

**Report to the City of  
Nottingham and  
Nottinghamshire Economic  
Prosperity Committee**

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**CAREERS PROVISION IN N2**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report is to update the Economic Prosperity Committee (EPC) on current careers provision and to make recommendations to ensure that all learners across N2 are able to receive good quality and well-informed careers advice and guidance.

**Background**

1. It is recognised at both a national and local level that careers, enterprise and employability skills are critical when shaping a young person's ability to successfully transition between school or college and the world of work. It is important for social mobility because it helps open pupils' eyes to careers they may not have considered.
2. Changes in technology and in the labour market mean that increasing numbers of jobs require specific education and training. This has produced new vocational options which, at present, are not well understood by many young people, parents or their teachers. Furthermore, the decision to go to university now means a major financial commitment, rather than being a safe default choice. Yet, despite its importance, career guidance in English schools has often been criticised for being inadequate and patchy and this was highlighted by the Gatsby Review of Good Careers Guidance.<sup>1</sup> This criticism has intensified since the withdrawal of the national Connexions service, removal of work experience as a statutory entitlement and transfer of responsibilities for careers to individual schools in 2010/11.
3. Reforms to the apprenticeship system are in part aimed at creating more vocational pathways for learners so that they can "earn while they learn" and so that young people gain skills that employers need. This expansion of vocational

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

routes up to degree-level are also creating new opportunities for post-16 learners and one of the key challenges is to stimulate apprenticeship uptake in the local economy.

4. The Government published a Post-16 Skills Plan in July 16, taking forward the recommendations of the Sainsbury Review of Technical Education. This highlighted that technical education remains the “poor relation of academic education” and outlined a range of reforms including simplifying the current system to arrest this. The former Skills Minister went on to publish a Post-16 skills plan that accepted the recommendations of this.<sup>2</sup> A further national Careers Guidance Strategy is expected to be published in autumn 2016 which will complement this.
5. Following the removal in 2010 of the statutory requirement of schools to provide careers advice, careers programmes within schools are now assessed by Ofsted under Leadership and Management. As a result schools have diverted varying levels of resources and leadership, and a range of new careers providers have come in to the marketplace.
6. Attached as appendix 1 is a careers provision map for N2. In summary this identifies that there is a comprehensive careers offer across the area though it is potentially confusing to navigate for employers and education providers. More information on some of the key issues that have been highlighted through the career provision mapping are outlined below.

#### *Learning from Career and Labour Market Information*

7. Education providers need to have up to date information on the key growth sectors across N2, enabling them to shape curriculum and ensure learners are gaining the skills that employers need now and in the future. Learners also need to know the potential career pathways they can pursue and the skills and experience they need to gain.
8. The D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Review Group for Skills and Employment is currently working with upper tier local authorities in the area to refresh its Skills for Growth Strategy; this will highlight projected growth sectors, high-employing job roles, and the skills that employers need now and in the future. Following on from this good quality labour market information should be promoted and made accessible to schools across N2.

#### *Educating young people about post-16 options*

9. It is also important to ensure that young people are aware of the options for post-16 education, training and employment. Government has made wide-ranging reforms and has committed to significant investment to create three million new apprenticeships by 2020. Apprenticeship uptake across N2 is higher than the national average, though it is predominantly at intermediate and advanced levels. Apprenticeships now offer new pathways through to higher education and will be

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/536043/Post-16\\_Skills\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536043/Post-16_Skills_Plan.pdf)

enshrined in legislation as having parity with Degrees. There may be a role to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to young people.

