

Report to Scrutiny Commission

**Economic Development, Transport and Tourism
Scrutiny Commission**

Date of Commission meeting: 4 March 2015

Employment Skills and Training Scrutiny Review

Report of the Employment Skills & Training Task Group



Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

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4th March 2015

Report of the Chair: Cllr Sue Waddington

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide conclusions and recommendations relating to employment, skills and training issues. The report summarises key aspects of the Task Group Review; however minutes of each meeting form Appendices 2-5 and contain more in-depth notes on the evidence provided.
- 1.2 The Review also received departmental responses to the report from the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission on employment issues within the city (August 2012). [A link to that report can be found here.](#)

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This review followed the 2012 review of the city council's role in creating and preserving employment within the city. Notes of evidence from a series of meetings are contained in Appendices 2-5. Recommendations from those meetings are set out in section 5 and cross-referenced to the appendices.
- 2.2 Evidence was taken in a series of meetings of the Employment Skills and Training Task Group between September 2014 and January 2015. Notes of evidence from these meetings are contained in Appendices 2-5.
- 2.3 Conclusions and recommendations arising from members' consideration of the evidence, including written reports and verbal evidence, from witnesses at these hearings, are set out below.
- 2.4 The Task Group looked at the responses to the recommendations in the 2012 report (see Appendix 6), comments on progress and makes further recommendations. Members feel that some performance indicators and actions need to be more robust and the actions they think are needed are summarised in recommendations 4.1 to 4.4.
- 2.5 The review explored other emerging themes relating to the local and sub-regional economy, many of them influenced or affected by national government policy as well as local economic, educational and social issues.
- 2.6 These include:
- the relationship between education and the world of work,
 - the continuing need to improve information about who participates in and who wishes to benefit from adult education and the match against provision by a range of agencies

- the growing influence of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and its delivery European Community social programmes as well as national government economic development programmes.
- 2.7 The Government has sharply reduced support for careers guidance and advice within schools; this has had a significant impact on increasing the gap between education and readiness of students for training/employment.¹²
- 2.8 Among changes since the last report has been a significant reduction in the resources available to the Connexions service. This service has been found to be good at tracking youngsters up to the age of 18.
- 2.9 Members were concerned about the lack of information about the employment and training of the cohort aged between 18 and 24. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) may have access to this data but appears not to be providing the resources to collect and use the information.
- 2.10 There is also a lack of information about the location of demand for training and adult education as compared with the supply of adult education courses and places within the city.
- 2.11 One aspect of the review which caused major concern was the major issue of the “hollowing out” of the economy. It means that middle-management and other interim tiers of employment are disappearing or have already gone.
- 2.12 A key impact of this is that young employed workers are finding themselves trapped for years, perhaps a decade or more, in low-wage jobs featuring in some cases zero-hours contracts.
- 2.13 For this cohort of workers there is little chance to gain advancement, get onto the home ownership ladder or create stable and prosperous households.³

¹ [OFSTED reported](#) that in 2013 that three-quarters of schools are failing to deliver adequate careers advice.

² The [Commons Public Accounts reported in January 2015](#) on 16-18 year old participation in education and training. The Chair of the Commission, Margaret Hodge, said: “Too many young people simply disappear from all the relevant public systems. 100,000+ young people are off the radar in that some local authorities do not know whether they are participating in education or training or not. If the activity of young people is unknown to the local authorities where they live, they are unlikely to receive targeted help.”

³ This has been the subject of a [2013 report for the Department of Business Innovation and Skills](#): Hollowing Out and the Future of the Labour Market

- 2.14 This trend towards “underemployment” among young workers was characterised by a jobs market which for them has become progressively more protracted, unstable and fragmented.
- 2.15 “Too many of our young people are not making a successful transition from education into work and as a result they risk falling into and out of short term jobs without the opportunity to develop careers. In other words, they risk becoming part of a new ‘precariat.’
- 2.16 “Under-employment is as great an issue as unemployment; the barriers for young people are more pronounced in the UK than many countries elsewhere.”⁴

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The City Council has made significant and welcome progress on many points raised by the previous Scrutiny Review of employment creation within the city. The original scrutiny recommendations and responses by the department are contained in Appendix 6.
- 3.2 There is still concern about the employment rates of women within the Leicester economy.
- 3.3 Wage rates and career progression opportunities for many young people in their first decade in the work market are too poor to allow for economic progression and this is a significant problem within the local and national economy.
- 3.4 Schools and employers should work more closely to provide workplace experience for young people still in education.
- 3.5 The LLEP is becoming far more effective as a delivery vehicle for European Social Fund and UK national programmes. The City Council, as a key partner of the LLEP, has an important role to take on a range of programmes which encourage and foster training, apprenticeships and other programmes, including those involving the voluntary sector.
- 3.6 Under-employment is a major problem for young people in the labour market, and interventions through European, national and local funding sources, and local employers, should recognise and seek to address the problems set out in pars 2.11 to 2.16 above.

⁴ Evidence to the November 2014 Task Group hearing.

- 3.7 While the numbers of NEETs has reduced, this trend has tended to leave those outside the available education and training programmes further away from the labour market and less employment-ready.
- 3.8 Social enterprises, especially at local level, provide a way into employment which can have a range of benefits, including strengthening local community cohesion, removing barriers to employment (such as travel time and costs) and providing local facilities while keeping financial resources within the local economy.
- 3.9 A survey of 1,000 firms undertaken for the LLEP should provide important information about the local jobs market, including gaps in skills and employment opportunities.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor's Delivery Plan

- 4.1 The 2012 employment creation scrutiny report called for an employment indicator for 18-24 year olds. The existing tracking omits 18-24 year olds. The Task Group recognises the problems involved in tracking this cohort but restates the need to have good information about this important community group and tracking progress.
- 4.2 Resources should be found from a range of agencies to bridge the tracking gap identified in recommendation 4.1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should be asked to provide the resources to help track the employment records of 18-24 year olds to help agencies track this cohort.
- 4.3 The council, local MPs and private sector business interests should seek to influence national policy through all available mechanisms to create the resources for the DWP to monitor and provide employment information among 18-24 year olds.
- 4.4 The 2012 report highlighted the low employment rates among women in the city. Further action is needed to correct the continuing imbalance. One option is to use the Adult Learning Service (LASALS), which features a high proportion of female adult students, to promote further training and employment to women.
- 4.5 The setting up and development of local social enterprises provides a useful and effective way of jobs creation at local level for people who might otherwise not be able to access the jobs market.

- 4.6 The City Mayor should report back on continuing progress against the recommendations, and on any new initiatives, to this or a related Scrutiny Commission by November 2015.

City Council and partners' intervention programmes

THINK Family

- 4.7 The Commission endorses the council's approach to the ***THINK Family*** programme; this looks at individuals and family groups across a range of issues and problems. This approach - helping people with a broad range of issues - could be extended to other programmes involving the city council and council partners.

