

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

TITLE: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	2 November 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with a progress update of the Barnsley Youth Employment Programme (YEP) being delivered by Barnsley Council and Berneslai Homes. To seek Cabinet's approval for the recommended option proposed in the Report to build on the success of the YEP in a sustainable way going forward.

Council Plan priority

Learning Barnsley – *“young people aim high and achieve their full potential”, “Lifelong learning is promoted and encouraged, with an increase in opportunities that will enable people get into, progress at and stay in work”*

Healthy Barnsley – *“Everyone is able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health”, “Fewer people live in poverty, and everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families”*

Recommendations

That Cabinet: -

1. Recognise the positive impact of the YEP for many of our Barnsley young people, supporting their progression into paid employment or apprenticeships. The Council have recently won an award from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) for its programme.
2. Acknowledge the commitment and engagement from numerous services and teams across the Council and Berneslai Homes in creating these opportunities for our young people.
3. Considers and approves the recommended option presented within this report (option 2), enabling the Council to build on the success and impact of the YEP in a sustainable way by:

- a) Implementing a Senior Leadership 'Inclusive Offer Pledge'
- b) Re-purposing ringfenced corporate apprentice budget
 - 'In-year' underspend can be used to create other paid work experience/placements for care leavers
 - Any underspend at the end of the financial year to be earmarked and used in the following financial year to create paid work experience/placements for any young people aged 16-24 who are NEET.
- c) Converting x20 entry level positions into paid work placements

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Barnsley YEP was approved by Cabinet 15th March 2021. The programme provides 12-month paid work placements with the Council and Berneslai Homes for young people (18-24) in receipt of Universal Credit and most at risk of long-term unemployment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It incorporates the Government's national Kickstart initiative, which provides 6-month paid work placements, with the Council and Berneslai Homes funding the additional 6-months.
- 1.2 Many of the young people on programme face multiple barriers to employment and the YEP provides comprehensive support to overcome these. Young people with the Council benefit from support with applications and interviews, a bespoke education & training package, a lead pastoral mentor overseeing progress and a comprehensive off-boarding plan to support each young person into either paid employment or an apprenticeship in the latter part of their work placement. Berneslai Homes have provided young people with a similarly high level of wraparound support including monthly 1:1 pastoral check-ins, an Education & Training budget for each young person and extensive support with CV's, applications and interviews.
- 1.3 Engagement from services across the Council and Berneslai Homes in creating work placement opportunities has been excellent. Without this engagement, the diversity and high quality of placements available to meet the needs and aspirations of young people would not have been possible.
- 1.4 A total of 94 young people have benefitted from the scheme across the Council and Berneslai Homes (64 and 30 respectively). The diverse and high-quality placements (appendix 1) created across the two organisations is supporting young people to develop knowledge, skills and experience that will support progression into paid employment or an apprenticeship.
- 1.5 The Council's Adult Skills and Community Learning service have developed, designed and delivering a suite of qualifications for young people to benefit from including Employability, Maths, English and Digital Skills qualifications funded through the Adult Education Budget. Other bespoke training and qualifications have been delivered specific to particular job roles.

- 1.6 The impact of the quality of placements and wraparound support is evident through the retention of young people on programme, with the Council's retention being 98.5% and Berneslai Homes 96.7%. From the 64 young people with the Council, 39 qualifications have been achieved, a further 39 qualifications on track to be achieved and 54 of the 64 on track to achieve at least one qualification. Of the 94 who have commenced placements across both organisations, 36 (26 from the Council and 10 from Berneslai Homes) have already transitioned into paid employment or an apprenticeship either internally within one of the two organisations or with external employers (appendix 2). We are ambitious and committed to supporting every individual on programme into either paid employment or an apprenticeship by the end of their placement, utilising comprehensive off-boarding plans that have been developed.
- 1.7 The YEP is proving to be an effective progression and succession pipeline for the Council, with 9 of the 26 that have already transitioned into either employment, or an apprenticeship have done so with the Council.
- 1.8 Feedback from both young people and managers has been highly positive. A selection of case studies and comments from both young people and managers can be seen in appendix 5.
- 1.9 The development and implementation of the YEP has resulted in a highly effective and robust model that helps young people overcome barriers and progress into paid employment or apprenticeships. Its effectiveness and impact has been recognised by the DWP, who have recently provided the Council with an award for the programme.
- 1.10 Recruitment of young people to the YEP ceased 31st March 2022. Whilst the YEP was developed and implemented in response to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on young people's future employment opportunities, there will remain a need for such opportunities particularly targeted at those from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 1.11 The YEP is being delivered by the Council's Inclusive Offer team, part of the Employment and Skills service. The Inclusive Offer works with various partners and providers to support young people and those from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged backgrounds into good quality work experience/placement opportunities with wraparound pastoral and personal development support. The Inclusive Offer supports the sufficiency of work experience in the Borough including T-Level placements, Supported Internships, ringfenced apprenticeships for care leavers and those with EHCPs, traineeships and a range of work experience and work placements.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The YEP is proving to be highly effective in supporting young people with varying barriers they face to enter meaningful employment, whether this be education, work experience or personal barriers (i.e., financial, mental health etc). The programme ceased recruitment 31st March 2022, yet there remains a glut of young people requiring the level of comprehensive support and opportunity provided by the YEP, particularly for those from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged groups. The following Options are provided with option 2