#### *Duplication of Provision*

10. Whilst the overall amount of funding supporting careers related delivery is significantly less than it was five years ago, there are a number of different initiatives operating across varying boundaries which create the potential for duplication. In addition to current provision, the Careers and Enterprise Company is rolling out new programmes including a recently announced national programme that will connect mentors to pre-GCSE teens at risk of disengaging and under-performing. Through European funding a new Careers Local initiative will also be seeking to engage with local education institutions. The Department for Education are also rolling out a programme to embed Job Centre advisers in schools, to offer 12 to 18 year old pupils insight in to the world of work.
11. There is a risk that multiple providers and projects, all fundamentally seeking to promote employability for young people, are unable to effectively engage with schools and learners. In addition, as new programmes come on board it is not always clear how they intend to integrate with existing provision. There may therefore be a role for a coordination group that brings together providers, schools, colleges and employers to stimulate ideas for how careers provision across the area and work more seamlessly.
12. Another area of potential duplication relates to employability toolkits which inform the strengths and weaknesses of schools' employability programmes. This has previously been highlighted as an issue and through a D2N2 working group a single toolkit for providers to work to across the area has now been agreed.

#### *Employer Engagement*

13. Many local employers, both larger and SMEs, are keen to engage with young people to promote aspiration and highlight what it is like to work in their organisation. This can help them address skills gaps and skills shortages over the medium-to-long term. Given that most careers programmes across the N2 area involve linking employers with schools, there is again a risk that employers are unclear about how to get involved or navigate this landscape. There may be a role for the N2 Skills and Employment Board, as our employer-led steering group, to identify mechanisms to simplify the way that careers providers engage with them.

#### *Inequity of provision*

14. While there is a comprehensive careers provision offer available, the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) Enterprise Advisor Network does not operate across all of N2. The Enterprise Advisor Network aims to link employers with school leadership teams to develop effective engagement plans and each employer is allocated a school or college that is supported by an Enterprise Coordinator. In Nottingham City, CEC Advisers are integrated within the existing Education-Business Partnership, Aspire, and this model is proving to be effective.

15. Match funding was required from local areas in order to run these programmes and as this was not provided in Bassetlaw there is currently no CEC advisor operating in that area. The capacity of CEC advisors to engage with large numbers of schools is also proving challenging in the County and so there may be a role to determine if additional resources are needed so that all schools in N2 have a fair and equal access to this support.

#### *Lobbying Government*

16. Evidence suggests areas that have greater control over skills budgets, including careers provision, ensure that provision is more responsive to local economic need. There may be a role for the N2 Skills & Employment Board in lobbying government for more local control of skills budgets.

#### *Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures*

17. Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council jointly own Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures, who deliver careers advice and guidance to young people and adults in the city and county through a range of contracted provision, including the National Careers Service. Futures also acts as an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) and delivers the Aspire Education Business Partnership in Nottingham. Futures is a key strategic partner for local authorities in Nottinghamshire, particularly in terms of shaping and steering initiatives and interventions and will be able to support further work on careers provision as recommended in this report.

### **NEXT STEPS**

18. Ensuring all learners across N2 have access to high quality careers advice and guidance needs a greater focus and effort. This is due to a variety of factors which include the proliferation of careers provision at a national and local level.
19. With the introduction of The Careers and Enterprise Company Mentoring Programme and the European funded Careers Local on top of existing provision, the EPC may wish to consider taking forward actions that will promote integrated working and the streamlining of provision where possible.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

20. The recommendations will contribute to the EPC priority of ensuring all learners across N2 are able to receive good quality and well informed careers advice and guidance
21. There is a risk that multiple providers and projects, all fundamentally seeking to promote employability for young people, are unable to effectively engage with schools and learners. The development of a local coordination group that brings together careers providers, schools and employers would promote integration of careers provision across N2

### **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

19. Doing nothing to improve access to good quality careers provision would impact negatively on N2's ability to adequately prepare young people for future careers

## **STATUTORY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Economic Prosperity Committee:

1. Considers the feasibility of a joint communications campaign to promote the benefits of careers in N2 and particularly those linking to the key sectors to young people in N2
2. Notes that the refreshed Skills for Growth Strategy will inform local education providers of recent labour market trends and projected future areas for growth
3. Considers establishing a local coordination group that brings together careers providers, schools and employers to maintain strategic oversight and promote integrated working
4. Consider the role of the N2 Skills & Employment Board in lobbying government for more control of skills budgets including careers provision

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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## **Background Papers**

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All

**Allen Graham**  
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