Adult Education

- 4.8 Adult education across the city should be tracked to establish a map of provision and an understanding of who does and does not access adult education courses. This would include access to a wide range of partners, including the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) which should provide figures for learning across the city.
- 4.9 Course providers should co-operate to get a more comprehensive picture of the demand for and provision of adult learning courses across the city.
- 4.10 Provision should take into account community needs across the city, including low employment of women and high concentrations of NEETs in particular areas. Provision should be at a local as level as possible to serve areas with the lowest access to employment of women and young people who are outside the labour market.

The links between education and the world of work

Apprenticeship Hub

- 4.11 The Commission welcomes and endorses the work of the Apprenticeship Hub, which has a presence throughout the Leicester and Leicestershire area. Apprenticeship promotion is a significant issue which needed to be championed through clear leadership at a corporate level. This should be re-established by the council.
- 4.12 The Youth Charter for Leicester should address issues which include the standards of training expected by apprentices and of employers and to ensure a high standard of apprentice training. Where necessary it should be updated to reflect those objectives.

- 4.13 The council should encourage employers to make closer connections with schools – supporting the priorities identified by the Schools Strategic Partnership⁵ and encouraging more work placements⁶ for schools.
- 4.14 There should be a central system to help schools and employers to promote and co-ordinate work placements across the city.
- 4.15 The Task Group wishes to refer the issue of a high level of NEETs among looked-after children to the Corporate Parenting Forum as a serious issue which needs to be addressed by the council. (See Appendix 4 Paragraph 7.3).

Provision of social support programmes – including work placement programmes

- 4.16 The City Council should bid for ESIF Objective 8 and 9 project funding, either by itself or with appropriate local partners, with the object of being a prime contractor. This might include working in consortia to deliver services and projects through a network of local providers
- 4.17 Bidders for ESIF funding, including private contractors voluntary sector suppliers, should have local connections and have a record of providing local services.
- 4.18 A short summary of European Structural and Investment (ESIF) programme objectives should be prepared, along with the means of accessing them, and the city council, ward meetings and other agencies be made aware of the programmes.
- 4.19 Procurement of programmes at both European, national and local level should include a fair balance of funding between prime contractors and sub-prime

⁵ During the course of this review [the government announced the setting up of a new company](#) to “ensure employers are supporting young people with decision-making and career development at every stage of school life. The brokerage arrangement will enable employers to talk directly to pupils about the opportunities available and ensure they are able to consider all the options as they move through school.

“The need for greater support and brokerage in this area has emerged following extensive discussions with teacher representatives, employers and business organisations involved in careers advice and inspiration” the Government said.

⁶ The Leicester Educational Partnership Leicester 13-19 Partnership Board has an agenda which looks at Helping Leicester Young People to be better prepared for employment and developing stronger links between schools and colleges and local employers. This shows an improved relationship between educational and economic development strands within the council.

contractors to ensure the (normally subcontracting) agency delivering the service receives a fair reward for the work involved. This recommendation recognises that European procurement rules might be a significant barrier to this objective.

- 4.20 Discussions with employers should take place to address the concerns about the “hollowed-out” nature of the local economy. Grant aid could be used to influence recipients to commit themselves to structural improvements in the jobs market to allow young workers to progress economically and in career terms.
- 4.21 It is requested that the results of the LLEP companies’ survey be reported to a future meeting of this Commission. The survey should be used to assist and guide schools, colleges and other education and training providers.
- 4.22 Information requested at the last task group meeting for information from Talent Match and CASE-da be reported to a future meeting of this Commission.
- 4.23 In the light of the report⁷ from the University of Leicester on low wage rates paid within the city’s garment sector, that the researchers be asked to come to a future meeting of the Commission to provide information and to answer questions.
- 4.24 That the agreed conclusions and recommendations be forwarded to the Overview Scrutiny Commission (OSC) for comment and endorsement.
- 4.25 That the recommendations be submitted to the Executive and City Mayor, who are asked to respond within the recommended three month timescale, including details of any proposed actions and implementation details where appropriate.

⁷ [Leicester Mercury: 19th February 2015](#)

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 The costs of implementing any specific actions under consideration should be quantified at the time and be part of the decision making process.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance – ext. 37 4081

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The report looks at employment skills and training and seeks to address issues relating to young people who are unemployed and not in training. The reduction in government support for careers guidance and advice within schools along with reductions in the resources available to connexions impacts on the gap between education and readiness of students for training/employment. There is also concern about the employment rates of women within the Leicester economy. The main protected characteristics for consideration would be age and gender.
- 6.2 Any proposals/recommendations that explore ways of working/employment opportunities enabling income inequality to be addressed will have positive impacts across all protected characteristics. Initiatives designed to ease the transition from school to work among young people will have a positive impact also.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow (Supervisory Legal Executive) x. 371435

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Membership of the Task Group and acknowledgements

Cllr Sue Waddington (chair)

Cllr Rashmikant Joshi (Vice Chair)

Cllr Ted Cassidy

Cllr Luis Fonseca

Cllr Ross Grant (resigned February 2015)

Cllr Vijay Riyait

The Commission would like to acknowledge the help, guidance and evidence from a range of witnesses and other sources, including:

Andrew L Smith: Leicester City Council (LCC) Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development

Mike Dalzell: LCC Head of Economic Regeneration

Caroline Boucher: Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Economic Strategy Officer (People)

Kerry Gray: LCC Head of Adult Skills and Learning Services

Julia Conlon: LCC Children Young People and families' Service manager

Adam Suddaby: Education service consultant

Tim George: (Department of Work and Pensions)

Ian Wilson: CASE-da Business Adviser

Jane Avery: CASE-da Business Adviser

APPENDIX 2

Notes from task group meeting held on 11th September 2014:

Members in attendance:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Grant (Part)
Councillor Joshi
Councillor Riyait

Officers present:

Andrew L Smith
Caroline Boucher
Kalvaran Sandhu
Kerry Gray
Mike Dalzell

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to meeting and informed that the purpose was to identify what the commission wanted to look at in terms of this topic area.
2. The Chair referred the meeting to appendix A in the meeting papers, which contained recommendations from a previous scrutiny review into the council's role in job creation. She asked that as part of the review the commission receives an update against each recommendation.
3. Commission members were asked what they would like the review to consider and the following areas were listed:
 - What are we offering to get people into employment since the removal of Multi Access Centres (MACs)?
 - Consideration of the Life Long Learning provision of the University of Leicester and the possible contribution it could make to developments in the city.
 - What is the vision for skills and learning issues, particularly low skills? How does training fit into this vision?
 - How do we cater for those that are 'hard to reach' particularly those where English isn't their first language?
 - What support is there for those that are in long term unemployment?
 - Consideration of the financial effect on low income families
 - Impact of increased university fees on mature learners
 - What are the areas for potential growth in jobs?
4. Kerry informed the task group that most of the MACs have now closed; just two subcontracted ones are now in the final stages of delivery. Some of the activity provided by MACs has been replaced with work clubs of which there are currently 10 but there is a demand for more.
5. Mike explained that work experience/employability is the focus for the council. It was explained that first round of step up programme had 140 individuals

completing it and 13% of them did not go back onto benefits. A second phase is being developed.

