

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – People and Economy.

**PORTFOLIO:** Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** People & Economy Quarterly Policy Update

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Board of recent national policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

2.1 **That the report is noted.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 A number of policy, legislation, consultation and guidance documents, are issued by government departments and agencies that have varying degrees of relevance to issues on the employment, learning and skills agenda and related topics.

3.2 A brief summary of key announcements is provided in this report along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate, so the Board can consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to a future meeting.

3.3 This report also links to the item on business planning elsewhere on this agenda as it serves to identify policies and announcements that may become important emerging issues for the PPB.

## **4.0 NEW POLICY, STRATEGY, STATUTORY GUIDANCE & GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **4.1 [NAO Report – Managing Provider Failure](#)**

The National Audit Office (the NAO) has published a paper which explores the principles Whitehall departments should use to manage service provider failure. Much of this is relevant to commissioning across the public sector, including local government

4.2 National Audit Office report **[Outcomes-based payment schemes: government's use of payment by results](#)** reviewing the government's recent experience of using 'payment by results' mechanisms to deliver public services.

- 4.3 **'Telephone Support' psychological wellbeing and work feasibility pilot evaluation** An evaluation of the 'Telephone Support' intervention to improve employment and health prospects for people with mental health conditions.
- 4.4 **Business regulation: Better Business for All**  
Background on Better Regulation Delivery Office's involvement and toolkit for local Better Business for All partnerships.
- 4.5 **Enterprise Bill: summary factsheet**  
Summarises all of the measures included in the Enterprise Bill.
- 4.6 **Public sector apprenticeship targets: Enterprise Bill factsheet**  
Outlines the measures that will be included in the Enterprise Bill.
- 4.7 **Ofsted good practice examples: further education and skills**  
Ofsted publishes a series of good practice examples in further education and skills derived from its regular inspection activity
- 4.8 **Preparing vulnerable young people for employment**  
This Ofsted good practice example shows how [Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community \(DISC\)](#) provides an education and training programme aimed at particularly vulnerable young learners to enable them to develop independent living skills and get ready to begin an apprenticeship, take further courses or start work.
- 4.9 **Helping women from disadvantaged backgrounds make a new start**  
This Ofsted good practice example shows how [Blackburne House Education \(BHE\)](#), helps women from disadvantaged backgrounds develop confidence and skills that prepare them for work, further education or training.
- 4.10 **Apprenticeships Levy: Employer owned apprenticeships training**  
As part of the new Government's Emergency Budget in July 2015, the Chancellor announced the intention to introduce a new apprenticeship levy. The levy will aim to incentivise Apprenticeship starts within large businesses, in order to help meet the Government's pledge of creating 3 million new Apprenticeships by 2020. The consultation summarises Government's proposals for the implementation of the levy. A second consultation exercise, focusing on the rate and scope of the levy, is expected later this year.
- 4.11 **Preparing vulnerable young people for employment**  
Ofsted good practice example showing how [Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community \(DISC\)](#) provides a successful programme.
- 4.12 **Hancock: Every young person should be earning or learning from April 2017**  
The government details radical plans to end long-term youth unemployment and decades of welfare dependency.
- 4.13 **LGIU Policy Briefing - Apprentices 2015-20: challenges and opportunities for local government** (*requires log in*)

This briefing describes government's proposals, draws on recent lessons on and evidence, to consider the opportunities and challenges for local authorities (LAs) in contributing to apprenticeship policy.

- 4.14 **Apprenticeships Policy – House of Commons Briefing Paper**  
In the 2015 Queen's Speech the Government set out its intention to create a duty to report on progress to meeting the target of 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020. Public sector bodies will be required to employ apprentices and be set targets to increase apprenticeships.
- 4.15 **Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation (HM Treasury Report)**  
This plan responds to the recent slowdown of productivity growth in the UK and to the long-standing gap compared to other countries.
- 4.16 **Downward mobility, opportunity hoarding and the 'glass floor' – SMCP report**  
The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has published a research report on the 'glass floor', which protects less able, better-off children from falling down the social ladder as they become adults – inhibiting opportunities for more able children from less advantaged backgrounds.
- 4.17 **The Welfare Reform and Work Bill and LGIU Policy Briefing**  
The Welfare Reform and Work Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 9 July 2015; it is scheduled to become law before the start of the new financial year in 2016. The Bill consists of several parts, one of which is of provisions relating to changes to welfare benefits; other parts include new duties on the Government to report to Parliament, the repeal of most of the 2010 Child Poverty Act, and changes to rent policy in social housing
- 4.18 **Open consultation: National Minimum Wage: 2015 - 2016 Evidence**  
New online survey seeking evidence to inform the Low Pay Commission's report on the National Minimum Wage rates.
- 4.19 **JRF Report Understanding Age and the Labour Market and LGIU Briefing**  
This report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation uses a range of indicators, including unemployment statistics, employment projections, employment, and education policy and practice, to investigate the role that age and generation play in employment, and how far this has changed over time.
- 4.20 **Further Education – Overseeing Financial Sustainability – NAO report and LGIU Briefing**  
The National Audit Office has looked at the future financial sustainability of FE colleges, and the system of Government levers to help FE colleges get back to financial health.
- 4.21 **The Dowling review - Business-university research collaborations final report**  
The final report of Professor Dame Ann Dowling's review of business-university collaborations.
- 4.22 **Guidance: Local partnership opportunities with Jobcentre Plus**

Updated list of Jobcentre Plus District Managers- Partnership opportunities for public and voluntary organisations to help Jobcentre Plus move people off benefits and into employment.

4.23 **Policy paper: Think, Act, Report**

Information about the purpose of the Think, Act, Report initiative and how to get involved. Think, Act, Report provides a simple step-by-step framework to help companies think about gender equality in their workforces, particularly in relation to recruitment, retention, promotion and pay.

4.24 **Local areas get their say on Sunday trading**

The government has launched a consultation on plans to give local areas the power to allow large shops to open for longer on Sundays.

4.25 **Non educational barriers to the elite profession evaluation**

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has published research 'Non educational barriers to the elite profession evaluation' showing that working-class applicants struggle to get access to top jobs in the UK. The research is the product of extensive interviews with staff from 13 elite law, accountancy and financial services firms, who together are responsible for 45,000 of the best jobs in the country. It finds that elite firms are systematically excluding bright working-class applicants from their workforce. Data collected for the project showed that as much as 70% of job offers in 2014 were to graduates who had been educated at a selective state or fee-paying school, compared to 4% and 7% of the population as a whole.

4.26 **Welfare to Work Devolution in England**, published by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, examines the case for more devolution in welfare-to-work schemes in England through a detailed examination of the history of central and local government partnerships in skills and employment programmes

## 5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The varied range of issues covered in this report potentially present a number of challenges and opportunities across a number of the Council's current priorities. Where appropriate a more detailed analysis of the information and relevance to the council will take place.

## 4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Currently the changes are out for consultation so there are no direct implications at this time.

## 5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 There are no immediate risks directly relating to the information in the report.

## 6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 None

**7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

7.1 None under the meaning of the Act. (For information - Hyperlinks to all of the full reports are embedded within the headings.)

**8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION**

8.1 If members would a more detailed analysis of any of the issues mentioned in this report, or paper copy of any of the documents referred to, they should contact; Debbie Houghton Principal Policy Officer at [debbie.houghton@halton.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.houghton@halton.gov.uk) or 0151 511 8231