

Appendix 1, Annex III Review of the 2014-16 strategy

Achievements and lessons learnt

Since the inception of the strategy, we have seen significantly increased interdepartmental working to address employment and skills issues and a team has been created to support the implementation of the strategy:

Significant steps have been taken to deliver against each of our workstreams as follows:

1. Boosting local employment and skills through strategic procurement

Initially, within our Procurement processes, we developed an 'Employment and Skills through Procurement Policy' for large contracts that we put out to tender. This meant that all potential suppliers were required to answer standard questions about their commitment to skills and to complete an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP), identifying specific activities that they would deliver should they be awarded the contract, such as offering Apprenticeships, Traineeships and work experience placements, upskilling employees and offering careers guidance via our schools and colleges. This approach was relatively successful and some of our larger contracts issued in 2014/15 included skills measures.

When it came to implementation, it was clear that not all departments were adhering to the policy when issuing Pre-Qualifying Questions (PQQs) and Invitations to Tender (ITTs) for their larger contracts. This was primarily due to a lack of understanding on when an ESP is appropriate and required. We realised that a policy alone was not enough and that alongside the policy we needed to ensure there was a consistent understanding of the process for including an ESP in a tender, both in the Procurement Team as well as in the Service Teams. We also learnt that we needed to provide suppliers with guidance on submitting an ESP, with signposting for support on taking on an apprentice or offering work experience to a local school, for example. Finally, we needed to gain a contractual commitment from our suppliers and a method of monitoring ESP delivery throughout contract life.

In addition, national policy changes were afoot that had implications for our own Employment and Skills through Procurement Policy. Specifically, the introduction of the Social Value Act provided a new focus and framework for the Employment and Skills through Procurement Policy.

As a result of these observations we:

- Integrated the Employment and Skills through Procurement Policy into an internal guidance document.
- Made it obligatory for all contracts issued by the council of a total value over £100,000 to include an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) as part of the evaluation of the tender, and where they do not request an ESP, those issuing the contract have to state why not
- Introduced a Suppliers Guide to Delivering Employment & Skills, containing the necessary signposting for support.
- Introduced quarterly KPI monitoring of contractual commitment versus ESP actual delivery in 2015-16.
- Updated Procurement documentation to ensure ESP requirements were embedded at all the necessary stages of the tendering process.
- Delivered refresher training to the Procurement Team about the Social Value Act and the delivery of employment and skills.

- We also introduced a KPI into the Council Plan to measure our progress against this workstream. The target was: *60% of new County Council procured contracts awarded following a tender process will include an Employability and Skills Plan.*

In 2015-16, ESPs were put in place for 11 (42%) of the 26 contracts awarded.

The measure for 2016-17 will reflect that there are some types of contracts for which an ESP is not appropriate. These tenders will be removed from the outturn figure and an explanation provided. This will help ensure that any potential blockers to an ESP being delivered are addressed.

2. Supporting skills and employability through internal training and recruitment

We have in place an extensive core skills training programme which is available to all staff employed in the Council. Linked to performance and development conversations, this provides opportunities for our staff to develop their skills, ensuring we have an appropriately skilled workforce.

We are developing our partnerships with other Council's with a view to enhancing and broadening the training and development offer available to the workforce.

In early 2015, we undertook a peer review of Manchester City Council's Apprenticeship Programme to inform the development of our own. As a result of the recommendations made by the review, our Chief Officers Management Team agreed the following principles for our own programme:

- That it should be informed by workforce planning, and Apprenticeship roles should be offered in those areas where we find it difficult to recruit or where we know that there will be future demands in our own or in the wider workforce.
- That we should use the programme to benefit NEET and LAC young people as well as those with Apprenticeship aspirations
- That all of those who apply should be able to participate on an initial work readiness programme so that they gain some benefit from our scheme even if they do not obtain an Apprenticeship role
- That we should take on cohorts of young people and offer them a range of support once in role in order to aid retention

We set three KPIs in the Council Plan as follows:

- Number of new apprenticeships with the County Council (ESCC and schools): 56
- Number of young people participating on work readiness programme: 60
- Percentage of apprentices retained in their apprenticeship placement and/or moving into alternative training or paid employment: 70%

Our Apprenticeship Programme was developed and was implemented in October 2015. To date we have recruited two cohorts of Apprentices recruiting 29 young people into Level 2 Apprenticeships in Business Administration, ICT, Health and Social Care and Youth Work, with a further 30 employed by schools, and enabling 52 to participate in our work readiness programme. Our retention rate improved to 93% during the year.

We learned several lessons during the course of the first cohort of Apprentices, which led to the improvement of our induction programme for our Apprentices as well as improved support mechanisms for the managers of Apprentices and for those Apprentices with

additional support needs. We also learned that for some of our more vulnerable groups, a Traineeship programme would be more suitable as a precursor to an Apprenticeship. As a result we will be trialling this in October of 2016.

As part of our People Strategy commitments we are currently in the process of developing a toolkit to support managers in identifying their workforce planning and development needs in the context of their business planning requirements. This will provide a more systematic approach to identifying future workforce needs and enable us to target future apprenticeship programmes around these needs.

In addition to the development of the Apprenticeship programme we have also devised an internship programme, working with the Universities of Brighton and Sussex, with guidance for managers now available on the intranet. Four interns have been recruited thus far, offering them the opportunity to apply their skills in a working environment and to improve their understanding of the workings of local government.

