Title: Scoping the NEET Scrutiny Review

Report of the Commissioning Director for Education

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**Summary:**

The Children’s Services Select Committee (CSSC), at its last meeting on 12 July 2017, received an options report to support members with choosing an area for a ‘mini’ scrutiny review. The CSSC, having discussed the three different topic options, agreed to undertake a scrutiny review on how the Council could improve its performance around supporting young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).

As requested at that meeting, this report proposes a scope of the mini review, including the terms of reference and a work plan that outlines a time-line for the methodology, evidence sessions members will take part in, and the production of the end report with recommendations to improve outcomes and practice.

**Recommendation(s)**

The CSSC is recommended to review and agree the proposed terms of reference and work plan for the scrutiny review.

**Reason(s)**

It is best practice to produce a scoping report prior to commencing a scrutiny review so that members and officers can give direction to the review, consider what evidence will form the basis of recommendations and have a time-line for completion.

The topic of NEETs relates to the Council’s vision to grow the borough, and reducing NEETs is a key objective with the borough’s manifesto corporate workplan.
1. **Introduction and Background**

1.1 Every year, each of the Council’s select committees agrees a work programme which lists the areas it wishes to scrutinise in the current municipal year. As well as one-off agenda items, the work programme often includes a more in-depth investigation into a particular area of concern that is relevant to the committee’s remit, which usually involves members attending sessions outside of the standard evening meetings scheduled for the year. At its meeting on 12 July 2017, the CSSC agreed to undertake a scrutiny review on young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). As 2018 will be a local election year, fewer select committee meetings have been scheduled for the current municipal year than usual, and therefore this scrutiny review will be smaller in scope than an in-depth scrutiny review.

2. **Proposal and Issues**

2.1 At the July 2017 CSSC meeting, members reviewed the issues that would potentially be involved in a scrutiny review around NEET performance whilst being informed that there was an extensive work programme to accelerate NEET reduction already in place (see Cabinet Report, Appendix 1). In light of this, areas of potential enquiry could include:

- Hearing the views of pupils and parents around the Council’s current work experience and work-related learning offer and how this might be improved;
- Hearing the views of businesses around what the Council might do to enable them to provide more support around developing work-place skills in our young people;
- Hearing the views of pupils, parents and teachers around the public perceptions of apprenticeships and what the Council might do to further improve the image and take up of apprenticeships locally.

Officers propose that the CSSC’s engagement with the above groups will take place occurs in the sessions outlined in 4 below.

3. **Title and Terms of Reference**

Officers propose that the title of the Scrutiny Review be “Improving the employability prospects of Barking and Dagenham Young People” and that the following three key questions form the Terms of Reference for the scrutiny review:

1. What do young people and parents expect and want from an offer of work experience and work-related learning, and how do they see this best contributing to young people’s employability skills?
2. How can the Council better engage with businesses to enable them to support the development of employability skills in our young people?
3. What are the views of parents and young people around apprenticeships? How might we improve the perception and take up of Apprenticeships by borough residents?
## Proposed Work Plan

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<th>Date of CSSC session</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| 2 October 2017 (CSSC meeting) | Final scoping report agreed with supporting reference documents, followed by:  
  Presentation on the Council’s current work experience and work-related learning offer  
  Presentation on the Council’s current engagement with businesses around supporting young people’s employability  
  Presentation on apprenticeships, including borough performance | 1, 2 and 3 | To be presented by Erik Stein, Group Manager Integrated Youth Services. To be presented by Rosalind Hall, Head of Careers and HE. To be presented by Terry Regan, Group Manager for Employment and Skills. |
| 10th October 2017, 6-7pm | The views of young people around work experience, work related learning and apprenticeships.  
Meeting with a cross section of young people in Year 10 and above, including some undertaking apprenticeships, to discuss approaches to work experience, work related learning and the promotion of apprenticeships. | 1 and 3 | This needn’t involve all CSSC members. Attendance and input may be split across this and the following session. Meeting to take place at Vibe Youth Centre. |
| November 2017, date tbc | The views of parents around work experience, work related learning and apprenticeships.  
Meeting with a cross section of parents of secondary aged pupils, including some undertaking apprenticeships, to discuss approaches to work experience, work related learning and the promotion of apprenticeships. | 1 and 3 | This needn’t involve all CSSC members. Attendance and input may be split across this and the above session. |
27 November 2017 (CSSC meeting) | CSSC session with businesses.
An opportunity for all CSSC members to hear from local businesses around how the Council might better support them to develop employability and work-related learning skills in our young people.

22 January 2018 (CSSC meeting) | Draft Scrutiny Review report with recommendations

21 March 2018 (CSSC meeting) | Proposed final Scrutiny Review report with recommendations (relevant Cabinet members to be invited).

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The cost of undertaking this scrutiny review will need to be met from existing budgets.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Lucinda Bell, Education Lawyer

6.1 This report requests that the Committee reviews and agrees the terms of reference for the scrutiny review of how the Council could improve its support to NEETS. The appended Cabinet Report of July 2017 details the statutory duties imposed on Local Authorities to provide targeted support to vulnerable young people and those who are NEET. The Education Act 1996, as amended, imposes general duties to ensure the provision of suitable education for children in the area of the Local Authority, including special education provision.

Background Reading and List of appendices:

Members are recommended to familiarise themselves with the reading materials listed here which may be referred to throughout the preparation for the scrutiny report:

Appendix 1 ‘Accelerating NEET reduction, particularly in vulnerable groups’ (LBBBD Cabinet Report, 2017);
Appendix 2 ‘A Guide to Apprenticeships’ (National Apprenticeship Service, 2017);
Appendix 3 ‘A-Z of Apprenticeships’ (National Apprenticeship Service, 2017);