



**Partnership & Place Overview &  
Scrutiny Committee**

20<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Report from the Strategic Director of  
Regeneration & Growth**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Employment & Enterprise Service Update – November 2013**

**1.0 Summary**

This report provides an update on the recently established Employment & Enterprise service area. It highlights key activities and achievements to date and provides an overview of future plans.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 None – this report is for information only.

**3.0 Detail**

**Background and Context**

3.01 The Employment & Enterprise service sits within Housing & Employment, which in turn sits within the Regeneration & Growth Department. A new Operations Director for Housing & Employment, Jon Lloyd-Owen, commenced in post in October 2013.

3.02 The Head of Employment & Enterprise has been in post since March 2013. Initial six-month focus has been on establishing the new service area and responding to immediate priorities, namely welfare reform mitigation activities and recruitment for the London Designer Outlet (LDO) in Wembley Park, as well as developing the strategic framework for future progress.

**Employment Strategy**

3.03 A borough Employment Strategy (for 2014-19) is currently being drafted, with a view to it being considered by the Executive in early in the new year. This will set the strategic direction for the borough as a whole, identifying our agreed priorities in improving employment rates in the borough. Discussion is currently underway with key partners to inform the overall direction of the strategy. From this, an action plan outlining the priorities for the Employment & Enterprise service area and key interventions to take forward will be established.

### **Strategic Vision of Employment Provision**

- 3.04 Most of the financial resources available for employment work are located within Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme, which is delivered in Brent by three Work Programme Prime Providers (Maximus, Reed in Partnership and Ingeus). In addition, there is significant skills funding channelled through both the College of North West London and BACES. The Council has a clear leadership role in promoting closer collaborative working between these organisations and in trying to drive better employment outcomes from the funding that is already being spent in Brent by these organisations.
- 3.05 To support this, we have signed a Partnership Agreement with Jobcentre Plus, College of North West London, and the three Work Programme Providers to codify our joint objectives, targets and actions.
- 3.06 Aligned to this, we recently convened and chaired a Brent Employment Summit, which brought together senior decision makers from each of the partners, including Brent Council's Strategic Director of Regeneration & Growth and Head of Employment & Enterprise and Jobcentre Plus District Manager. The group agreed to a further workshop to try to align priorities and consider more robust partnership arrangements.

### **Establishing the service area**

- 3.07 The new Employment & Enterprise team structure includes a 'delivery' function (incorporating the pilot Navigator service and an employer liaison function based within Wembley Works), a 'business development and partnership' function and a 'business engagement' function, responsible for supporting enterprise and growth.
- 3.08 The new Business Development & Partnership Manager commenced in post in July 2013, and has since recruited two direct reports including a Bid Writer and a Performance Analyst. This team is responsible for identifying and successfully securing external monies to further support employment, skills and enterprise provision in the borough, and supporting a network of delivery partners, predominantly from the voluntary and community sector (VCS).
- 3.09 The team also incorporates an apprenticeship function, with responsibility for identifying a pipeline of local apprentice candidates to supply the Council's drive to increase the number of apprentices in our own organisation. This role will however be predominantly business-facing, working with local employers to promote greater take up of apprentices within their organisation. The new Apprenticeship Lead starts in post on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

### **Welfare Reform**

- 3.10 To date the main activities on this priority has been twofold – trying to drive better value and results from working closely with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) as part of a joint welfare reform mitigation team, and secondly through the delivery of the pilot Navigator project.

