

**CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on 15 October 2018.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Lewis, (Chair), Arundale, Brady, Branson, Davison, Dean, Goodchild and Uddin

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Anthony, Kelly, Nimra (representatives from Youth Employment Initiative)

**OFFICERS:** T Frank, J Jamison, C Kemp, K Mackintosh, J Richards, B Smith and S Lightwing

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillor S Biswas.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point in the meeting.

**18/14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

**18/15 COMMUNITY LEARNING- EMPLOYABILITY**

The Panel at their meeting on 10 September 2018 had requested further information in relation to the Community Learning projects which assist individuals gain skills and employment.

These projects were:

- Youth Employment Initiative
- Routes to Work
- Adult Education Budget

**Youth Employment Initiative**

The Chair firstly welcome Terry Frank, Coordinator of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to the meeting. Terry was accompanied by a learning advisor, James and three participants who had gone through the YEI project.

The panel were provided with some background information on YEI, they were advised that YEI was created by the European Commission in 2013, which was to target regions with a high youth unemployment rate. The initiative in the Tees Valley is called, Tees Valley Pathways programme, and is part funded by the European Social Fund and supported under the Youth Employment Initiative.

The aim of Tees Valley Pathways was to support young people across the Tees Valley aged 15 to 29 years, who are unemployed and/ or not in education, employment or training (NEET). The initial programme was due to run until 31 July 2018, however the programme had been so successful that additional funding became available and the application to extend the programme until 31 July 2022 was approved.

The panel were advised that Hartlepool Borough Council were the Lead Accountable Body, with Middlesbrough being one of 22 partner providers. Any changes to the programme must be approved by Hartlepool Borough Council and changes or commitment to funding must be approved by the Contract officer.

T Frank further outlined that YEI was due to commence in October 2015, however due to a slight delay, it started in January 2016, with contractual arrangements completed in June 2016.

The aim of Tees Valley Pathways was to offer personalised education, employment and enterprise opportunities alongside innovative activities and bespoke support. The panel were made aware that the area of delivery revolve around four outcomes:

1. *Participants completing a supported intervention -*
2. *Participants receiving an offer of employment, education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving*
3. *Participants in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment upon leaving*
4. *Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, apprenticeship, traineeship, employment or self employment six months after leaving.*

It was commented that bullet points 3 and 4 were critical to the programme and provided evidence of outcomes.

The programme itself was very much outcome based, which received a lot of scrutiny, having 24 measures, audit and contract reviews and heavy paperwork based to show outcomes, e.g. if a participant gained employment for more than 6 months, if no evidence was received from the employer, they cannot count this as an outcome.

The panel were advised that the Tees Valley Pathways project for Middlesbrough was called Choosing Pathways.

The programme provided the following:

- financial support - e.g with childcare, travel, clothes and equipment and incentives
- 6 months additional tracking and support following programme exit
- Motivational approach with high expectations
- aims to transform thinking and behaviour - take control, responsibility and ownership of consequences
- 3 week interactive 'Choices' programme, with 6 sessions around self awareness, attitudes, responsibility, motivation and confidence.
- Flexible, individualised induction and individual learning plan
- wrap around support from a learning advisor
- Employability and personal development
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The programme had a 'can do' approach rather than 'can't do'. Currently there were 5 members of staff with one vacancy.

Members queried the success rate of the programme, of which the officer presented a key outputs and outcomes table. In terms of participants, as of September 2018, there were 477 participants of the programme, the target for 31 July 2022 was 830 and in terms of 6 month sustainment of employment, participants were 142 ( as of September 2018) and overall target

for 31 July 2022 was 332. It was commented that the Choosing Pathways project was more positive than the Tees Valley average. Satisfaction questionnaires completed by the young people have shown positive comments, including for example:

*'Great help from advisors made me feel comfortable'  
'the whole programme helped me improve my mindset'*

To gain first hand evidence of the programme, the panel heard from a number of young people during the meeting who provided first hand experience of the programme. Their advisor James was also in attendance to offer support.

