Title: Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People

Report of the Commissioning Director, Education (Scrutiny Champion for the Children’s Services Select Committee)

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**Accountable Director:** Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director, Education

**Accountable Strategic Director:** Anne Bristow, Strategic Director, Service Development and Integration

**Summary:**

The Children’s Services Select Committee (CSSC), has undertaken a scrutiny review of ‘Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People’. Appended to this report is the final scrutiny report, for members’ consideration.

Recommendations of the CSSC as an outcome of the scrutiny review are key to changes leading to improvements in the offer work-related learning, work experience and apprenticeships. The report contains the findings of the scrutiny review and recommendations, which members are asked to analyse and approve.

It should be noted that this is a mini-review due to the advent of local elections in 2018 and therefore a shorter timescale than usual within which to complete it.

**Recommendation(s)**

The CSSC is recommended to review the final scrutiny report and approve so that officers are able go ahead and implement the recommendations provided.

**Reason(s)**

The topic of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) relates to the Council’s vision to grow the Borough. Reducing NEETs is a key objective with the Borough’s manifesto corporate workplan. Improving the employability prospects of young people is key to reducing NEETs.
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 municipal year. As well as one-off agenda items, the work programme often includes a more-in depth investigation into an 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.

1.2 For 2017/18, having received an ‘options report’ providing information on the issues a scrutiny review would involve for three different areas, the CSSC agreed that NEETs would be the topic on which to undertake a scrutiny review, due to the Council’s focus on improving performance in this area.

1.3 Due to 2018 being an election year, it was noted that the review would be slightly smaller in scope that the usual Select Committee reviews, due to the reduced timeframe in which it could be completed.

2. **Proposal and Issues**

2.1 The key issues that arose as part of this review are in the body of the final scrutiny report at **Appendix A**. The CSSC were asked to consider a draft report on 22 January 2018 and discuss its findings and the potential recommendations put forward. CSSC were asked to note that officers will continue to work on the layout, wording and overall presentation of the report between that meeting and the publication of the final version of the report in March 2018.

3. **Title, Terms of Reference and Key issues explored in the report**

3.1 The title of the Scrutiny Review is “Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People” and 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?

3.2 The key issues explored in the report are:

- What is Barking and Dagenham’s performance on Participation?
- What is the Council already doing to improve Participation Performance?
- What is Barking and Dagenham’s Work-Related Learning Offer?
- What is the range and quality of apprenticeships on offer to Barking and Dagenham’s young people?
- What does research tell us about best practice in Work-Related Learning and Apprenticeships?
• What do young people, parents and businesses think about Barking and Dagenham’s offer of work-related learning, work experience and apprenticeships and how might they be improved?

4. Next steps

4.1 Should the final report be agreed, the decision maker will be asked to respond to the recommendations, develop an action plan to monitor the implementation of the recommendations, and it is anticipated to present progress on the action plan in approximately six months’ time.

5. Implications

5.1 Legal and financial implications have been sought in relation to the final scrutiny report, which will contain the recommendations made as a result of this scrutiny review.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Final scoping report for this scrutiny review, available at:

Children’s Services Select Committee on Monday, 2 October 2017

List of appendices:

Appendix A Final report of the CSCC, ‘Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People’