- 3.11 The Navigator service was designed to work with our most disadvantaged and excluded residents, in an effort to signpost them to the right services that will help them secure employment. The immediate priority has been to work with those residents most impacted by the Overall Benefit Cap (OBC), who are not engaging with other services. The service was predicated on the assumption that a number of related services, particularly around job brokerage, existed within the borough, to which residents could be referred.
- 3.12 A stretching employment target was set – to achieve an employment outcome for 35% of a predicted caseload of 300 households, equating to 108 jobs. Given the nature of the client group and the limited resources available this performance would be well above comparable benchmarks.
- 3.13 To date, 62% of residents actively supported by the Navigators are lone parents, over 71% are either on Income Support or ESA, and over 70% were born outside of the UK. Over half of actively engaged residents have either never worked or have been unemployed for 5 years or more. Over 23% have never formally worked. Constraints to employment range from English language needs, to insecure housing, to poor health, to childcare. All residents engaged have multiple constraints to employment.
- 3.14 The Navigator service commenced in January 2013. It is fair to say that the service has faced a number of challenges which has impacted on the achievement of the outcome to date. The three biggest initial challenges have been: an absence of job brokerage services within the borough; a delay in the implementation of OBC in the borough resulting in an impact on referral; and poor quality of customer service in other services resulting in the Navigators engaging with customers at a greater level than originally anticipated.
- 3.15 Following a six-month review of the pilot, a pivot in direction, to ensure available resources make a bigger contribution towards overall employment outcomes, was implemented:
- A shifting of resources from the Navigator team to specifically support the London Designer Outlet (LDO) recruitment in an effort to ensure more residents could access this pipeline of opportunities (please see below for further details). This resulted in 3 Navigators focused on the LDO recruitment.
  - Commissioning of job brokerage services to VCS partners in order to help build the capacity of more local and community driven employment provision. Following a competitive tendering process Ashford Place (formerly known as Cricklewood Homeless Concern) was awarded the contract with delivery commencing in August 2013. The Business Development team was also successful in securing monies from DWP to commission a second job brokerage service, which is being delivered by Lift in Harlesden and commenced in September 2013. Both programmes will work solely with Brent residents impacted by OBC, to support as many of these residents secure employment as possible. The duration of contract is 1 year and is based on a payment by result model.
  - Establishing a co-located JCP team within our welfare reform mitigation team in the Civic Centre. The JCP team provides employment support to our

residents, focusing on those residents who are on Income Support and impacted by the OBC, whilst the Council team can focus on housing and benefits support. This facilitates a coordinated approach resulting in improved service for the resident.

- Working specifically with VCS partners in the Somali community, as the single biggest community impacted by welfare reform in Brent. The Navigator team trained 8 Community Champions, working with Help Somali Foundation, who in turn raised awareness of the implications of welfare reform and support available within the Somali community. Somali Diaspora was also supported to run a series of job clubs from the Unity Centre in Church End.

- 3.16 To date the Navigator service has actively worked with 120 residents, supporting 52 into employment. This is 43% of active caseload. In total 48% of caseload actually received job offers and 59% secured job interviews. 53.43% of the total number of active caseload were impacted by OBC. 51.42% of OBC impacted residents (36) were supported into employment.
- 3.17 Secondary outcomes which improve the social inclusion of the households supported have also been monitored. These include: 57% of residents being signposted for further upskilling/training (such as work trails, work experience, ESOL courses) and 25% receiving support with keeping their tenancy (separate to OBC related issues).
- 3.18 Whilst initially £413,000 had been budgeted for the service, the actual spend has been significantly less. The cost of the Navigator service has been £290,869, which means a unit cost of £2,423 per resident engaged and £5,593 per residents supported into employment. The cost per job outcome is broadly comparable with the most recent welfare-to-work programme in Brent, Employment Zone, where cost per job outcome was £4,688 (working with JSA claimants and some lone parents). The Employment Zone, in its first year achieved 37% job outcome rate.
- 3.19 At the time of writing an external review of the pilot service has been commissioned, which should conclude end of February 2014. This review, along with the employment strategy, will help to inform the future of the pilot Navigator service.

#### **London Designer Outlet (LDO) – Wembley Works**

- 3.20 The LDO is the biggest designer outlet within the M25. It comprises 85 retail units, 15 food and beverage units and a multiplex cinema, and is an integral part of the Wembley regeneration programme. The LDO is clearly a critical new source of local jobs, providing new jobs in the fields of catering, retail, cleaning, leisure, entertainment and hospitality.
- 3.21 The LDO has two key opening dates; 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 as the local opening and April 2014 as the national opening. As of 24<sup>th</sup> October about 60% of the retail units and 85% of the food & beverage units had contracts signed for occupation.
- 3.22 Supporting the recruitment for the LDO is labour intensive – as a way of illustration, Newham Council had 150 officers working on a similar scheme to deliver 2500 jobs at Westfield, Stratford. Therefore in order to ensure the success of this recruitment drive we are working closely with key partners, namely JCP, College of North West

London, Work Programme providers and BACES, to draw in a 'borough-wide team', thereby maximising potential resource. This partnership also includes a network of over 30 borough-based providers including registered providers and VCS groups. Resource within the Employment & Enterprise team has also been realigned to focus on this priority, including the Navigator service and Business Development functions.

