

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**19 JUNE 2019**

### **SOCIAL MOBILITY PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise Members on the outcome of the activities undertaken in partnership with the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) and third sector partners in order to support individuals in the 18-24 age range into work, training or further support as appropriate. These activities followed results of the social mobility report of November 2017 which identified Newark & Sherwood as one of the least socially mobile areas in the country.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The fourth report from the Social Mobility Commission published in November 2017 highlighted the fact that the East Midlands was the most “left behind” region in terms of social mobility. It uncovered a stark picture of under-investment in young people which meant that Newark & Sherwood was one of the least socially mobile areas in the country. The report identified a “local lottery” where there was little social progress for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and it highlighted poor educational performance as a key factor in constraining social mobility. Newark & Sherwood was suffering from a historic dependence on declining traditional industries leaving a legacy of low skills and low aspirations and poor educational performance over decades. The youth social mobility indicator reflected the transition from school to work with NSDC ranked the worst ‘coldspot’ for this indicator.

2.2 The Social Mobility Index (SMI) explores how geographical location can affect social mobility for individuals growing up and choosing to live in different areas. The index combines a range of indicators into one figure and uses this to provide a ranking between different areas. It seeks to answer the question: ‘What are the differences between different local areas in the chances that a child from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background has of doing well as an adult?’ The index measures social mobility indicators in each major life stage from early years through to working lives. It examines what happens in the early years where significant gaps open up between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their more fortunate peers. In total, there are 16 key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess which parts of the country have the best social mobility outcomes and which have the worst.

2.3 The work undertaken by Newark & Sherwood District Council (NSDC), DWP and partners was supported financially from a £60k budget received in May 2018 following a request to the Economic Development Committee at the March 2018 meeting. The initial proposal focused solely on the 18- 24 age range however the social mobility budget was flexible enough for issues identified in other age brackets to be addressed with appropriate projects being undertaken.

2.4 The aim of the work was to support those residents in the district on their journey to employment and provide school age children with opportunities to explore career opportunities available to them.

### **3.0 Proposals**

- 3.1 A number of actions took place from May 2018 to begin to address and support projects for those currently in the local primary and secondary schools and in the 18 to 24 age group. This has involved working with partners in both the public and private sector, including the DWP and Employment Agencies, training providers and charity organisations.

#### **Support for 18-24 age group registered as unemployed**

- 3.2 An intensive support package for the 18-24 age group registered as unemployed within Newark and Sherwood would take time to deliver significant results. All those who were currently looking for work received a one to one interview with a Recruitment Agency who works with large employers in the area and has staff vacancies. This secured employment for 10 of the people identified in this group within Sherwood. From the 76 young people identified in Newark at the outset of the programme, 10.53% who attended the one to one interviews were able to secure employment through the Agency directly. 18.42% went on to do other training, receiving alternative support from their work coaches within the DWP. 15.79% migrated to Universal Credit and undertook training through the Youth Obligation training programme. The remaining 42 (55.26%) have all found employment by working with their coaches and alternate training providers. All the young people presented significant challenges and had been attending the Job Centre for some time. Mandy Aspland the Newark Job Centre Leader quoted the following “ *Each outcome was a massive achievement for the individual and the work that had been done with them and it was through the initiative shown by Newark and Sherwood District Council that has made a major difference for the people within our area.*”

#### **Trackwork Rail Engineering Training**

- 3.3 Trackwork engineering is a Network Rail accredited course delivered across the UK. The training programme ran 3 courses primarily for 18-24 year old unemployed within Newark. The first course ran at the Doncaster site due to a delay in the site at Newark becoming available. Transport was provided by Newark and Sherwood enabling the first group of 12 to start their course in June 2018. Of the original 12, 50% of these candidates went on to secure full time employment. The 7 week long courses continued to run from July 2018 to the end of November. 15 individuals were referred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> course, 80% attended and 73.33% completed this fully and went into employment within the rail industry. Of the 12 referred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> course 25% withdrew for health reasons, the other 75% were successful in gaining employment. The DWP reported that they had received messages and feedback from the trainers commenting on those who had undertaken the training. One of the comments received stated “*they were the best blue hats (trainees) we have ever had*”  
Status –Complete

#### **Cognitive Behaviour Training**

- 3.4 Funding was provided to pay for a trainer from the Direct Help and Advice Team (DHA) and the venue where the course would be delivered. This was part of the intensive work highlighted by the DWP work coaches for those 18-24 unemployed young people with whom they were working. Of the 20 referrals in total across the 2 training sessions which ran in July 2018 and March 2019 all but 3 completed. Feedback from the attendees was very positive stating “*They felt that it was different from any other training they had*