6. There is a push to target private sector employers to provide training and increase those directly employed by them. Also the traineeship offer (42 places in LCC) is being promoted but is often not attractive to young people as its unpaid work.
7. Caroline reported the work of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and described the following:
 - LLEP is focussing on where there is growth in the economy and communicating this to young people so they can make an informed choice about what they study
 - There has been a gap as to what the MACs provided since they have been closed and there is a lack of support to get the most disadvantaged people back into employment. However, the EU Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) funding can be used to address that.
 - The ESIF will provide additional services to be commissioned at targeted groups and provide sector specific programmes to help people gain the skills that are being sought in the growth industries
 - People eligible for this currently have to claim benefits for this support but they are asking DWP whether this can be extended to non-benefit claimants.
 - LLEP are keen to have localised providers commissioned that have an understanding of local communities
 - The funding will run from 2014-2020 with the aim of having initial contracts for 3 years to be reviewed after that.
 - LLEP are also about to do a survey to see what skills, employment and training issues businesses feel need addressing
8. Cllr Riyait mentioned Liz Kendall MP's job fairs as a good example of something that has been successful but done with minimal effort and resource.
9. Councillor Fonseca asked how providers communicate with the public to inform them of the skills they are looking for. Caroline stated that this rarely happens and often their focus is only on finding suitable candidates and not

educating people and whilst the LLEP will try and influence the onus is on them.

10. A further issue can be that people go on courses that they want to do but not necessarily courses that lead to jobs. Kerry stated though that focussing contracts now on having outcomes for learners tries to alleviate some of that and ensure better results in getting people into employment.

The following actions were agreed:

1. A report on the previous recommendations to come back to the next task group meeting.
2. The task group receives information about the demography of the city, research on skills levels and where there are gaps in order to get a better understanding of the issues.
3. The Scrutiny Policy Officer to produce a draft scoping document to go to the next meeting of the commission.
4. The next task group meeting to take place on Wednesday 29th October at 5.30pm.

APPENDIX 3

Notes from task group meeting held on 29th October 2014:

Members in attendance:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Joshi

Officers present:

Caroline Boucher
Jerry Connolly
Kerry Gray
Mike Dalzell

Cllr Joshi declared as an interest that he worked in the voluntary sector.

Cllr Joshi declared as an interest that he worked in the voluntary sector.

1. Apologies

Cllr Ross Grant
Cllr Riyait
Andrew L Smith

2. **Minutes of the meeting on 11th September**

Agreed as a good record of the discussion

Members in attendance:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Joshi

Officers present:

Caroline Boucher
Jerry Connolly
Kerry Gray
Mike Dalzell

Note: 73% not 13% did not go back onto benefits.

3. **Scoping document**

- 3.1 OSC comments included requests from Cllr Osman information the effectiveness of DWP courses (and whether they led to employment). Domiciliary care conditions, and the related issue of child poverty, were also referenced by OSC members.

4. **Cover report – comments on information**

- 4.1 Data presented to the Task Group related principally to claimants at different times, comparing information for different age ranges and gender across

similar regional communities, mainly Nottingham and Derby; it also included city ward-based information about claimant numbers.

- 4.2 However members noted that the data did not directly reference employment and unemployment rates, and did not reveal the “churn” of claimants – those coming onto and leaving the register.

There was a lack of education and training provision and gaps across the city.

It was AGREED that further information and evidence should be obtained in these sectors.

- 4.3 Sources to be asked to provide evidence would include:

- Adam Suddaby
- Leicester College
- Chamber of Commerce
- Connexions
- Job Centre Plus
- Universities

Skills shortages

- 4.4 In looking at mapping skills gaps, the LLEP is starting a survey of 1,000 businesses. Survey work was going on through November and was regarded as a key piece of work looking at sector, business size and the type of skills that are in short supply.
- 4.5 There are sectoral projections for growth over the next 10 years, and it was now known that the average age in some industries (eg engineering, logistics, construction) was over 50 and skills shortages was described as “a ticking time bomb”.

Transition for school to the world of work

- 4.6 The Task Group identified as a key issue the tracking of youngsters moving from school to work/training. Connexions helped tracking up to the age of 18 and the council had a better record than nationally in having information on this cohort. Adam Suddaby also had significant data on youngsters going through transition from school.
- 4.7 However there was a significant gap in knowledge in the 18-24 age range and the Task Group regarded provision of this date as a key issue for the city.

It was AGREED that Job Centre Plus be invited to provide evidence on their tracking movement of claimants when they have left the JSA register, as well as other data on skills demands and labour shortages.

- 4.8 Programmes which might help youngsters (and others) out of unemployment included:
- Talent Match
 - Troubled Families programme
 - Step Up
- 4.9 The latter programme involved cross-department working by the council (LASALS and economic development. It was pointed out that 1100 cases had been handled through the troubled families programme over time. Unemployment and lack of work skills were often part of a wider set of issues for households within this category.
- 4.10 Other issues identified by the Task Group included economic activity within the city. Average economic activity was 72.6% against a national average of 77.5%. The performance gap was even greater when employment rates are measured – 62.5% against 72%.
- 4.11 Within this data it was clear that the rate of employment among women was also significantly lower than national rates and was an identifiable issue. (It had also been an issue which the previous employment measures review had identified and expressed concern about). Cllr Waddington commented that ..in similar profile cities there are better women employment rates but the barriers to employment were similar.
- 4.12 The discussion on women's employment considered whether there were employment opportunities in setting up and running nursery provision. It was reported that KCA had won a contract to provide set-up support and was looking to co-ordinate activity across the city.
- 4.13 Members asked how it would be possible to bring employers and potential staff together. It was felt the council might have a support role – but that the main responsibility should be with employers and there had been a number of jobs fairs.
- 4.14 The apprentice hub however had provided a focus for information for companies and students. The training sector was fragmented with a wide range of providers offering advice which had the effect of marketing their own services. There were examples provided of inappropriate training – for example a trainee building services manager being offered a customer services training course.

- 4.15 City Deal, and the provision of apprenticeships through city council programmes, was considered to be a significant factor in supporting the sector within the city, however.
- 4.16 Low pay was also an issue, and there was a request for data relating to in-work benefits. Members acknowledged there are also low-skill jobs; one comment was that children with low achievement can get into work...for example into the care sector.
- 4.17 Cllr Cassidy there was a need to try to move from low-skills low-pay economy to a more of a mixed economy. Kerry Gray said that increasingly LASALS was concentrating on vocational skills development (alongside English and maths).
- 4.18 Looking ahead, the Task Group was advised that mapping of skills provision was still a problem. It was suggested Leicester College could provide information and evidence on this topic.

