

**Report of the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and
Opportunities for Children & Young People**

Cabinet – 3 June 2014

**RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE
ECONOMIC INACTIVITY SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
LOOKING AT HOW THE COUNCIL & ITS PARTNERS COULD
REDUCE ECONOMIC INACTIVITY IN SWANSEA**

Purpose:	To outline the response of the Cabinet Members to the scrutiny recommendations and to present an action plan to address these.
Policy Framework:	None
Reason for Decision:	To comply with the requirements of the Council Constitution.
Consultation:	Legal Services, Financial Services
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Cabinet Members responses as outlined in the report and related action plan be agreed.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report of the Economic Inactivity Scrutiny Inquiry Panel was submitted to Cabinet on the 12 November 2013 after a detailed inquiry into how the Council and its partners could reduce economic inactivity in Swansea.
- 1.2 The response and whether Cabinet agree, or not agree, with each recommendation is detailed in this report. The report also highlights where in the context of a recommendation work is already taking place and the issues raised are being addressed.

2. Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

Recommendation 1
Takes steps to extend apprenticeship schemes beyond the traditional, to include office based and to encourage local employers.
Cabinet Member Response: This is already a CCS policy commitment established and augmented by the current administration .Work has already begun as part of the Council's Poverty Forum to work with others to set up a Swansea wide apprenticeship scheme. The Authority via the Lifelong Learning & Employment Training Service (LLETS) manages a large Apprenticeship and Traineeship programme funded by the Welsh Government. The South West Workways Project managed within the Economic Regeneration & Planning Division provides the support for unemployed and economically inactive people to acquire the skills and confidence to gain employment or engage in higher level training. Beyond Bricks & Mortar works with employers and contractors to provide jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities. This authority is already recognised as leading the way in developing both the skills and opportunities for apprenticeships in the region. Moving forward the intention is to integrate these three Council activities and introduce a programme of employment, education, enterprise and training opportunities for 18-24 year olds that includes an enhancement of the Council's current apprenticeship programme. Organisations on the Local Service Board will be asked to join this programme. The aim is to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities available in Swansea overall and to broaden the range of apprenticeships to include higher level posts (i.e.; legal, financial, planning etc.) and areas such as Business Administration. Social and domiciliary care. This would help to meet the needs of a greater number of people from a diversity of backgrounds.
Recommendation is already Council policy
Recommendation 2
Raises the following with the Department of Work and Pensions around employment services: a. Accessibility of employment opportunities for disabled people; b. Support and availability of services for the generational and long-term unemployed group; c. Issues raised by participants highlighted in this report.
Cabinet Member Response: As part of the Council's anti-poverty agenda we have established that DWP has several schemes to ensure that disabled people and long term unemployed are able to access employment opportunities, for example; - The UK Government's Work Programme lies at the heart of the UK

Government's welfare reform agenda. It provides a single platform for support to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA- formerly Incapacity Benefit) claimants who need additional help in securing employment.

- Work Choice is a DWP programme providing specialist employability, work entry and supported work opportunities to unemployed and economically inactive disabled people (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) with complex employment support needs.
- Access to Work scheme can help employers with some costs involved in making adjustments for disabled workers
- Disabled people enrolled in the New Enterprise Allowance scheme can now receive additional support through Access to Work to help pay for necessary specialised equipment, support workers and travel costs to get their business started.

The City & County of Swansea engages with the Department of Work & Pensions (and other partners) through a number of local fora – such as the Economic Equity Delivery Team, Universal Credit Task & Finish Group, Workways Employer Support Group – which provide opportunities to discuss strategic and operational issues relating to employability support in Swansea.

Recommendation **has been completed**

Recommendation 3

Investigates the possibility of incentives and increased support being offered to businesses in relation to recruitment and employment issues.