*attended, made a difference and was very helpful.”* The trainer’s feedback to the DWP included that she was able *“to address certain barriers around confidence and saw them develop throughout the course”*. Status – Complete

### **Life Skills Education Charity programme for primary schools in Newark**

- 3.5 Newark & Sherwood District Council aimed to partner with relevant agencies in order to facilitate upskilling 16-24 year old residents as skill levels are lower and unemployment higher for people in this age range in the district. Careers and employability needs to be introduced earlier in the curriculum in order to raise the children’s aspirations to attain a higher skills level. The Life Skills Education Charity delivered the (Drugs Abuse Resistance Education) DARE programme to years 5 and 6 within primary schools in Newark. Dedicated DARE officers were funded through the social mobility budget in order to deliver a consistent message around decision making, communication skills, risk assessment and consequences of their behaviour. The schools who accepted the funded DARE sessions were able to access a one hour “Introduction to the World of Work” delivered by 2 members for the economic growth team at times and dates compatible to the school timetable. A total of 309 year 5 and 6 pupils from 6 primary schools have participated in the interactive “world of work” sessions which have proved popular with the children and staff alike. Status - Complete

### **Funding for The Dukeries Careers Lead course**

- 3.6 The Government’s new careers strategy published in December 2017 places the Gatsby benchmark at the heart of the careers provision in schools and colleges; formalising the expectation that all schools and colleges should have a named Careers Lead in place by September 2018. The Careers Lead would offer a stable careers programme, addressing the needs of each student including personal guidance, not only linking the curriculum to careers but managing encounters with further and higher education. The Dukeries Academy in Ollerton employed a named Careers Lead with a Level 5 qualification. In order to continue to employ this individual who had not only built good relationships with the students but had the knowledge and expertise to deliver the required support a QCF LEVEL 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development was needed. This is highest level vocational qualification within Careers and Advice Sector that provides valuable opportunities for individuals to develop their skills and knowledge in the workplace to reach a professional standing within their field. The cost of financing this for the school was proving prohibitive and the likelihood of losing this individual was a possibility. Funding therefore from the social mobility budget was allocated in order to pay for the course which enabled the school to continue to employ the careers lead and not lose a valuable asset. Michelle Hackett, the Senior Careers Lead quoted the following *“I feel the support from Newark and Sherwood District Council is best practice, the funding received has made the biggest difference to the students”* Status - Complete

### **Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society (NNAS) Schools Project**

- 3.7 The NNAS schools project funded by the social mobility budget was set up to enable the Education Project already in place to provide much bigger and better practical farming challenges and experiences to the students attending the schools within the district. The project offered opportunities and experiences outside of the classroom for the young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The funds made a significant

difference to the variety and the amount of sessions delivered over the academic year 2018 -2019. The career in farming presentation was delivered to Newark Academy, Magnus Academy, Dukeries Academy and Toot Hill, Bingham. Newark Academy participated in the Schools Harvest Scarecrow competition at the Vintage Tractor and Heritage Show in November 2018; Toot Hill School were able to visit Grange Farm in Hawton and Riverlands Farm with transport funded by NSDC in June 2019. The Careers in Farming presentation has been provided to the schools who have engaged with the project for future use. Status- Ongoing as part of the High Level Work Plan Objective 1: Schools and Businesses

### **NNAS and DWP**

- 3.8 Two farming presentations were held in January and February 2019 to 7, 18-24 unemployed young people. 5 of these expressed an interest in finding out more with a view to future work experience within farming. The presentations would continue to be delivered on a fortnightly basis until the end of July 2019. The interest shown in the early stages is proving very encouraging not only for the farming community but offering varied employment opportunities for the young people. Status- Complete

### **Sherwood Forest Trust Environmental Youth Project**

- 3.9 The project aimed to develop a woodland/environmental management project within NSDC targeting specifically the 18-24 age groups. The objectives were to create opportunities for young people to undertake activities enabling them to improve their knowledge, experience and skills within the environmental and land based sector. The nationally accredited training certificate in Practical Conservation skills would undertake work, in association with the Forestry Commission and other local organisations, primarily on Ollerton Pit Woods/Little Ollerton, surrounding the energy village. Practical woodland management work associated with these sites would be major part of the course. Participants would have the opportunity to learn about navigation/map reading whilst exploring the beautiful greenspaces in the area. A number of challenges meant the project began in earnest on 6 March 2019. The programme will run for 3 days per week for 6 weeks @ 6 hours per day per participant with an induction element for each trainee before committing to the training programme. 3 young people have been referred to the project as a result of attending the Ollerton Outreach Service and the collaborative work in place between the DWP in attendance and the Building Better Opportunities project. Status - Complete