The panel heard from three young people; Kelly, Nimra and Anthony. Some of the comments received were as follows:

*Kelly- " I left school at 16, I am now 21. I went college and then worked for 2 years, but I had to leave that job because it was very difficult, as it was not a nice place to work. I wasn't working for about 6 months, then got another job for 4/5 months and then I found Choosing Pathways. YEI has made such a difference for me, i wrote a CV and James has really helped me. We talked about what i want to do and he has made me realise I can do what I want to do"*

*James- When we first met Nimra, she was the most timid, quiet and lovely natured young woman we had ever met, but she was so quiet. In our first one-to-one, which lasted about an hour, Nimra spoke about a dozen words. We worked on different skills and Nimra went and completed the National Citizenship Service. Three weeks later, this little person came bouncing through the door full of confidence and skills to move forward with. I am very proud of Nirma and what she has achieved, as she is now an apprentice within Democratic Services in the Council"*

*Nirma- "You helped me gain a lot of confidence and I am so pleased I did the programme"*

*Anthony- " I was working in merchandising before Christmas, but I was laid off and I got in a bad way. The programme boosted my confidence as I lacked motivation, but I am now waiting for a start date for a job"*

The panel were very impressed with the young people and thanked them for their input.

The panel finally heard about some of the challenges faced towards Choosing Pathways:

- Job Centre Plus- claimant characteristics/ type/ numbers - The contract value is heavily weighted towards unemployed participants (JSA claimants). However these numbers are low and form a small proportion of benefit claimants with the greater number being ESA claimants and these are classed as inactive not unemployed. Also as numbers reduce those left are increasingly harder to help.
- Number of providers (initially 27) - these offer diversity but also means providers are competing for Job Centre Plus clients.
- Young people on zero hour contracts - currently classed as working and as such ineligible for support through YEI. It will be interesting to see whether the introduction of Universal Credit has any impact on this.
- Sustainable employment - this is the real challenge as many opportunities for young people are part time / temporary or zero hours contracts.
- Exclusion of those already 'on the system'- The timescale for the programme was now over 6 years in total. This means that any young person signed up to the programme (any of the providers) when 16/17/18 and perhaps not ready to fully engage would not be eligible to rejoin at a later date when they are more ready to engage (say when 20/21). We have already come across a small number of such cases and this may increase as we go forward.

A number of the members queried how young people would seek a qualification if this was required for a job.

James, the learning advisor outlined that in the first few weeks, each participant will complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which will identify any training needs for qualifications. This may be able to be delivered through Middlesbrough Community Learning (English and Maths and ESOL) or if not we contact providers such as the STEM centre at Middlesbrough College who provide us with courses/ dates and times. It was discussed that there was no direct contact for course delivery within the College, however it may be beneficial to see if there was contact officer who YEI officers could go to direct.

### **Routes to Work**

The Chair introduced Joanne Richards, Coordinator of the Routes to Work scheme and Barbara Smith to provide the panel with an overview of the scheme.

Joanne advised that Routes to work was a pilot scheme was introduced in October 2017, it was a £6m DWP matched by £1.5 million from the combined Authority. The three year pilot scheme was to support the 'hardest to help' to move back into, or towards work, by providing joined up services, centred around the individual.

The scheme was aimed at individuals aged 30 years and over and those either in :

- over 2 years unemployed, or
- who had significant/multiple barriers who are unlikely to find work in the next 12 months, e.g. ex-offenders; disability; BME/ESOL needed; SEND; drug/alcohol dependencies, or
- who have had a claim for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) rejected, or
- were on the ESA Support Group (have a significant health issue but may be able to work with assistance), or
- were not in work but are disengaged from the benefit system.

The panel learnt that the key elements of the scheme were to support the 'hardest to help' to move back into, to towards work, by providing joined up services, centred around the individual by doing the following:

- Creation of multi-agency teams;
- Use of Key Workers' who can provide holistic support around the individual on the Pilot and into work;
- Targeted use of advocacy/ brokerage with employers;
- Ongoing in-work support (for the individual/employer) for up to 12 months.

The Pilot should also:

- be fully integrated with other existing services offered by a range of partners;
- cross refer to other programmes and aim to fill any gaps in existing provision, using flexible funding.

The panel were advised of the objectives of the scheme, these being:

- To use the progressive approach to help those furthest from the labour market move more closely towards work
- Engage with long -term unemployed , breaking down barriers and looking at holistic needs
- Identify gaps in provision already out there
- To increase skills and improve health and wellbeing
- Support those furthest removed from the labour market

The Tees Valley Local Authority had set a target to get 273 people engaged on the Routes to work scheme, actual numbers were 108. This target was for year two (April 2018-March 2019). The panel were made aware that there was a high demand for participants on the scheme, however at present there were issues were staffing which were preventing the scheme taking on more participants. Despite this, 4.5 staff had recently been recruited and officers were confident that once in post the target would be met.

The panel learnt that the TVA had set a target of 247 for 'making a positive outcome', officers explained that this could be seen as going on a training course, referring an individual to housing or debt advise , or establishing a CV.