- 3.23 Brent Council, through Wembley Works, has been coordinating the recruitment activities. Positioned as the single point of contact for these new employers, on behalf of the partnership, the team has been engaging with employers to develop bespoke short-term training provision to meet their requirements and secure 'guaranteed interviews' for residents. These training courses have been delivered in partnership with BACES and College of North West London.
- 3.24 Recruitment for the LDO is on-going, and will be so until April 2014. At the time of writing the team has had access to just over 500 vacancies (circa 515), securing 236 jobs, which equated to over 45% of vacancies. It is worth noting that there is a lag factor in terms of job offers as recruitment for some of these vacancies is still in progress. This is a strong achievement.
- 3.25 We are confident that the number of jobs secured will continue to rise and that employers will continue to work with Wembley Works to meet their recruitment needs. Indeed, many employers have returned to Wembley Works for further support or to remedy against drop-outs from their own recruitment drive. Feedback from employers engaged thus far has been very encouraging.

#### **Business Development Activities**

- 3.26 In addition to the two job brokerage services referred to above, we have been successful in securing a number of other funding streams to the borough.
- 3.27 In November BACES and P3 (VCS partner), will start delivering a two year 'introduction to apprenticeship programme' for 19-24 year olds. They will run courses in Childcare, Retail, Construction, and Business Administration. Funding (£100k over 2 years) has come from the City Bridge Trust following a successful bid.
- 3.28 We have also secured £100k of London Councils' European Social Fund (ESF) monies, which Brent Council is matching. This £200k (over 2 years) will be used to support residents with mental health needs into employment. It will be delivered jointly by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Remploy.
- 3.29 In addition, we have supported the Investment Team to develop a programme to support residents in Church End. This will be delivered by Lift and will assist local people to establish their own businesses, as well as to find employment.
- 3.30 We are still awaiting the outcome of a bid submitted to DCLG, on behalf of BACES, to deliver English language support. Our focus has been to provide English language skills to support employment.
- 3.31 And finally, we have just submitted another bid, on behalf of BACES, to the Skills Funding Agency for ESF money to deliver skills for employment provision across

west London sub region. Should we be successful this will be delivered in partnership with other local authorities and their voluntary sector network.

### **BACES Review**

- 3.32 The fundamental review of BACES is in progress. This involves a thorough review of key strands including asset, curriculum and vision with a view of making the service much more focused on skills and employment in time for the 2014/15 academic year.

### **Enterprise**

- 3.33 The Employment & Enterprise team is contributing to the development of a borough Economic Development Action Plan. This follows the recommendations made by Arup, who were commissioned to undertake an economic review of the borough. The Action Plan is in the process of being finalised, including detailing priority projects, before being presented to relevant Members. Immediate actions being taken forward by the Employment & Enterprise team include Small Business Saturday and the background work for a proposed Brent Business Hub.
- 3.34 Brent Business Hub is a proposed new initiative to support and promote economic growth in the borough aimed at new start-ups, established companies, struggling companies, self-employed and students interested in entrepreneurship and business. It is proposed that Brent Business Hub replaces the current Employer Partnership.
- 3.35 The proposed Brent Business Hub will have two main platforms, a virtual one-start-shop via the Council's website, providing access to information and support service, and an events programme that will bring businesses and entrepreneurs together through a regular series of meetings, networking events and educational workshops. Brent Business Hub will be guided by an 'advisory board' comprised of local business representatives. Once details have been drawn up the proposal will be shared with Members for sign off.
- 3.36 Small Business Saturday was founded in the USA as a way to encourage shoppers to visit local businesses. This year, the initiative is being promoted in the UK by the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, with cross party support, and Small Business Saturday has been set as Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December.
- 3.37 To tie in with this, the Council will be hosting a series of events to support local businesses in the borough, including the Small Business Exhibition.
- 3.38 The exhibition will feature over seventy stalls in four themed zones. It will allow existing businesses to advertise and sell their products, offer a space for entrepreneurs to test out and promote their start-ups and give business owners and the public a chance to receive professional business advice and ask questions about running their own business.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 None

**6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 A full impact assessment will be undertaken once the full employment programme has been agreed and full team is in place.

**7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 None

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