

# THE ASSEMBLY

1 MARCH 2006

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY

<b>Title: Improving Employment Prospects Policy Commission</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>Final reports of Policy Commissions are submitted to relevant parts of the Political Structure as set out in paragraph 11 of Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>The Improving Employment Prospects Policy Commission (the Commission) was established in November 2004 to investigate ways in which to improve the employability of local people.</p> <p>The following areas were considered and the report has been subdivided accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The skills base in Barking and Dagenham</li><li>• Young people (14 -19 years old)</li><li>• Adult learners</li><li>• Barriers to employment</li><li>• The development of the local, existing and future workforce</li><li>• The leadership role of the Council on employment</li></ul> <p>Members were provided with an information pack and key documents to support the work of the Commission. A visit to a Beacon Council noted for its work in this area and the professional views of a number of expert witnesses have also contributed to the process.</p> <p>The work of the Commission has highlighted the need to strengthen the work currently being undertaken to develop local residents with relevant skills and qualifications to enable them to access future employment opportunities generated by the huge regeneration of the Borough, the wider Thames Gateway and the 2012 Olympics and Para Olympics.</p> <p>The Commission has made a number of recommendations covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tackling the low skills base</li><li>• the barriers to employment</li><li>• the development of the local and regional economy</li><li>• the development of the local existing and future workforce</li><li>• strengthening the leadership role of the Council on employment</li></ul> <p>An action plan will be drawn up by officers in the Regeneration Department to review/monitor implementation of the recommendations.</p> <p>This report asks the Assembly to consider the attached final report of the Commission.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected:</b> All Wards</p>	

**Implications:****Financial:**

The recommendations of the Policy Commission do have financial implications which at this stage are not quantifiable. An action plan will be drawn up which will contain the costs of the various recommendations. The actions will only be undertaken where existing Council resources exist or where additional external funding is obtained. One mechanism to enable these recommendations to be met will fall to the Economic Development and Enterprise block of the Local Area Agreements where pooling of a range of funding can be applied to community priorities.

It is noted that the Council has recently submitted a Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid which will support the development of:

- Increase total entrepreneurial activity
- Support the sustainable growth and reduce the failure rate of locally owned businesses
- Attract appropriate inward investment to the borough

**Legal:**

The use of monies generated for employment and skills support through Section 106 contributions will need to have legal clearance (Recommendation 16).

**Risk Management:**

The Lead Officer will monitor the action plan resulting from the recommendations and there will be an annual review meeting in 12 months.

**Social Inclusion and Diversity:**

The very nature of the Commission will have a direct impact on the Barking and Dagenham community who have traditionally been excluded from employment and training opportunities.

There are a number of recommendations to reduce the barriers to employment for the various groups.

**Crime and Disorder:**

There may be some impact on the reduction of crime as a result of tackling barriers to employment.

**Recommendation**

The Assembly is asked to agree the recommendations as set out in the final report.

**Reason**

Final reports of Policy Commissions are submitted to the Assembly for approval and adoption of the recommendations.

<b>Contact Officer:</b> Julie Willing	<b>Title:</b> Democratic Services Officer	<b>Contact Details:</b> Tel: 020 8227 2119 Fax: 020 8227 2171 E-mail: <a href="mailto:julie.willing@lbbd.gov.uk">julie.willing@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
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## Consultees

Head of Democratic Services and Director of Corporate Strategy

## Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Improving Employment Prospects Policy Commission draft final report
- Notes of the meeting Improving Employment Prospects Policy Commission held on 15.12.05