In terms of getting individuals into work, TVA year two target was set at 13, and the scheme has already got 9 into work already. This demonstrated the significant work undertook by staff. It was essential to recruit the right people as key workers, who were able to understand the needs of an individual.

Referrals to the scheme could come from a whole host of partners, including, self-referral, Job centre, job coaches, local authority and any service or voluntary service (MVDA/ MIND). A member of the panel questioned how businesses approach a worker who had been an ex offender. In response, the officers outlined that it was down to the business and some were willing to provide opportunities, for example, businesses in Yarm. The scheme was also unique in that it can provide funding to help businesses pay half their wages for a couple of weeks, or buy the individual bus fares/ new clothes in order for them to carry out work.

Another panel member further queried whether they had been an ex-service referred to the scheme. The officers outlined that they had not received any referrals, but with new staff being employed, they were hopeful that more links would be developed. The panel saw merit in including the Routes to work contact within the Armed Forces Directory and also passing on details to the transition service.

*Learners Journey-* The officer advised the panel that when individuals join the scheme, they are assigned a key worker and from there an individual plan is developed. This will address and identify skills they have, training requirements and identify what sort of support/job they require. The key worker will also spend time discussing the barriers with the individual which has preventing them getting into work, this could be a whole host of things, including substance misuse, ex offender and parental/ carer issues. Individuals have regular contact with their key worker, where advice is provided. If the individual were assigned to a course, the key worker will make contact during the course to monitor progress.

Once the key worker feels the individual is work ready, we will offer them the right support, for example, providing them with the correct IT skills to apply for jobs online, setting up an email address, help with job applications, developing a CV and giving advice on interview techniques. Once in work, as outlined above, the scheme offers incentives for employees to help support individuals in work.

Quite often volunteering opened up opportunities for work and this was seen as an ideal route for those who had been out of work for a long time.

Lastly, the intended outcomes and intended impacts were discussed:

Intended outcomes were as follows:

- Improved confidence, independence, aspirations and motivation
- Client more socially included
- New opportunities
- Volunteering
- Work experience
- No. of clients in paid work
- Increased income/financial security

Intended impacts:

- Improved mental and physical health
- Less isolation
- Less reliance on benefits
- Reduction in crime
- community cohesion
- new industry- meeting new employers
- Increased productivity of the town
- Clients leading more fulfilled lives

Barbara provided two impact stories to the panel, who have not managed to secure jobs but having engaged with the scheme. One story related to trainers and the other relating to teeth..

Trainers" We were approached by a man who was really down and really depressed, he had been on drugs, binge drinking and hadn't worked for years. He referred himself to the project. They don't have to come, they are not forced. He didn't turn up to the next appointment so I gave him a call and sent him an email. Then he got in touch and he came back. A few weeks later he was binge drinking again. Then got back in touch. After completing a report with him, I started saying even if you don't want to come, still come. You don't have to get dressed in your best clothes. So he started coming all the time. I referred him to MIND and I went along with him. They absolutely loved him. He has gone on to one of their programmes. If he does another one he can go to a Team Leader and he can volunteer with them. Massive difference in him. He said I love running and my bicycle got stolen. He had a face full of spots as well and his confidence was low. I assured him it was just me and to keep calm. *We got him an appointment for the Doctors. He got his spots sorted. We had the luxury of buying him some trainers. Now goes running 3 times a week. On a bike maintenance course. At the end of the second day he gets the bike to keep. He hasn't lapsed now for about 5 months. He is really positive and looking forward to life".*

Teeth: *We had a guy who came to us who had very low confidence. Smoked and drank heavily. He had been out of work for 5 years. We noticed that h only had about had 4 teeth but he complained that he used to suffer with pains in his stomach. We got him a doctors appointment and found out he had acid reflux. The doctor prescribed tablets and his stomach is now fine. Then I said about a dentist and he began to cry. He was terrified of going, so I look him along. After a series of appointments, he now has a full set of teeth and is loads more confidence. He would now look for a volunteer role and eventually look for work.*

### **Adult Education Budget - Adult Skills**

Lastly the Chair welcome Karen McIntosh to provide an overview of the assistance the Adult Education Budget helps with getting individuals into work. Karen advised that there were two key aims to the AEB; Community Learning and Adult Skills. The presentation would be focusing on Adult skills.

Karen outlined that the AEB was targeted at people aged 19 years plus. The purpose of community learning was to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:

- progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
- improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or develop stronger communities

The panel learnt that the AEB was currently in devolution transition between the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Tees Valley Joint Authority (TVCA). The officer advised that the budget would be transferred to the TVCA in 2019 however they anticipated that there would be a phased transition and they were expected to continue as they current do until 2020.