5. Departmental responses to the previous Employment creation scrutiny review

- 5.1 The chair commented that there had been some progress in some areas – but less in others.
- 5.2 Some Performance Indicators on the economic plan had been updated – but they concentrated on what the city council was able to do or influence directly. Progress in a number of these areas has been good.
- 5.3 Members would be looking at new PIs relating to areas of work where the council had less control and will be looking to produce softer PIs. Re recommendation 6, Cllr Waddington said: We've said the city mayor needs employment indicator from 19-24 year olds. The existing tracking omits 18-24s.
- 5.5 Mike Dalzell said in respect of Recommendation 7 that Talent Match provided funding for working with and engaging with younger NEETS but we were not able to track older people.
- 5.6 On Recommendation 8 – women's employment - Members commented that there did not appear to be as much work as hoped in this area. Kerry Gray commented that LASALS didn't package courses as being for women but 72% of those on courses were female.
- 5.7 Members asked what the outcomes were in terms of employment following the courses. Cllr Joshi asked if there were particular reasons why women were not going into employment.

- 1. Info on two European programmes

2. City Deal
3. Business survey - interviews in November: probably not available before January
4. Employability skills/ sectoral growth information
5. Leicester College information and view on provision gaps would be helpful

6. Summary of future actions

6.1 Key themes identified at the meeting included:

- The lack of tracking data for 18-24 year olds
- Continued low employment levels within the city, including low employment rates of women
- Lack of employment/unemployment data at local (ward) level
- A lack of education and training provision and gaps across the city.

6.2 It was AGREED that Job Centre Plus be invited to provide evidence on their tracking of the movement of claimants when they have left the JSA register, as well as other data on skills demands and labour shortages.

6.3 It was AGREED further witnesses be asked to provide evidence, including

- Adam Suddaby
- Leicester College
- Connexions
- Universities

6.4 Further information to be requested, among other things, on:

- The Troubled Families Initiative
- LLEP data and surveys
- Transition data
- Relevant ONSA and other statistical data

APPENDIX 4

Notes from task group meeting held on 17th November 2014

Members in attendance:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Joshi

Officers present:

Caroline Boucher
Jerry Connolly
Kerry Gray
Mike Dalzell

Tim George (Department of Work and Pensions)

Ian Wilson; Jane Avery

Business advisers – CASE-da.

Cllr Joshi declared as an interest that he worked in the voluntary sector.

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Riyait

2. **Minutes of the meeting on 29th October 2014**

Agreed

3. **LLEP business survey**

3.1 Caroline Boucher updated the Task Group on the start of the LLEP survey of 1,000 businesses in the city. Consultants had been appointed to undertake the work. Trials had been undertaken on 50 firms and the questionnaire tweaked on the basis of the early trials. It was hoped to report the results to the Task Group in January.

4. **European Structural Funding streams**

4.1 Two detailed papers from LLEP formed the basis of evidence to the Task Group. They related to:

- European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF Thematic Objective 8 - supporting people into employment); and
- European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF Thematic Objective 9 – promoting social inclusion).

- 4.2 Each paper referred to the commissioning frameworks for bidding for funding through these programmes. The Objective 8 funding programme was £42m, with ESF funding of £22m, which had to be match-funded. The Objective 9 total programme value was £22m, with the ESF providing £11m.
- 4.3 Evidence stressed that the LLEP was consulting with a large number of partners within the city and the wider economic area. The European Commission will sign off the ESIF operational plan in March 2015. No bids can be looked for until the plan is signed off. June seemed the most likely time when the procurement process would start.
- 4.4 The outcome payments model being considered would require evidence that of working with community organisations and delivery at and through local level.
- 4.5 The model might also recognise that some smaller less well-resourced organisations could not afford to bid for projects which only saw payments being made at the end of the contract. However, a number of models were under consideration.
- 4.6 It was suggested there was a disconnect between companies within the city and working at local level and prime contractors. However it was suggested one major prime contractor was looking to win the main contract then work with smaller groups – but they didn't know how to make the necessary local contacts.
- 4.7 Mapping of local provision was due to start in December 2014.
- 4.8 The city council could be a partner in delivering the operational plan and could also act as a prime contractor. Members **recommended at this point that:**
- 1). The City Council bids for ESIF Objective 8 and 9 funding, either by itself or with appropriate local partners, with the object of being a prime contractor.
 - 2). It is ensured that anyone who bids has a local presence.
 - 3). Bidders should have local connections and have a record of providing local services
 - 4). This might include working in consortia to deliver services and projects through a network of local providers
 - 5). Procurement should include a fair balance of funding between prime contractors and sub-prime contractors to ensure the agency actually delivering the service

- 6). A mechanism should be in place which enabled major contractors and local suppliers (prime and sub-prime contractors) to be in better touch with each other
- 7). A short summary of ESIF programme objectives should be prepared, along with the means of accessing them, and the city council, ward meetings and other agencies be made aware of the programmes.

5. LASALS

- 5.1 A detailed analysis of applicants for adult education places was presented on a ward-by ward basis, and on ethnicity and gender. The largest single ethnic group enrolling for courses was white British.
- 5.2 However the bulk of this cohort came from outside the city – and it made up almost two-thirds of out-of-city enrolments. The biggest other ethnic groups were Indian and African.
- 5.3 Almost three-quarters of all enrolments last year were from women. It was not clear why so many women (or few men) had enrolled; one possible factor was a desire to access ESOL courses to improve basic English communications skills. However ESOL graduates could go onto other courses such as those developing computer skills.
- 5.4 The take-up varied from ward to ward and it was not clear why there was such a variation across the city. Courses were promoted equally, but take-up was different across different communities.
- 5.5 Within the city the greatest numbers of enrolments came within the Spinney Hills Ward, followed by Stoneygate. Spinney Hill enrolments totalled around 1250, more than twice the Stoneygate figure.
- 5.6 Thurncourt and Western Park wards showed less than 200 registrations. Aylestone had around 200 registrations, while Eyres Monsell, Freeman and Evington wards had around 250 enrolments.
- 5.7 In Spinney Hills and Stoneygate wards the gender profile reflected the wider city profile of around 3:1 female to male applications. Westcotes Ward diverged most significantly from this pattern; even here, however, around 60% of applicants were female. In Charnwood around 90% of enrolments were female.

Draft Recommendation

Adult education across the city should be tracked to establish a map of provision and an understanding of who does and doesn't access adult education courses. This would include access Skills Funding Agency (SFA) figures for learning across the city.

