambition that B&NES will have an economy with sufficient quality, sustainable jobs at all levels and local residents have the skills to enable them to progress through the labour market and earn incomes, which will enable them to achieve their economic potential and competitiveness.
- 1.2 A programme of work has been defined to ensure that the opportunities arising from economic growth within the district between now and 2030 are harnessed for the benefit of our residents. Our residents are a key asset, contributing to productivity growth: residents' skills must match business need to meet our growth targets.
- 1.3 Members will receive a presentation on the priority actions which are being progressed to assist in delivering the Employment & Skills Action Plan.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the PD&S Panel note the planned programme of work to deliver the Employment & Skills outcomes in the Economic Strategy.

### 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Economic Strategy Action Plan sets out a number of proposals for future action based on opportunities identified in the Strategy which will be the subject of detailed evaluation as they are progressed.
- 3.2 Any proposals which could have resource implications for the Council will be subject individual review and to the Council's usual approval processes.

3.3 The impact of the apprenticeship levy has been incorporated into the budget proposals for 2016/17, the apprenticeship levy is payable on the value of payroll where it exceeds £3m.

3.4 Any new post will be assessed against service requirements and budgets, including consideration as to the financial impact from any apprenticeship funding available and levy costs.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

4.1 Councils have the power to address the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their area. The Economic Strategy addresses a number of considerations including: economic prosperity; equalities; sustainability; planning; and public health and inequalities.

## **5 THE REPORT**

5.1 Clear links have been established between skills development and productivity growth.<sup>1</sup> The Bath & North East Somerset Economic Strategy therefore includes 'People' as one of three pillars of economic growth for the district. The Employment & Skills Action Plan addresses both employability skills and higher level skills. Enabling more Bath & North East Somerset residents to access employment and progress to higher level skills relevant to our priority sectors will contribute to increased productivity levels.

5.2 Planned programme of activity: Apprenticeships

(1) As a major local business the Council takes a lead role in employing apprentices. We currently employ 30 apprentices. This number is set to increase to around 50 as the Government will target all public sector bodies to deliver a higher proportion of apprentices as part of the workforce. The Council has an apprenticeship policy and works with training providers to deliver meaningful placements in a variety of roles.

(2) Further work is planned with the Learning Partnership to harness the work of the National Apprenticeship Service, National Careers Advice Service, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership for the benefit of the local area. The Learning Partnership will re-convene the Apprenticeship sub-group to coordinate this activity, including partners such as the College and key employers such as Wessex Water.

(3) Initiatives are underway such as the Future Apprenticeships and Jobs Fair on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Bath College. The Council enables links to businesses and promotes these events.

(4) As further information emerges about the Apprenticeship Levy process we will be working with businesses to ensure that they are able to seize the opportunity.

5.3 Planned programme of activity: Employability skills.

<sup>1</sup> *Leitch Review of Skills*, 2006; UK Commission for Employment & Skills: *The value of skills: an evidence review*, 2010

(1) Creation of entry level opportunities –

- a) Joint working with the Public Services Board to deliver projects such as Project Search and spreading best practice across the public sector. This will include promoting apprenticeships, work placements, supported interview processes and sector based work academies.
- b) Application of Targeted Recruitment and Training outcomes via the Social Value Toolkit to our procurement contracts and to development via Planning Obligations SPD. The Council secures a local return on investment for residents through its procurement processes (the Social Value Toolkit) and through the Planning Obligations SPD. These processes place a requirement on contractors and developers to provide apprenticeships, work placements and job vacancies notified to Jobcentre Plus. Once the opportunities are secured we work with partners to support the companies in fulfilling the roles.

(2) Enabling individuals to access opportunities -

- a) Direct working with care leavers and unemployed residents to access training and employment.
- b) Set up of the Virtual Employment Hub which communicates upcoming opportunities to all Council services and partners.

(3) Addressing inequalities

The Health & Well Being Strategy recognises the importance of employment as a driver for improving other inequality measures. As such the HWB strategy has adopted the Employment & Skills Action Plan of the Economic Strategy to deliver this and will provide additional scrutiny to ensure that inequality is being addressed as the action plan is delivered.

5.4 Planned programme of activity: Skills Progression.

- (1) Working with West of England Partners to develop a Local Outcome Agreement. This will enable Further Education Colleges to deliver outcomes which are relevant for business and promote productivity growth.
- (2) Working with the LEP and Further Education Colleges on progression pathways to higher level skills in our key sectors.
- (3) Promotion of higher level apprenticeships.
- (4) Provision of independent Careers Information Advice and Guidance to enable young people to make choices informed by future job opportunities.

5.5 Planned programme of activity : Maximising opportunities from future development

- (1) The Economic Strategy identifies that productivity in the district will increase by 80% from 2014 to 2030. Delivery is underway with positive progress being made on delivering development within the Enterprise Area. The Enterprise Area was included in an extended Bristol, Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone announced in the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. Work is underway to progress the Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zone components to delivery stage with a possible start in April 2017.
- (2) In Keynsham, master planning is underway to bring forward new developments in the town centre, at Somerdale and the East of Keynsham employment land.
- (3) These opportunities are time limited; the Council and partners are working to identify the future profile of job creation and skills requirements to ensure the current and future local workforce has the appropriate skills and to harness the benefits for residents of Bath & North East Somerset.
- (4) Construction skills are a particular issue as developments come forward. Working with Bath College funding for the Somer Valley Construction Skills Training Centre has been confirmed including a £2.5m contribution from the Local Growth Fund in 2016 / 17. The Centre will deliver training across a broad range of disciplines including brickwork, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, stonemasonry, and refrigeration & air conditioning. Additionally training on renewables and retrofitting will be available. Training will focus on full time programmes for 16-18 year olds, apprenticeships, higher education, programmes for the unemployed and 14-16 year olds. A full planning application is due to be submitted at the end of February 2016.

## **6 RATIONALE**

- 6.1 An appropriately skilled workforce is a critical contributor to productivity growth and will underpin our ability to grow our key sectors.
- 6.2 Significant opportunities to forward this agenda will arise as a result of the planned development in the district and these opportunities are time limited.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 None

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Economic Strategy Employment & Skills Action Plan is overseen by the district's Learning Partnership which includes cross-service officer representation from the Council. The Partnership is also attended by the West of England LEP.
- 8.2 The Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

## **9 RISK MANAGEMENT**

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Economic Strategy: Review Update <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s39077/EconomicStrategyReviewUpdate.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s39077/EconomicStrategyReviewUpdate.pdf</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	