

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2012

**'Building Engagement, Building Futures: 16-24 year olds in Education Training and Work'****1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for the Committee on the Government's strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work ('*Building Engagement, Building Futures*'), including developments in 14-19 vocational education, and to highlight some of the implications and considerations for the Local Authority in responding to the strategy. Attached is a briefing paper which highlights the key strands of the strategy.

**2.0 North Yorkshire context**

The following data reflects the levels of youth unemployment, in North Yorkshire as at February 2012;

- 462 young people between the ages of 16 and 18 were not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- The education, employment or training status of an additional 546 young people was 'unknown'.
- Over 3,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 were claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).
- 6.5 % of 18 – 24 year olds in North Yorkshire are claiming JSA compared to 3.6 % of over 25 years.

**3.0 Implications and considerations for the LA**

- 3.1 The strategy is explicit in the importance that it attaches to locally led action and the coordination of services at a local level to deliver for young people. LAs are challenged to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and embrace new opportunities and responsibilities to provide targeted, personalised support to young people who are NEET or at risk of doing so. Importantly the strategy is for 16-24 year olds, and includes but extends beyond our work on raising participation up to 18.

- 3.2 Key issues for the LA are:

**Identification and tracking:**

- The LA's ability to track participation (CCIS, NEET reports etc) is now much more complex as roles and responsibilities have changed and we will need to ensure information systems for tracking young people are robust
- More work on identification of vulnerable young people within schools using the Risk of NEET indicator model (RONI)
- Pre 16 tracking is good and with PRS and Collaboratives is hugely supported. There is scope for a stronger coordination of partners post 16

## **Bespoke Support**

- Important to review the support processes for young people with different forms of vulnerability that often lead to non participation – to ensure support is effective and joined up
- Equally, given the connections between young people’s education, employment, housing, transport, finance health and care and family context and the impact of all these on participation, means that a holistic approach to tackling issues is critical

## **Programmes and provision**

- There is an ongoing need to review young people’s needs, match them with available curriculum offer whether accredited or non accredited; FT or PT and/or work with providers to develop bespoke provision.
- There is a risk that the range of options available to young people 14-16 is more limited, particularly that fewer recognised vocational options will be available and that it will lead to greater disengagement pre 16.
- Much of the above will rely on the LA influencing and coordinating the wide range of providers in the market - particularly non school providers (including work based and voluntary providers)
- Changes to careers education and guidance may also impact on the availability of high quality, impartial advice to young people on options available to them

## **Employers and Employability**

- Links with employers will be a key factor for the LA (as it is for national policy). This means reviewing our working with employers (LEP), and NAS for Apprenticeships plus Job Centre Plus for the post 18 transition.
- Apprenticeships are a major element of the approach 16-24 and much work has been undertaken recently to coordinate and join up activities around apprenticeships in the LA.

## **Supporting 18-24 year olds**

- As mentioned identified above, the strategy covers support for 18-24 year olds. Further consideration is required across the LA on what role the LA sees for itself and the priority it places on this part of the strategy, particularly in terms of a coordinating and bringing coherence to the work of partners

## **4.0 Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the report and briefing and to comment on the issues raised.

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Background Papers: None  
Annexes: One

## **'Building Engagement, Building Futures: 16-24 year olds in Education Training and Work' – Briefing Paper**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update on the Government's strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work (*'Building Engagement, Building Futures'*).

### **2.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

- 2.1 *'Building Engagement, Building Futures'*, published jointly in December 2011 by the Departments for Education, Business, Innovation and Skills and Work and Pensions, seeks to address the needs of the of the 1.16 million 16-24 year olds who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), with the aim of helping every young person develop the skills, qualifications and experience they need to succeed in their careers as well as make a positive contribution to society and the economy. The strategy includes reforms already proposed for changes to vocational education, skills and welfare provision.
- 2.2 The strategy looks to the key role of LAs as both service providers and strategic partners. Usefully, the strategy is explicit in emphasising the importance of locally led action and co-ordination of services. It recognises that neither 'top down' nor 'one size fits all' solutions will work.

### **3.0 KEY POINTS OF THE STRATEGY**

- 3.1 There are two key themes:
- Supporting the most vulnerable (in NEET terms) from an early age to get targeted support and skills training
  - Providing new opportunities and provision (e.g. apprenticeships) via support for employers, the Youth Contract, plus a wide range of schemes, whilst at the same time ensuring work is seen as an attractive option

It proposes to:

- Achieve full participation in education and training for 16-17 year olds
- Reverse the trend for rising youth unemployment
- Tackle the long term consequences of young people being NEET

The report identifies 5 key strategic priorities:

- Raising attainment in schools
- Helping local partners provide effective and co-ordinated services
- Incentivising employers to offer apprenticeships
- Ensuring 'work pays'
- Implementing the new Youth Contract (£1billion over the next 3 years)

### **3.2 Early Intervention and Attainment at 16:**

The key point stressed here is that the single most important factor in improving young people's participation post 16 is by driving up their attainment at age 16.