6. School to work transition issues

- 6.1 Adam Suddaby presented a paper highlighting key factors which are causing problems for youngsters getting into employment. The paper supplemented a paper, which formed part of the evidence and which was presented to the 13-19 Partnership Board in October 2014⁸.
- 6.2 Local (and national) issues included:
- Loss of manufacturing jobs
 - Greater competition from older and more experienced workers
 - A hollowed-out employment structure
- 6.3 Unemployment among young people, while reducing, is still too high. It was around 16.5% for 18-24 year olds in early 2014, against 6.8% for 16-64 year olds. Unemployment among young people was significantly higher than in other European economies (while unemployment for older people was broadly comparable across a range of economies).
- 6.4 However, under-employment is also a significant new factor, with many young people unable to get better than poorly-paid service sector jobs for years on end ("fragile jobs, many with zero hours contracts"). This is reducing their capacity for many years to advance economically.
- 6.5 Data showed that around 45% of 16-24 year-olds were in elementary or sales/customer service occupations. The hollowed-out nature of employment demand has seen a collapse in the ability of young people to obtain management positions.
- 6.6 Employers complain that young people lack the right attitudes and personal qualities and work experience. However, evidence suggested employers were not creative in encouraging employment of young people through a failure to:
- Provision of apprenticeships

⁸ Helping Leicester Young People to be better prepared for employment: developing stronger links between schools and colleges and local employers.

- Show willingness to employ and support the progression of young people.
- 6.7 Members of the Task Group noted the decline within schools and colleges of programmes which helped prepare youngsters for the world of work, including the ending of careers guidance programmes and the reduction of work placements. Schools curricula were also becoming more academic.
- 6.8 The Government cut the funding for careers guidance. However it was felt employers should do more to support or develop replacement programmes, if possible in partnership with schools and other agencies.
- 6.9 Members praised the “joined-up” and strategic nature of the papers, and the way in which they brought together a range of issues and the roles of partners within and across the city.
- 6.10 They were advised, however, of a growing schism within the city relating specifically to way in which young people in schools were supported by their parents.
- 6.11 In communities which were made up of Asian families, there tended to be a high level of support, including providing private tutoring, for children, with an expectation that they would proceed to higher and further education.
- 6.12 By contrast, in parts of the south and west of the city there was no pressure or expectation on youngsters to go on to further education or training.

Draft recommendations

- 8 Create a Youth Charter for Leicester to address the issues set out above
- 9 Encourage employers to make closer connections with schools – supporting the priorities identified by the Schools Strategic Partnership
- 10 Use the apprenticeship Hub to address the issue of reduced links between employers and schools and colleges
- 11 In particular, policies should be devised to address the threat of a growing social division within the city as set out in Appendix 4 paragraphs 6.10-6.12.

7 CONNEXIONS

- 7.1 The Task Group received the most recent (October 2014) data prepared by Connexions for the 16-19 year old cohort. Headline data showed that the numbers of NEETs (not in employment, education or training) was falling.
- 7.2 The report ranked wards by NEET; Freeman, Castle, Eyres Monsell and Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields all had NEET rates of more than 10%. The NEET rate for those without a fixed address was 56%.
- 7.3 The Task Group was advised of NEET rates among a range of vulnerable groups. In particular they were concerned about the high rate among looked after children. Thirty-three out of 123 looked after children in the Year 12-14 range were NEET. There was also a high correlation between youngster with learning difficulties and their being known to the Youth Offending Service.
- 7.4 Members also noted with concern that:
- There were increasing rates of NEET as youngsters went further away from full-time education
 - Tracking of 16-19 years by Connexions was excellent, but there was a serious gap in the ability to track young people between the ages of 19 and 24.

Recommendations

- 13). The Task Group wishes to refer the issue to the Corporate Parenting Board as a serious issue to be addressed by the council.
- 14). Resources be found from a range of agencies to bridge the tracking gap set out in Par 7.4 above.

8 CASE-da

- 8.1 Case helps set up social enterprises and co-ops, and works with various agencies within the city council. It works with hard-to reach groups and helps organisations work with hard-to-reach groups, including youngsters. These groups help keep youngsters off the statistics being discussed at the meeting.
- 8.2 It cited where one group working with disadvantaged youngsters (on a metal-bashing project) got paid £50 per placement on the Work Programme while the prime provider was paid £1500.
- 8.3 There was a need for a proper division of reward for groups in the city (as suggested by recommendation 5 above. There also had to be a requirement for people on such schemes to be paid a living wage.

8.4 It was suggested that clients needed to be “clever with the payment model” to ensure a proper reward for local groups providing front-end services.

9 JOB CENTRE PLUS (JCP)

9.1 JCP is working with clients on weekly, if not daily, structured programmes to bring them to the jobs market. Youngsters are placed on the Work Programme after nine months, and sometimes sooner. All ex-offenders go straight onto the Work Programme.

9.2 Programmes are tailored for different needs, and there are programmes for 50+, 60+ and possibly 65+ clients.

10 Summary of future actions

10.1 Further information on city-based programmes including:

- Apprenticeship Hub
- Talent Match
- Step Up
- Troubled Families Programme

APPENDIX 5

Notes from task group meeting held on 28th January 2015

1. Present

Cllr Sue Waddington (chair); Cllr Ted Cassidy

Andrew L Smith; Mike Dalzell; Jerry Connolly

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Ross Grant (who withdrew from the Task Group)

Cllr Rashmikant Joshi

Cllr Luis Fonseca

Cllr Vijay Riyait

3. Notes from the meeting of 17th November 2014

- 3.1 These were previously circulated and were agreed to be correct subject to the deletion of Par 4.6 whose matter had been dealt with elsewhere in the report.

FURTHER ISSUES

- 3.2 It was reported that CASE had won a contract to help build links and consortia in the voluntary sector to deliver ESF Theme 9 (social inclusion) programmes. The Skills Funding Agency was pressing the LLEP to define procurement policies for the delivery of Theme 9 projects at local level; it was also asking for similar policies for the delivery of Theme 8 and 10 programmes.
- 3.3 It was **agreed** that the commission writes to CASE to ask for information about how it is setting about this project, including how consortia would be put together and in which fields.
- 3.4 It was also **agreed** that the City Council should be a prime contractor within this sector. There were considerable funds available to deliver these programmes (£11m from the ESIF and £9m from the Big Lottery).
- 3.5 The proposal from the previous meeting, that the council should seek prime contractor status in the delivery of the ESF 9 agenda programmes, was reinforced by the chair.
- 3.6 The council had an ambition to extend the services it offered in terms of delivering apprenticeships across the city and the county (see 5.1-5.6 below). However it was reported that the National Apprenticeship Service had been

significantly cut.⁹ The NAS web site had been taken down, the task group was told. The council was struggling to get data from the Skills Funding Agency about the take up of apprenticeships for residents within the city.

- 3.7 In respect of LASALS it was noted that there was little information about demand for courses. LASALS only recorded details of their own students. There was only a patchy picture about demand and supply of course across the city.

Potential recommendation

That course providers co-ordinate and co-operate so as to get a more comprehensive picture of the demand for and provision of adult learning courses across the city.

Provision should take into account community needs across the city, including low employment of women and high concentrations of NEETs.

4. LLEP company survey – verbal update

- 4.1 Jerry reported that Caroline Boucher said the LLEP survey of 1,000 firms in the city and county had been completed, but that the data analysis was still being undertaken.
- 4.2 Cllr Waddington requested a copy of the survey when it was available.