Not only do these measures offer opportunities for local people, but they also enrich our own workforce, growing local talent to meet our future jobs needs.

3. Improving employability in East Sussex through joint working

We have a wide range of partners with whom we work closely.

Schools are integral to the delivery of employability and skills and we have been working closely with our schools in a wide range of areas.

Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

- 21 East Sussex secondary schools and 6 special schools now hold Investors in Careers status, which means that they have a formal and planned approach to the provision of careers advice to their pupils.
- 20 schools have actively been involved in the Young Enterprise Company programme over the last 2 years, which
- We have worked with our schools to develop an employability passport, to help young people keep a record of their work readiness and employability skills. The passport will be piloted in the next academic year.
- Our Work Experience Unit has identified and undertaken Health and Safety checks for 1500 employers and has worked with 31 schools and colleges, to place over 5000 students over the past 2 years'

Supporting the take up of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships East Sussex is a group of strategic partners that meet with the aim of securing the coordination and growth of apprenticeships in East Sussex. The partnership includes representatives from East Sussex County Council, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP), Sussex Downs College, Sussex Coast College, Plumpton College, District and Borough Councils, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Alliance of Chambers East Sussex (ACES), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the East Sussex Youth Employability Service (YES).

Apprenticeships East Sussex have driven the You're Hired campaign. The campaign promoted Apprenticeships to employers and asked them to pledge to taking on an

Apprentice. We received 700 pledges 72% of which were converted to apprenticeships starts within 3 months of the campaign end.

Reducing the numbers of NEET

In accordance with Ofsted feedback from 2014 to reduce the number of 18 year olds recorded as NEET, we implemented a number of strategies to address this including:

- targeted 1:1 support for this cohort,
- developed and implemented more robust tracking systems and processes
- Analysis of cohort and provision to inform actions
- NEET focus agreed and implemented from members of Increasing Participation Operational Group

As a result we have halved the number of 18 years old recorded as NEET from 14.7% to 7.2% and have seen a 10% increase in the number entering education, training or employment over the past 2 years.

Jobs Hub provision in libraries

Eastbourne Jobs Hub, located in Eastbourne Library, was established in September 2014, the objective to provide a bridge between the jobs advertised and the residents. Support is provided to residents by linking with partners to provide Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), application and job seeking support in addition to referrals to local organisations to provide specialist services. Over 200 customers have received in depth CEIAG with many more accessing the jobs board and other support. Since mid-2015 we have worked to extend this model into rural locations. 4 staff members are receiving CEIAG training to provide local referrals, with more starting in September 2016. Online subscriptions to services, including MyWorkSearch and Atomic Training, provide tools for residents to improve their skills, streamline their job seeking and support customers to complete successful applications have been rolled out in all Libraries. Libraries also provide qualifications through learndirect which provide the skills customers require to improve their chances of work, confidence and quality of applications.

Skills East Sussex

Working with the business sector has also been a key element of this workstream. In 2014/2016 we established our local **Employment and Skills Partnership Board, Skills East Sussex (SES)** which comprises business representatives and training providers (Schools, FE and HE). The Board has met eight times and has developed a statement of priorities and is in the process of developing some common KPIs to measure its effectiveness over the next three years.

ESCC has produced nine sector skills evidence based research reports to inform the work of SES. These reports have led to the following activities:

- Four sector task groups (business led) have been established focusing on addressing skills needs within four of our priority sectors (Engineering, Construction, Creative and digital, Landbased and visitor economy)
- An additional task group (Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance providers network) has also been established.

Each of these task groups has started to deliver activity to address identified needs. Activity includes:

- STEMfest – a month long programme of activity to promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning in secondary schools run in April-May 2016 reaching over 700 young people
- Construction Ambassador workshop – to train construction employers to deliver ‘careers in construction’ sessions in schools
- CEIAG mapping to identify duplication and gaps in CEIAG provision, and identify the quality of provision locally
- Curriculum planning – FE colleges working with local employers to identify their training and development needs in order to develop appropriate courses in terms of both qualifications and course content.

We have also enabled Skills East Sussex to secure £305,000 of funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company to deliver two Employer-Provider partnership projects:

- The Enterprise Adviser initiative, which pairs schools with a business adviser to develop and enhance school careers advice activities
- Progress! a programme of careers and work readiness activities designed to raise aspirations, increase the uptake of Apprenticeships and reduce levels of NEET in the County

We have also introduced an additional element within our Business Grants scheme and now offer funding to support businesses seeking to employ an Apprentice as part of their Grant request. Thus far five companies have taken advantage of this opportunity.

We also have a key role in terms of external representation and as a result Council representatives have played an important role in the following meetings over the duration of the Strategy:

- Area Based Review of FE provision in Sussex
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Skills Advisory Group
- 3SC (Three Southern Counties) Devolution Skills Group

Social Value Measurement Framework

A draft framework for measuring Social Value has been developed by Procurement, which is based on the themes and objectives identified in the Social Value Strategy for Procurement. Relevant financial measures from the New Economy Unit Cost Database have been incorporated into the framework, which has undergone scrutiny from Finance, Legal and Audit teams, who have given their approval to commence with the implementation of this framework. A plan is now being developed to test and then phase the framework into our tendering processes.

Using the framework, we will be able to place a financial social value on the delivery of activity as a result of the Employment and Skills Plan 2014-16 and will release these figures in December 2016 as an addendum to this strategy.