The purpose of AEB aimed to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to

equip them for work, an apprenticeship or other learning. It enabled more flexible tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which may or may not require a qualification, to help eligible learners engage in learning, build confidence, and/or enhance their wellbeing (ESFA funding rules 2018/19).

Karen explained to the panel that the Adult Education budget (Skills) funds an agreed list of eligible qualifications that move participants to a positive destination, work, further education or apprenticeships and there were two types of funding:

**Legal entitlement:**

- English and Maths for those who have not previously achieved a GCSE Grade A\*-C or grade 4 or higher
- First full level 2 qualifications (19-23 year olds)
- First full level 3 qualifications (19-23 year olds)
- Learners earning less than £15,736.50
- In addition to the above list a new entitlement for digital ICT training will come in force in the 2020.

**Local Flexibility:**

Flexible tailored provision for adults, including qualifications and components of these and/or non-regulated learning, up to level 2. Depending on their circumstances, funding may be available to fund the course.

As discussed in the last meeting, members were reminded that the Common Spectrum Framework changed to delivering skills, and in turn the TVCA was focussed on outcomes, linking to how courses can help individuals seek employment, with the purpose of ensuring individuals could gain a level of English which they could survive within a work setting.

In terms of Middlesbrough Skills budget , it was broken down as follows:

- English and Maths (29%)
- ESOL (58%)
- Work Readiness assessment (5%)
- Night school (3%)
- Supporting schools (2%)- in delivering courses identified by the school e.g basic maths

The officer advised the panel that they have excellent partnership working especially with the job centre who will refer individuals as necessary. Routes to work would also refer individuals if there was a specific training need.

**Learning journey- Focus on moving learning closer to employment**

The panel learnt of the learners journey :

1. They firstly have an initial assessment ; in terms of ESOL the centre would assess their level of English and what they require. Some individuals have no literacy, whilst others are educated to degree level.
2. Secondly, learners go on a 2 week assessment, where the tutor will assess the learners holistic needs in relation to their career aspirations. The tutor will have mixed ESOL groups to mix with native speakers, this helped with social cohesion and broke down barriers. The sessions were also centred around the local area, so that learners have pride in where they are from.
3. Programme of Study: all learners have access to a personal advisor, there were qualification and none qualification classes , which focus on employment and there were enriched activities. Intake on the courses was every 2 weeks , which was a request from the job centre. Low level classes had a session on employability every week.
4. Progression: there was a focus on moving learners closer into employment, be that either

employment, further education or volunteering. The centre had strong links with James Cook hospital, MVDA and street wardens.

The officer then provided a number of case studies of learners who have been through the courses:

*Jason- Gentleman in his mid 40s who had been unemployed for a while. Jason had low in confidence and his English was not very good, nor his CV. Jason wanted to volunteer at James Cook University Hospital. We supported him by paying his bus fares. Jason now is more confident and his change in attitude was so nice to see. Jason was now on the shortlist for prospects course.*

*Unsil. was a refugee. He used to work in telecommunications and had some work experience with BT. The tutors were very impressed with him and we supported his application to Teesside University. They have advised that they will guarantee him an interview when he has got his qualification.*

*In terms of outcomes, from Adult skills in 2017/18*

- 79.4% learners went into further Education
- 12.2% went into employment
- 0.5% went into voluntary Work
- 6.7% Other
- 91.5% Achievement

The officer finally read out some of the learners comments who had undertaken the courses:

“Normally I’d switch off but not in this class” “It’s not boring lots of activities”

“He (the teacher) builds my confidence and helps me understand things”

“I can go to the doctor’s now without an interpreter”

“It’s nice to go out with new friends and learn about Middlesbrough it makes me feel better”

“I want to come back to this class to get more help to learn”

The Community Learning Manager, advised that there was one further presentation, however it was agreed that this would be discussed at the November meeting.

After the presentations, the Chair thanked the officers and the young people for their contributions to the meeting.

**Agreed:**

1. **That the information presented at the meeting be considered in the context of the scrutiny panel's investigation.**
2. **That the 'Adult education budget- Community learning' presentation be discussed at the November meeting.**



The investigation outline for the current investigation into Community Education (linking to Employability), including the Terms of Reference, had been circulated with the agenda.

**AGREED** that the investigation outline for the review of Community Education (linking to Employability), including the Terms of Reference, was approved.

18/17

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE**

The Chair gave a verbal update on items discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 2 October 2018.

**NOTED**