5. City-based programmes - update

- 5.1 Further information on city-based programmes including:
- Apprenticeship Hub
 - Talent Match
 - Step Up
 - Troubled Families Programme

APPRENTICESHIP HUB

- 5.2 Mike Dalzell reported on the work of the Apprenticeship Hub. There had been a series of successful promotion events aimed at bringing employers and potential trainees together.

⁹ “Just months after the Government pledged to expand the number of on-the-job training places, it emerged that the number of staff tasked with driving the programme was being reduced by 47 per cent.” [Daily Telegraph: 11th July 2014.](#)

- 5.3 It was hoped to expand the apprenticeship hub, and provide a service, reflecting the LLEP area, across the city and the county. The council itself promoted in-house apprenticeships, including building apprenticeships within the housing department.
- 5.4 Members congratulated the department on facilitating the events. They said it was a demonstrable example of direct help to trainees (of all ages within the city).
- 5.5 Members were concerned that there should be good quality control over the standards of training by employers, and considered that a training charter (for employers and apprentices) should be established to set, benchmark and maintain training standards¹⁰.
- 5.6 MD noted that the role of apprenticeship co-ordinator within LCC, had been diluted somewhat in that the post holder was now responsible for a wider programme of work with less of a specific focus on the apprenticeship agenda. Members were concerned by this, and also felt the numbers of providers signed up to the apprenticeship hub training provider charter should be wider.

Draft recommendations:

- (a) Apprenticeship promotion is a significant issue which needed to be championed through clear leadership at a corporate level. This should be re-established by the council
- (b) The council should develop and implement a Charter to set out what is expected of providers and apprentices, and which can be used to ensure high standards of training by the providers.

STEP-UP PROJECT

- 5.7 The first phase of the project started in November 2012 and supported 145 young people. It showed “markedly” better results (in terms of numbers returning to the unemployment register) than the Government’s WORK programme.
- 5.8 A second phase started in early 2014 and required a 25% employer contribution towards salary costs. Placements in Talent Match target wards

¹⁰ Nottingham City Council has developed an [Apprenticeship Hub Provider Charter](#) which “aims to identify the actions and activities that the Hub and its partner providers will deliver to ensure that a high quality, coordinated support service is made available to city residents who are interested in progressing onto an Apprenticeship”.

can be extended by three months. Fifty-one individuals had been employed and a further 65 were to be signed up by the end of 2015.

- 5.9 Progress was slower than in the first phase, partly due to the employer contribution requirement and partly to reduced numbers of youngsters on the unemployed register.
- 5.10 Members commented that it might also have been possible that the first phase of the project had helped the most accessible of the cohort and that youngsters now might be further away from the jobs market and harder to place (including being more expensive to make job-ready).
- 5.11 The report to members commented that:

“Youth unemployment has significantly reduced over the past year. At December 2013 there were 835 young people unemployed for more than 6 months.

“One year later by December 2014 the figure had reduced to just 305 - a reduction of very nearly two thirds.

“This is very good news but the obvious implications is that those still eligible are likely to be individuals with multiple barriers and requiring more support.”

TALENT MATCH

- 5.12 This is funded by the Prince's Trust in a five-year programme aimed at young people in Leicester and Coalville who have been unemployed for more than a year and hidden NEETs who do not feature in official unemployment figures.
- 5.13 The council is one of the delivery partners and aims to place 46 people from the target wards in paid work placements. The programme has been built into the Step Up project and has supported 19 individuals to date; the target figure was expected to be achieved by December 2015.
- 5.14 There was concern about the cost and effectiveness of the engagement process and it was agreed to write to Talent Match to get examples of good practice and an assessment of the effectiveness of the engagement process.

THINK FAMILY

- 5.15 This is a rebranding of the government's Troubled Families programme; it looks outside the narrow range of working with young people, putting training, education and employment issues into a wider social context.

- 5.16 To be accepted onto the programme families need to meet two out of three nationally prescribed criteria of crime, education & worklessness. The families accepted on the programme have triggered for the following reasons: Crime (47%), Education (85%) and Worklessness (91%).
- 5.17 The report noted that improved data exchange between partner agencies has allowed the programme to identify families who may not ordinarily request support; data also identifies families who have a history of non-engagement with services.
- 5.18 The THINK family programme was supported by two Department of Work and Pensions staff. This had had two effects. It had:
- raised the profile of the worklessness issue (within family groups confronted by a range of problems); and
 - helped improve relations between the DWP and city council.

Potential recommendation

Members welcome the programme's approach of looking at individuals and family groups across a range of issues and problems. This approach, helping a broad range of people with a broad range of issues, could with advantage be extended to other programmes with the city council and council partners.

6 Other issues: Leicestershire County Council

- 6.1 Members asked whether the County Council had withdrawn from economic development programmes. Officers said that the county considered the LLEP the main vehicle driving economic development issues.

APPENDIX 6

RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Progress against previous recommendations October 2014

Economic Development Scrutiny Recommendation	
<p>1. We would like as a Commission to work with the Mayor's office to develop appropriate, challenging but also realistic Performance Indicators for the Economic Action Plan.</p>	<p>Note the final EAP Performance Indicators are based on things LCC can largely achieve and are being tracked and reported including in the City Mayor's delivery plan. Some wider measures of economic performance will also be tracked and the potential data set to be used for this purpose is being reviewed at the moment, though these don't equate to hard targets for LCC activity. They are intended instead to be a measure of overall city progress.</p>
<p>2. <i>Other partners, including the private sector, FE colleges, and agencies such as Connexions should also be consulted on the development of credible and realistic performance indicators.</i></p>	<p><i>Much work has been done over past year with Connexions and FE colleges, especially in relation to targets and strategies regarding apprentices, traineeships, careers advice and tackling NEET.</i></p>
<p>3. <i>There should be an annual report to the Commission to assess the effectiveness of the Mayor's Economic Action Plan, and to monitor the Performance Indicators within the Plan.</i></p>	<p><i>This meeting is one of series of progress reports against the EAP. These have been organised for different stakeholder groups such as the wider business community, elected members, this commission etc.</i></p>
<p>4. The Commission welcomes the high priority given to worklessness and NEET levels within Leicester</p>	<p>Noted. The Leicester to Work programme specifically targets youth unemployment and a multi-agency working party has been supported to drive strategy to tackle NEET. Since the launch of the Economic Action Plan, Youth unemployment has significantly reduced. At Nov 2012, there</p>

