

**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Review to Address Skills Shortages & Increase  
Employment Opportunities – First Evidence Gathering  
Session**

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## **SUMMARY**

This report gives detail of the evidence gathering session that will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The views of the Committee are being sought on the evidence presented.

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## **Background**

1. Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the focus of its review in 2018/19 will be work to address skills shortages and increase employment opportunities.
2. The review will help the Committee to have a truly holistic view of the current skills and employment position and the challenges we face both now and in the future, as well as looking at best practice in other areas which could be developed in Gateshead.
3. The Committee will also consider how we or our partners currently work; highlight gaps in provision and identify more effective partnership working opportunities for the benefit of our residents and their ability to access employment opportunities, with a view to agreeing a set of recommendations.

## **Purpose of this session**

4. The scoping report, agreed by OSC on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, laid out the position in Gateshead in terms of skills and employment. Broadly, these are:
  - Whilst skills levels are improving, Gateshead continues to have a higher than average number of residents with no/low-level skills and a lower than average number with high-level skills.
  - Levels of benefit dependency and health-related issues remain significantly higher than national comparisons.

- A mismatch of skills, both nationally and locally exists, with research<sup>1</sup> showing large mismatches between skills young people are developing and the jobs available.
  - Challenges exist between learner supply and employer demand when trying to address the wider skills needs of the economy.
  - National research shows 1 in 5 workers in elementary type roles are classed as underemployed and 13% of part-time workers are people who could not find a full-time job. This is particularly concerning given the nature of Gateshead's employment base, with just under 40% of employees in entry level jobs<sup>2</sup> and just over 25% of the working age population working part-time.
5. This is the first in a series of evidence gathering sessions being undertaken for this review, looking at a life-long journey of skills development and employment. The purpose of this session is to look at two key areas of development; early years and careers education.
6. This session will hear two presentations of ten minutes from:
- Jan Batchelor, Childcare Support Lead Officer, Care, Wellbeing and Learning, Gateshead Council
  - Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator: Careers Education, North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP)
7. Gillian will provide an overview of early years childcare and parental employment, as well as the value of early education for children and how early years entitlements support social mobility, looking at both Gateshead's current performance and future challenges.
8. Ryan will provide an overview of North East Ambition, a regional programme of activity that centres on the Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks, successfully piloted from 2015 to 2017 and now part of Government's National Careers Strategy. The aim of the programme is to ensure every young person can identify routes into work, supported through experience and exposure to the world of work; looking at both the regional and local challenges and progress to date.

## Issues to Consider

9. When considering the evidence outlined above, the Committee may wish to consider the following:

### *Early Years*

- Gateshead's take up of the two-year old offer for disadvantaged children is currently 83%, which is 11% above the national average.
- Children's two-year integrated assessment provides an opportunity for health visitors and early years practitioners to identify children who would benefit from additional support at an early stage.

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<sup>1</sup> Research by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion on the behalf the LGA

<sup>2</sup> SOC 2010 Major Group 6-9, Nomis 2018

- Research has shown the importance of high quality provision in improving outcomes for children. Within Gateshead, 96% of childminders and 100% of private, voluntary and independent nurseries, pre-schools and out of school clubs have been grade by Ofsted as either “Good” or “Outstanding”
- The Local Authority is fulfilling its duty to ensure there are sufficient childcare places, including places for the 2, 3 and 4-year old entitlements.
- The early years’ entitlements are funded from the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The amount Local authorities receive from government has been challenged nationally. There is no commitment from Government to review funding allocations before 2020 and this may lead to some providers becoming unsustainable.
- Childminder recruitment and retention is an issue. Since 2012, there has been a national decrease in the number of childminders of 27%. In Gateshead, this figure stands at 31%.
- The percentage of children achieving at least expected levels across the Early Learning Goals covering the three prime areas of learning in 2017/18 is 84.60%. This figure compares with the national average of 79%.

### *Careers Education*

- The Aspires research concluded that young people make career limiting decisions by age 10, which they solidify by age 14.
- Young adults who recalled four or more activities (with employers) while at school were five times less likely to be NEET and earned, on average, 16% more than peers who recalled no such activities<sup>3</sup>.
- There are nationally over 700,000 job vacancies and entrepreneurship and self-employment have never been more vibrant...yet youth unemployment remains high and young people do not know what is available to them or how to get there<sup>4</sup>.
- Social Mobility is at the heart of the Gatsby Good Careers Guidance Benchmarks, with Sir John Holman stating, “if young people and their parents know more about the range of careers open to people with the right qualifications, they will have a clearer idea of the routes to better jobs.”
- There is no single ‘magic bullet’ for good career guidance: it is about doing a number of things, identified in the benchmarks, doing them consistently, doing them well and doing them for each and every student<sup>5</sup>.

### **Future evidence gathering sessions**

10. As agreed in the scope, future evidence gathering sessions will cover the following:

#### **October**

- Schools and extra-curricular activities
- Post-16 Education

#### **December**

- Post-18 HE

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Anthony Mann, Education and Employers Taskforce research

<sup>4</sup> The Careers and Enterprise Company

<sup>5</sup> Sir John Holman, The Gatsby Foundation

- In-work progression/career development

### **January**

- Skills for the unemployed

### **March**

- Increasing employment opportunities for local people

### **Recommendation**

11. It is recommended that the Committee:

- Gives its views on the evidence presented
- Notes the proposals outlined at point 10 of the report, as the focus for future evidence gathering sessions.

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