### **Wheels to Work – Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN) scheme**

- 3.10 The scheme supports jobseekers to overcome transport barriers in order to gain and maintain employment and or training by offering affordable moped loan and ongoing support to the client as needed. The fund NSDC committed towards the RCAN Wheels to Work scheme concentrated on the extension of the project's coverage in the Newark and Sherwood area for young people aged 18-24. Matching the funding from the social mobility budget against existing funding would allow for at least 2 mopeds be committed to allow for 2 to 4 participants to access a subsidised moped loan, enabling access to work or training. The primary focus was to support clients farthest away from the labour market specifically due to location. A number of approaches were made towards the end of December, including a couple of referrals from BBO (Building Better Opportunities). The charity has since been successful in winning a lottery bid enabling the service to continue the provision. The match funding received from NSDC plugged the gap in the meantime with positive outcomes. Status - Complete

### **Fork Lift Truck (FLT) training**

- 3.11 NSDC has made a contribution to assist with the cost of FLT training/upskilling for staff from businesses within the Newark and Sherwood district. Staff from Ambitions Personnel had the capacity to contact and meet with 7 new businesses and work with 5 already known to the economic growth team. As a result a total of 42 individuals attended refresher courses in FLT and 29 individuals attended as new employees, undertaking apprenticeships or were upskilled within the business. Carol Beacham from Caledonian Modular was delighted with the assistance quoting the following: *“The fork lift truck training funding assisted us greatly, we were able to get three employees fully trained which in turn assisted us with our production and stores development plans and our overall growth plans. We are implemented new systems within stores and on the shop floor which required additional fork lift support being required”* Martin Keil, the depot manager from Agrovista Newark showed his appreciation with the following *“ I would like to thank Newark and Sherwood District Council for funding staff to have the Counterbalance Fork Lift Truck training. The training allows a member of staff to unload his lorry on his own when he returns from farm deliveries saving valuable time. In the morning he will be able to load his lorry himself and assist using the Fork Lift with loading other drivers that are not certificated”* Iain Mackay – Partic Motor Spares quoted *““We must say that Ambitions personnel and Newark & Sherwood DC provided a first class response and service, regarding our Forklift training at Brunel Drive. We are extremely grateful for Social mobility funding and how it helps us keep up to date with our Health and Safety directive.”* Status - Complete

### **Developing Employability Skills - project with Deere Apprenticeships- Newark Academy**

- 3.12 The Developing Employability Skills project funded by NSDC (Social Mobility Budget) was set up to provide the Year 10 students at Newark Academy the opportunity to understand what skills their future employers would require. Their education and experience may make them eligible to apply for a job, but to be successful in most roles; they will need skills that they are likely to develop over time. Some will be specific to the job, but the vast majority will be so-called ‘soft skills’ that can be used in any job or employment sectors. These soft skills are ‘employability skills’: they are what makes the young people employable. The sessions will run over a 2 week period in July for their Year 10 students, with a total of 20 students in 2 groups of 10 attending. Staff at Newark Academy and Deere Apprenticeships worked together to determine the most appropriate units and method of delivery. Each student will undertake 3 units. The first is a self-assessment unit to be used as a tool by each student to determine their strengths and areas where they may need to improve. Applying for a job and Preparation for an Interview will follow. Equipping the students now with employability skills will prepare them to make the transition from education to work, exploring all aspects of the selection and recruitment process. Enabling them to have the tools necessary to enter the world of work or move onto higher education, whichever is appropriate to them and not become one of the unemployed of the future. Status - Complete
- 3.13 Work continues with local employers to encourage the take up of Apprenticeships and discuss opportunities for entry level employment as well as higher level roles.

## **Next Steps**

3.14 The impact of increasing social mobility creates the opportunity for talent across the social spectrum to be recognised and helps to boost local productivity. As set out in Agenda Item 6 on the review of the Economic Development Strategy it will be important to consider how the team can continue to address this particular issue in future work and will be considered at the proposed member workshop.

### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 The report clearly demonstrates the interventions of the District Council have had a positive impact on disadvantaged groups within the district.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no potential budget implications within this report.

### **6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

6.1 Objective 8 of the Community Plan states that the Council will “reduce the levels of deprivation in target area and remove barriers to social mobility across the district.” In particular key activity 8.4 require that we “Work with partners to tackle social mobility by creating strategic cross-sector connections to improve aspirations and youth engagement”

### **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

**a) the contents of the report be noted; and**

**b) future consideration of further activities to remove barriers to social mobility are considered as part of the review of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy.**

### **Reason for Recommendations**

**To ensure that increasing social mobility continues to be addressed as part of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy.**

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Veronica Dennant on Ext 5260

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