<p>5. <i>In exploring the problems faced by young people who are not in employment, education and training it is important to recognise that the numbers increase in the older age groups. A service is required that tracks and supports young people from the ages of 16 to 24. It is suggested that successful European models are examined, which are more effective than those used in the UK, in that far smaller numbers of young people drop out of the support systems.</i></p>	<p>were 3410 young people aged 18-24 claiming job seekers allowance. This now stands at 1715 at September 2014, a just over 50% reduction.</p> <p><i>The ‘Connexions’ service is now established as an ‘in-house’ service of the city council. The service is tracking all young people in Leicester aged 13 – 19 years and up to 25 for those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. A more detailed review of activity and strategy to tackle NEET could be brought to a future scrutiny commission meeting by Connexions.</i></p> <p><i>In 2013-14 LASALS supported 303 unemployed people into work; 62 people into voluntary work and 336 into further or higher education. 2862 qualifications were achieved and 3610 people participated in non-accredited Community Learning.</i></p>
<p>6. It is recommended that the Mayor adopts a Performance Indicator which seeks to reduce the rate of NEET unemployment among 16-24 year olds by 2020. This objective has been agreed by every EU country except the UK. The City Mayor is urged to ask all three City MPs to lobby the Government for the introduction of this PI as a national target and to lobby government directly himself.</p>	<p>Work referred to above has developed targets for NEET endorsed by the 13-19 Partnership to 2015/16. In 2014/15 the measure is 6.5% NEET Target and under 5.0% of unknowns.</p>
<p>7. <i>We believe that addressing the higher than average levels of economic inactivity and unemployment in Leicester among particular groups, and</i></p>	<p><i>Agreed. The Talent Match programme targeted ‘hidden NEETS’ and has been focused on the 4 wards with the highest NEET numbers in the city (Braunstone / New Parks / Beaumont Leys / Spinney</i></p>

<p><i>particular areas, such as wards with the highest level of NEETs should be a priority for action.</i></p>	<p><i>Hill). Via the City Deal process and the EU strategy we will be seeking to expand the resources / geographical area to include other high NEET wards. The Talent Match scheme has recently been agreed to be extended to cover the whole of Leicester, however the concentration of activity will still be focused on those wards with highest level of deprivation. Statistics for the take up of our Step Up programmes show that young people in the most disadvantaged wards are the primary beneficiaries.</i></p>
<p>8. We would strongly support a strategy which addresses the problem of comparatively low employment levels among women, some older age groups, some minority groups, and the dramatically low levels of employment, in some areas of the city. (See special recommendations re women below).</p>	<p>Agreed. Business support programmes endorsed by the City Mayor include a focus on disadvantaged groups including women. For example a very successful programme targeting female entrepreneurs has been run in disadvantaged communities by Skills for Enterprise. TREC also operate a pre-start support programme for new arrival communities. These programmes are typically supported by ERDF resources.</p>
<p>9. <i>These groups and communities should receive additional support from locally based Leicester to Work Centres (the renamed MACs) to enable them to gain access to advice and guidance, training and education and employment services. The work of these Centres should be reviewed and renewed to make them fit for this purpose.</i></p>	<p><i>The commission is aware of the organisational review carried out by LASALS that impacts on this work area. A review of the strategy has prioritised support via 'work clubs' rather than via one to one advisors. The statistics are demonstrating that this is delivering positive results and that we are ahead of target. 20/10/14 LASALS have appointed a Workclub Leader and an Employer Engagement Officer and currently have an established programme of 10 Workclubs across the city and will consider expanding this to meet demand if funds allow. LASALS are also working closely with Libraries, under the Transforming Neighbourhood Services project, to</i></p>

<p>10. A Leicester Skills and Qualifications policy should be developed which includes a comprehensive set of actions to address skills shortages and low levels of qualifications across all sectors and age groups. This should be a long term commitment by the City Council. It is recommended that the Mayor establishes a high level task group to define a skills and qualifications policy which would feed into the proposed skills network. The Task Group should be made up of relevant Executive members and external partners with specialist knowledge. The Task Group should report within 12 months of being established.</p>	<p><i>expand drop-in access to the internet for job-search outside of the Workclub time slots.</i></p> <p>Encouragingly the overall gaps between qualifications held by Leicester residents and others are narrowing.</p> <p>Substantial work to define and analyse skills gaps and to propose responses has been led by the LLEP and it has been felt unnecessary to create a further independent city group at this time.</p> <p>City representatives are ensuring that issues of skills shortages etc are being properly prioritised within key strategies such as the City Deal, the EU funding strategy and the LLEP growth strategy.</p>
<p>11. <i>Coordination of activities across the city to improve training and employment opportunities should include a strategic decision to link the many diverse elements within the Council to deliver the EAP. This would include much closer cooperation between education, further education and training, adult education and economic development programmes and teams.</i></p>	<p><i>The corporate group established to deliver the Leicester to Work programme is delivering much better co-ordination. For example there is now close working between economic regeneration and adults i.r.o. 'Troubled Families' and between economic regeneration and children's i.r.o. apprenticeship work and NEET strategy.</i></p>
<p>12. The Council has a valuable role in sponsoring and promoting apprenticeships. It is recommended that this</p>	<p>The Leicester to Work programme has committed substantial resource to expand apprenticeships. At present Leicester City</p>

<p>programme is expanded as resources allow.</p>	<p>Council has supported 489 apprentices either within the city council or by working with external agencies and businesses to create apprenticeships.</p>
<p>13. <i>The Council can seek to build training and development requirements into its own contracts as part of a wider and separate review of its procurement practices.</i></p>	<p><i>Considerable progress made on this. A new ‘Constructing Leicester’ policy and programme is under way which builds training and development requirements into construction projects and this is being led by economic regeneration.</i></p>
<p>14. The Commission notes that two elements of “employability” of school leavers (and indeed university graduates) do not relate to formal qualifications at all.</p> <p>These relate to the “soft” skills of communications and team working. The Council, private sector and other work providers should develop programmes which can be delivered in schools, FE, AE and HE to support the development of these “soft skills”, building on existing good practice being developed at Leicester University and within schools in the city.</p> <p>It is important that the private sector, which has highlighted the lack of these skills, should be much more proactive in identifying what is needed, and also help provide solutions.</p>	<p>Agreed. Some pilot programmes are being developed to tackle this that draw directly on private sector input and are being proposed as part of the City Deal. However it is proving problematic at the moment to fund such initiatives via the City Deal process. Negotiations continue with government officials on this aspect.</p>
<p>15. <i>The Mayor should seek powers to enable the City Council to determine and manage the „welfare to work“ programmes currently contracted by the</i></p>	<p><i>Agreed in principle. However many such contracts are currently in place and for larger geographical areas than the city which makes it very difficult to achieve the objective. Scope to revisit this when</i></p>

<p><i>Government to private providers in the City. These multi million pound projects would be more effective if managed by organisations with local accountability, a local stake and comprehensive responsibilities for the welfare of the City and its residents.</i></p>	<p><i>contracts are up will be kept under review.</i></p>
<p>16. The Mayor's EAP identifies transport development as an issue. One of the barriers to work is the high cost of transport especially for those seeking low paid employment. The Mayor should therefore seek greater powers to direct the bus operators, along the lines of the Transport for London model.</p>	<p>The City Mayor strongly agrees and has been pressing for this.</p>
<p>17. <i>The Commission welcomes the partnership approach proposed in the Mayor's EAP. Time and again, the evidence presented to the Commission has called for greater co-operation between stakeholders and leadership from the Council in this area.</i></p>	<p><i>Agreed – good partnership work has been developed for the apprenticeship and NEET strategies, alongside the engagement with the LLEP and its' many stakeholders. This approach is also being developed with businesses in priority areas. For example via the independent retail area improvement work and with creative businesses via the Cultural Quarter Business Association etc.</i></p>
<p>18. The Partnership, and other groups and agencies working with the city council, should set targets and objectives which aim to provide further opportunities for all young unemployed people out of education and training (NEETs), and other vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>As noted above this is a focus of the Leicester to Work programme and the forthcoming City Deal.</p>