Cabinet Member Response:

This a clear Council priority and there are a number of schemes already in place to incentivise employment, for example:

- **JobCentre Plus Wage Incentive** - Available for 18-24 year olds that have been unemployed 6 months or more. The incentive is paid to the employer, although eligibility is based on the individual and paid at a rate of £1,137.50 for part time work (16-29 hrs) or £2,275.00 for full time (30 hrs or more).
- **JobCentre Plus Work Trials** - Available for up to 1 week (can be longer in exceptional circumstances). Individuals are able to claim travel costs to and from the place of work in addition to continued benefit.
- **JobCentre Plus New Enterprise Allowance (NEA)** – for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants aged 18 and over who want to start their own business. It gives participants access to a volunteer business mentor to provide guidance and support to develop their business plan and through the early months of trading. Following approval of business plan, the end of their benefit claim and start of trading, individuals can access a package of support worth up to £2,274 in weekly allowances and a loan.

- **ReAct II Redundancy scheme** - provides support that helps people gain new skills, overcome obstacles and improve their chances of returning to work in the shortest time possible following redundancy. The package is additional to, and offered in collaboration with, a wide range of support from the Welsh Government and their partner organisations such as Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus. There are three parts to the scheme: a vocational training grant for people who need to update their skills to return to work; extra support to help remove any barriers to vocational training; a wage subsidy and help with training costs for recruiting employers.
- **Employer Training Support** - a discretionary fund of up to £1,500 that may be available towards the cost of each new recruit's job related training.
- **WG Young Recruits Programme** – offering a wage subsidy of £3,900 (over 52 weeks) to businesses to take on additional apprentices aged 16-24 years.
- **WG Jobs Growth Wales** - Supports 16-24 year olds to gain work experience and secure employment by covering the participants wage costs for 26 weeks
- **Traineeships** - Available to individuals who are unfocussed or unsure of the career path they would like to take. Level 1 training provided for up to 1 year with the individual paid a minimum of £50 per week via the training provider.
- **Workways Temporary Job Opportunities** – available to eligible participants and employers. Employers receive a subsidy equal to the minimum wage for duration of the placement and participant's training and travel are paid, along with a contribution to childcare costs (if applicable).
- **GO Wales** – Up to £1000 funding for SMEs to offer a work placement for a graduate of up 10 weeks.
- **Skills for Industry** – offers subsidised, accredited training to meet the needs of employers in South West Wales.

Recommendation is **already Council policy**

Recommendation 4

Enters into discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions to develop a 'Single point of Entry', in relation to employment opportunities, so that all groups have equal access to available jobs/ training and apprenticeships.

Cabinet Member Response:

As I stated at the scrutiny panel the City & County of Swansea in conjunction with the Regional Learning Partnership is leading on a new initiative designed to highlight job and training opportunities as part of its strategy to reduce poverty in Swansea. The vision is to increase the number of job and training opportunities for young people and those wishing to return to work and to create an accessible single point of entry, detailing future opportunities and the skills and learning routes that will help individuals to achieve their goals. Awareness and contact with the initiative is being created via the e-portal "Inform Swansea,"

providing a one-stop shop-frontage for those opportunities created. Inform Swansea holds real time information on what is available and the route-ways for people to avail themselves of those opportunities. Discussions are underway and almost complete with Job Centre Plus (Department of Work & Pensions) and others in Swansea on linking with Inform Swansea.

Recommendation is **Council policy and is almost complete**

Recommendation 5

Works with schools to develop initiatives with young people who are considered to be at risk of becoming NEETs from an earlier age.

Cabinet Member Response:

The Children and Young People's Board along with the Local Service Board have started discussions around the expansion of the 16-18 NEETS agenda to include children and young people from a younger age and to include those beyond 18. This work is ongoing and is inclusive of school representatives that sit on the CYP Board.

Recommendation is **complete and an example of best practice**

Recommendation 6

Works to raise aspirations of young people in schools by encouraging the promotion of further and higher education at an earlier stage (e.g. in Primary School)

Cabinet Member Response:

We can work to support HE and FE institutions to raise the profile and ambition in our schools and as a result of it being raised in this report the relevant cabinet members will ensure that the item is discussed at a future Swansea Learning Partnership meeting. However, responsibility for this also lies with the HE and FE institutions themselves and is not a sole responsibility of the Council.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 7

Investigates the possibility of holding regular entrepreneurship events to encourage young people.