To do this there may need to be interventions from early in life and during school years together with additional support for those with severe learning difficulties and / or disabilities. These include early starts for some at two years old and extending through Sure Start centres, into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with the phonics programmes and additional support for slow readers.

Also mentioned is the general support for families through the work of Parent Support Advisers, plus new measures to support 120,000 'Troubled Families' and the Family Nurse Partnership's work with vulnerable first time teenage mothers. Specifically the report discusses the developing use of *Risk of NEET Indicators*, and how this tool can be used to identify more targeted interventions in Years 9,10 and 11.

In addition, the report restates the changes initiated in 'The Importance of Teaching' (Schools White Paper: November 2010) covering 'flexibilities' offered to Academies, etc; reform to the curriculum emanating from the 'Wolf Report – Review of Vocational Education'; improving behaviour and attendance; targeted support for disadvantaged pupils and the new guidance arrangements. Some play is made of the importance of the Key Stage 4 Destination Measure starting (partially) in 2012.

### 3.3 Full Participation of 16-17 Year Olds

There is little new information here; the headlines are:-

**RPA** - to be reinforced by the legislation, but enforcement delayed for the time being. Consultation is currently underway about the proposed regulations.

**Apprenticeships** - more money (£833m) and more places with target of 240,000 places for 16-18 year olds by March 2013. Improvements include new incentive payments for small employers and reduced bureaucracy. A condition of funding for training providers will be 'to support all learners' without A\*-C in Maths and English

**Work related learning** – in line with the outcomes of the 'Wolf Report' recommendations, the Government has consulted on removing the statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 with work related learning. Schools will be free to determine whether and how work related learning and work experience for young people at Key Stage 4 is provided. The increasing emphasis is that work experience is of greatest value as part of the post 16 curriculum.

**School Performance Tables** - In future, only qualifications which are deemed to be high quality, rigorous and provide access to a range of study and employment opportunities will be recognised in school and college performance tables for 14-16 year olds, which may have an impact on the range of vocational options available to this age group.

**New 16-19 Programmes of study** – again on the back of the 'Wolf Report' the Government has consulted on proposals 'to ensure that all 16-19 year olds study coherent, well thought out programmes which offer them breadth and depth and do not limit their options for future study or work'. The focus is on good vocational programmes, English and maths, progression and work experience.

**Supporting Local Authorities to deliver their statutory and strategic responsibilities** – the report envisages that, 'LAs will be at the heart of delivering RPA', with the following responsibilities:-

- To develop, with their partners, 'robust and timely' arrangements with partners for tracking participation and identifying those at risk of disengaging;
- To provide bespoke support (using the Early Intervention Grant) for particularly disadvantaged young people;
- To ensure that all 16 / 17 year olds are offered a suitable place to continue their education or training (through the September Guarantee);
- To address young people's health needs, particularly those associated with lifestyle choices, (as per the new Health and Social Care Bill responsibilities);
- To identify and address gaps in provision with local providers and the YPLA

- To act as a strategic lead, bringing together all the agencies and organisations working with disengaged or vulnerable young people in the area.
- To undertake learning difficulty assessments

**Addressing Financial Barriers** – gives details of the new bursary scheme, ‘Care to Learn’ for teenage parents and Voluntary and Community Sector grants

**Support for vulnerable 16—17 year olds within the Youth Contract** - there will be £150m extra funding for this group of young people (those with a history of poor achievement, truancy and exclusion). Delivery will be by providers in the private, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, working closely with LAs.

### 3.4 **Helping 18-24 year olds engage in education and training**

Having the right skills is fundamental to getting, and staying in, work. This requires a strong, rich offer of further learning from the age of 18. Commitments to support this ambition include:-

- Launching the National Careers Service in 2012
- Reforming the Apprenticeship programme, including the promotion of higher level apprenticeships
- Fully funding 18-24 year olds to get a first Level 2 or 3 qualification

### 3.5 **Supporting 18-24 year olds into employment**

**The Youth Contract:** support via this scheme includes an offer of work experience plus extra support from Jobcentre Plus and in some cases wage incentives of £2,275 to employers. Eligibility is 3 months plus on Jobseekers Allowance. In total the scheme should cover up to 410,000 18-24 year olds over the next 3 years. (NB there are ‘penalties’ for those who ‘fail to engage positively’ in the Youth Contract which include ‘Mandatory Work Activity’ and loss of benefits).

Other measures to help young people into work include:-

- Help for those ready to work via Universal Credits and ‘Get Britain Working’ measures
- Support for long term unemployed via the Work Programme
- Help for the disabled and those with complex needs via the ‘Work Choice Programme’ and ‘Access to Work’

### 3.6 **Support for inactive and vulnerable 18-24 year olds**

This is targeted support, ‘where appropriate’, for the 371,000 young people not available for work because they are lone parents, disabled people, young carers, young offenders, care leavers and those with health problems. Great store is again set on the role of the community and voluntary sector to provide the necessary additional support. The report highlights the sector’s role in the European Social Fund NEET fund; the Prince’s Trust co-location at Jobcentres and the development of public service ‘mutuals’ to develop innovative services.