

Sunderland East Area Committee: 21 July 2010

Report of Office of the Chief Executive

Item 2: Annex 2: Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee: policy review on Working Neighbourhood Strategy.

Background

- At the May 2010 meeting, Committee agreed that the recommendations produced by the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee were presented to Area Committee. With a view of selecting one or two key recommendations which will impact on increasing employment and enterprise opportunities across the East area.

Recommendation from Scrutiny

- a) In the light of the **current economic situation**, there is a pressing need to **review that the Working Neighbourhood Strategy** is succeeding in ensuring that disadvantaged people and neighbourhoods are not losing out *disproportionately*. The strategy should provide a flexible, and reactive approach to the impact of the downturn especially on the long-term unemployed seeking work;
- b) Future decisions on the use of worklessness funding should be based on an **evidence base** of the work and skills provision in the city including **evidence of which interventions are particular successful** and are proven to deliver improved outcomes;
- c) Using evidence of successful interventions the strategy should use the evidence base to explore **new forms of community outreach services** that give access to opportunities in the **most disadvantaged neighbourhoods** to match the levels of deprivation;
- d) To review the **Job Linkage service** to develop a service with greater ambitions for its own achievements and higher aspiration for its clients in order to break the vulnerable cycle;
- e) The strategy should ensure that **employment is the ultimate goal** with **customer journey mapping** rigorously undertaken, and shared with partners, with any issues identified within this process addressed in a timely way;
- f) It should be ensured that worklessness funding gives **added value** and **wraps around existing national mainstream provision**;
- g) To support the achievement of a wrap-around service to mainstream provision, boundaries should be established with partner organisations through a **Partnership Agreement** which sets out a clear framework for roles and responsibilities;
- h) A further focus should be given to supporting and **engaging with employers** to ensure that worklessness funding is geared towards meeting their needs as the economy moves out of recession. This could include consideration of using the WNF to provide the long term unemployed with a **personal job subsidy** to provide a more level playing field when they compete for jobs with those who have the advantage of recent work experience;
- i) To continue to explore with local partners what additional data could be shared and overcoming barriers to **data sharing** to support joint efforts to tackle worklessness.

Recommendation

- That recommendation (c) is selected by the Committee.
- Establish and nominate members to form a Task and Finish Group, with the aim to identify successful interventions using evidence from the Working Neighbourhood Strategy to fund a project that provides access to opportunities to neighbourhoods across East area to increase employment and enterprise opportunities with an estimated budget resource requirement coming forward to September 2010.
- Results of the Employer's Skills Gap city wide survey with employers presented to Area Committee in September 2010.

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