<p>19. <i>Partnership arrangements established by the Mayor should be subject to regular scrutiny to assess their achievements against objectives.</i></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>
<p>2 Women in employment (Chapter 6)</p> <p>The following recommendations were proposed by 2010 Sheffield Hallam University report and are supported by the Commission:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need for more locally based and well informed careers advice which builds on existing and successful services in Leicester. Advice and guidance should seek to raise employment aspirations where relevant, and not simply push people towards any job. 2. <i>Careers advice needs to consider the dynamics of the labour market in Leicester. This needs to be balanced alongside individual preferences and aspirations.</i> 3. Work placement programmes (which engage with a range of employers) and ILMs offer mutual benefits to individuals and organisations, and should be considered as a means of addressing ...lack of experience. 	<p>Agreed and noted – though the reduction in resource / transfer of responsibility to schools for IAG advice will likely resulting in a mixed picture. This is an area where the withdrawal of resource made available from the previous government (i.e. the working neighbourhoods fund) has greatly limited our ability to progress</p> <p><i>Work to analyse skills needs and job growth areas has been completed in the last year. We now have a detailed picture of the local labour market.</i></p> <p>Such an approach is central to the Leicester to Work programme and is being delivered via Step Up. We have also revisited the Step-up programme and are piloting linking Step-up to the traineeship programme. That will enable individuals with lower skills levels to gain a full level qualification. Individuals are offered 6 weeks of un-paid work</p>

<p>4. <i>There is a clear preference for job search support to be administered locally, perhaps through the MACs in a more formalised way and, where possible, on a one-to-one basis. This should also include identifying and/or collating work opportunities compatible with childcare responsibilities.</i></p> <p>5. The success and popularity of existing service provision mentioned above (e.g. MACs, <i>Nextstep</i>) suggests that any further interventions and changes to employment support for women should draw upon the existing knowledge, experience and expertise of those organisations.</p> <p>6. <i>As many of the research participants were keen to enter employment in the childcare sector there may be potential to provide cost efficient childcare services by drawing on the skills and labour of workless women qualified in this area. This could also provide valuable work experience at the same time as increasing the level of provision and going some way to reducing the cost.</i></p> <p>There is a need to provide information on the welfare</p>	<p>placement moving onto a guaranteed interview for a 6 month paid work placement via Step Up</p> <p><i>See comment above at para 9</i></p> <p>Agreed</p> <p><i>In practise it is extremely difficult to finance any new childcare provision without dedicated resources and a sustainable business plan therefore it hasn't been possible to progress this.</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities to negotiate work experience placements etc in the care sector are being pursued via Step Up. There are currently 5 placements as part of Phase 1 of Step Up. In 2013-14. LASALS trained 315 people to work in Early Years Education and as Support Workers in Schools.</i></p> <p>The city council is investing dedicated research officer time to investigate the</p>
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<p>reforms introduced by the coalition government and to inform women of their benefit rights and entitlements. This should pay attention to the complexities of eligibility and the interplay with household circumstances, which dictate eligibility to certain benefits.</p>	<p>impact of welfare reform. That information can be used to inform future information and advice strategy.</p>
<p>7. <i>There is a need for engagement with employers, in terms of addressing discrimination in the workplace and during recruitment. This engagement is crucial as a means of raising awareness and cultural sensitivity to the religious and cultural needs of many women in Leicester, and also in helping to tackle age discrimination.</i></p>	<p><i>Such work is on-going via the Step Up programme which is engaging many employers. It is being assisted by a more 'business-facing' economic regeneration service and is helped when there is scope for 'leverage' e.g. when we are awarding grant support to SMEs via 'Enterprising Leicester' grants or financially incentivising apprenticeship take up via Leicester to Work.</i></p>
<p>8. There is a need for more accessible English courses, mainly for "older" Asian women and new migrants. The benefits of such provision extend far beyond access to employment.</p>	<p>Though national government has regularly changed ESOL funding criteria and reduced resource, programmes are still available to these client groups and details of provision and take up can be provided via the Head of Adult Skills and Learning Services. The LASALS ESOL programme includes a significant amount of locally provided courses, particularly at Spinney Hill Primary School, Abbey Primary School, Belgrave NC, St Mathews NC and the Highfields Centre. In 2013-14 of the 1713 enrolments on LASALS ESOL courses, 89% were women and 51% were Asian women. 6% of the female, Asian learners were aged 60+.</p>
<p>3 Recommendations re changes in the Connexions provision (Chapter 7)</p> <p>The Commission welcomed</p>	<p>It is suggested these issues should be the</p>

<p>evidence from Connexions. It helped highlight key issues facing NEET youngsters. But it also offers a structure and framework for the City Council and other agencies to work together to provide a wrap-around service for agencies across the city.</p> <p>The Commission notes the sharp reduction (£2.4m to £750,000) available for the service currently provided by Connexions. This contract is currently being retendered and is an issue which has yet to be resolved by the City Mayor and Executive.</p> <p>1. <i>The Council will have to demonstrate that if direct funding is being cut in this way that it is directing other resources to providing the range of services and data-tracking being provided by Connexions.</i></p> <p>2. The effectiveness of school-commissioned careers information, advice and guidance should be put under review. The Mayor may wish to review the current arrangements, the new arrangements, their respective costs and outcomes.</p>	<p>subject of a separate report and discussion with the commission.</p> <p>Data tracking is still part of the Connexions remit. The main change has been the change from a universal service to a targeted service supporting vulnerable young people.</p> <p><i>The Connexions service is being commissioned by schools and colleges in the city and some in the county to deliver independent and impartial careers guidance. The current traded activity is £180,000 for direct work with young people. Some schools have recruited their own careers guidance workers.</i></p>
<p>4 Leicester College</p> <p>We recommend that the City Mayor discusses the issues</p>	<p>The city council has stepped forward to take a co-ordinating role in respect of</p>

<p>highlighted by Leicester College as part of the Council's leadership and co-ordination role across the city. (Section 8.2), including in particular the College's role as an Apprentice Training Agency (ATA)</p>	<p>work both to promote and develop apprentices and to tackle NEET. Both were clear priorities in the EAP and Leicester College has been heavily involved in this work.</p> <p>LASALS works closely with Leicester College and other providers to plan provision and avoid duplication, particularly around employability, English, maths & ESOL and Community Learning programmes.</p>
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