

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Review of Worklessness
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 8 June 2010
Cabinet Member: Councillor Fry
CMT Member: Director for Development and Regeneration
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Ref:
Part: I

Executive Summary:

The Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel discussed the issue of worklessness at two scrutiny meetings, namely 28 September 2009 and 7 December 2009 (G & P minutes 18 and 37). Several representatives from different organisations namely, Jobcentre Plus, Working Links, Plymouth Employment & Skills Board, Plymouth City Council and Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, attended the September meeting and provided the Panel with presentations upon the high levels of worklessness in Plymouth and the importance of tackling the issue of worklessness together.

Representatives from different organisations and sectors of the Council, namely Strategic Housing, Social Inclusion, Recruitment and the Shekinah Mission, similarly attended the December meeting and informed the panel that programmes were currently in place to tackle worklessness; however it was important for this to continue and for Plymouth City Council to take a lead.

The main points to address were -

(i) Tackling Worklessness was essential to the City meeting the objectives set out in the Local Economic Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy, Children & Young People's Plan as well as a range of other targets. Whilst it was recognised that worklessness impacted on many aspects of the Council and partnership's work e.g. health, learning, etc., ultimately it demanded a lead service area and could best be addressed from a Strategic Economic Development perspective.

(ii) The present framework with central and local government and the third sector was too complicated. The emerging consensus in national policy, endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny, was that, operationally, worklessness was best led by the Local Authority under the strategic direction of the Local Strategic Partnership.

(iii) The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be aware of the Skills and NEETs agenda. (16-19s Not in education, employment or training)

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board approved the following recommendations;

- (a) That the Department for Development and Regeneration take on the ownership and leadership of the worklessness agenda on behalf of the Council and that links across Plymouth City Council are accordingly established to a) ensure the council's role is clearly understood and b) that, from an Economic Development perspective, skills development aligns with the economic drivers of the city and key sectors.
- (b) That Plymouth City Council take on a strategic leadership role.
- (c) That Human Resources work with the Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration (Economic Development) and his team to develop a strategy for Plymouth City Council recruitment under the worklessness agenda and that the Corporate Management Team be requested to endorse this.
- (d) That Plymouth City Council review its recruitment policies to become an exemplar employing body, by providing greater employment/work opportunities for disengaged groups e.g. young people, care leavers, young offenders and the longer term unemployed.

Corporate Plan 2010-2013:

CIP 8 Improving skills and educational achievement
CIP 12 Delivering sustainable growth

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

N/a

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

N/a

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

The recommendations of the report are welcome as worklessness and economic inclusion are key strands identified within the Local Economic Strategy and will form a key part of Economic Development's work programme over the next 12 months.

The Economic Development Service will now seek to co-ordinate worklessness issues for the City Council. There is a great deal of good practice that already exists, including the £14m urban enterprise programme, but it became clear from the scrutiny process that there is a need to join up the City Council's approach. This will consist of ensuring consistent standards of service delivery, the development of a clear strategy, sharing of best practice and maximising resources.

The Economic Development Service has been successful in securing external funding for a Worklessness Co-ordinator and once appointed this person will facilitate an internal workshop with a view to developing a worklessness action plan. Once the City Council has an agreed strategy and implementation plan for worklessness this approach will be shared with partners through the Wealthy Theme Group

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

To do nothing or for PCC to not demonstrate a lead role will put economic growth at risk

Background papers:

Sign off:

Fin	DJN 101 1.00 2	Leg	JAR /10/ 148	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											