Cabinet Member Response:

As I stated in my detailed response at Scrutiny we are actively encouraging and promoting enterprise education among young people is currently being co-ordinated by the Building Enterprise Education in Swansea (BEES) Group. Reporting into the Swansea Economic Regeneration Partnership (SERP) Board, the BEES Group members (comprising local authority Members, staff and educational practitioners) have for a number of years contributed to the delivery of entrepreneurship initiatives (Young Business Dragons, Enterprise Troopers) and conferences (ELVIS, IEEC) in schools and colleges. In addition the local authority has in partnership with local HE institutions and businesses supported entrepreneurship weekends

which have been recognised on a global stage and have encouraged the formation of new start up businesses. In addition The local authority has funded two Enterprise Support Officers to increase interest and take up of enterprise education activity in schools and among young people, these Officers, based at Gower College Swansea, are regular contributors to the BEES Group agenda and meetings.

The BEES Group is already delivering on this recommendation.

Recommendation is **being delivered**

3. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 3.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening of the report has been undertaken which confirms that a full EIA screening is not required, as the report has a low direct impact on the general public. However, individual actions in the action plan may have a more significant direct impact on the public and it may be appropriate for them to undergo the EIA screening process during their development, to assess if they require a full EIA.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal implications at this stage.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Cabinet Action Plan – Scrutiny Inquiry of Economic Inactivity

Scrutiny Inquiry of Economic Inactivity– Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation	Action Taken / Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1. Takes steps to extend apprenticeship schemes beyond the traditional, to include office based and to encourage local employers.	<p>This is already a CCS policy commitment and work has begun in conjunction with the Council's Poverty Forum.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with Service areas/Departments, formalise and present proposals for additional apprenticeships and work experience 2. Engage with and present to LSB members on them joining the effort 3. Launch a Swansea wide scheme 	April – December 2014	Steve Marshall
2. Raises the following with the Department of Work and Pensions around employment services: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Accessibility of employment opportunities for disabled people; b. Support and availability of services for the generational and long-term unemployed group; c. Issues raised by participants highlighted in this report. 	Recommendation is agreed and the framework for raising those issues exists and the Council can use them to continue on-going engagement and discussions with DWP through the various working groups already identified and established.		
3. Investigates the possibility of incentives and increased support being offered to businesses in relation to recruitment and employment issues	Recommendation is agreed and it has also been established that a significant number of incentives currently exist for employers. The new programmes of European structural funds will also have this as a priority and regional projects under the new programmes will have the creation of employment as a key theme.		
4. Enters into discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions to develop a 'Single point of Entry', in relation to employment opportunities, so	As part of the Council's Poverty Forum we have developed the e-portal platform 'Inform Swansea as a front of house' client interface for promoting opportunities and will:	April – December 2014	Steve Marshall

	that all groups have equal access to available jobs/ training and apprenticeships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with Job Centre Plus via the Economic Equity Delivery Team (SERP) and the work of the Regional Learning Partnership (RLP) on joint use, 2. Determine what DWP initiatives are also being developed in this context 		
5.	Works with schools to develop initiatives with young people who are considered to be at risk of becoming NEETs from an earlier age.	Recommendation is agreed and discussions are already taking place via the Local Service Board and Children and Young People's Board that includes representatives from our schools		Cabinet member for Opportunities for Children and Young People
6.	Works to raise aspirations of young people in schools by encouraging the promotion of further and higher education at an earlier stage (e.g. in Primary School)	Recommendation is agreed although this is not the sole responsibility of the Council. Raise the matter at a future meeting of the Swansea Learning Partnership		Cabinet member for Opportunities for Children and Young People
7.	Investigates the possibility of holding regular entrepreneurship events to encourage young people.	Recommendation is agreed and work is already taking place and co-ordinated by the Building Enterprise Education in Swansea (BEES) Group. The Council has recently funded two Enterprise Support Officers to increase interest and take up of enterprise education activity in schools and among young people		