enabling the Council to build on the YEP and continue a model that is both feasible and sustainable for the long-term.

2.2 **Option 1:** Do nothing

Should the YEP come to an end and none of the following options approved, the Inclusive Offer will continue to work with services across the Council and external partners to support young people and those from vulnerable / disadvantaged groups into good quality work experience/placement opportunities to move closer to sustained employment. However, the impact of this work will be diluted compared with approval of some or all of the following options.

2.3 **Option 2:** Implement the following measures to build on the success and impact on the YEP in a sustainable way

1. *Senior Leadership 'Inclusive Offer Pledge'*

The Executive Director of each Directorate signs a pledge committing to facilitate its proportionate (based on Directorate headcount) number of the following opportunities each financial year:

- X20 T-Level work placements
- X10 Supported Internship placements
- X10 3-month work placements for adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities
- X20 paid work placements (please see measure 3)
- A guarantee that ringfenced apprenticeships will be facilitated where requested
- A guarantee that work experience for care leavers will be facilitated where requested

Heads of Service (HoS) to also sign up to the pledge. Relevant HoS's are cc'd into requests from the Inclusive Offer to support/influence the creation of the relevant opportunities with the relevant teams and/or individuals. The Inclusive Offer to report update bi-annually to Senior Leadership and/or Cabinet.

The opportunities included within the 'Inclusive Offer Pledge' are key priorities for the Borough in supporting young people and those from vulnerable / disadvantaged groups towards employment. For an overview of the different type of work experience/placements within the Pledge, please see appendix 3.

2. *Re-purpose ringfenced corporate apprentice budget*

The Inclusive Offer receives core funding each financial year of £231,200 to cover salary and on-costs for up to x10 apprenticeship positions for care leavers (x2 positions can be used for young people with EHCP's). In addition, it supports a small number of targeted co-funded positions, if required, helping to incentivise services to create additional ringfenced positions and also funds the Pastoral Lead Mentor role who supports both new apprentice entrants to the council and care leavers and young people with EHCP's in ringfenced positions.

The highest number of ringfenced apprentice positions filled at any one time is five, which is the current position (x4 care leavers, x1 EHCP). It is anticipated there will likely always be an under-utilisation, and therefore a resulting underspend.

The following two re-purposing actions are proposed:

3A = 'In-year' underspend can be used to create other paid work experience/placements for care leavers, those with an EHCP who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) are, or those who have been through the Youth Justice Service

3B = Any underspend at the end of the financial year to be earmarked and used in the following financial year to create paid work experience/placements for any young people aged 16-24 who are NEET.

The Inclusive Offer would use the model developed for the Youth Employment Programme and provide wraparound education & training, pastoral and other support for any young person who came through this option to help them progress into sustained employment.

It is impossible to provide accurate numbers of young people who would benefit from this option as it would depend on how many positions are utilised with apprenticeships. It would also depend on the length of time a young person in Options 3A or 3B above remained in placement before progressing into another destination (i.e. paid employment, apprenticeship etc). However, as an example, if the budget was fully utilised by x5 apprentices for a full financial year, this would leave approximately £80,000 to support 3A. If we had x5 young people from 3A for six-months on the same terms as the YEP (hours and pay), this would use approximately half of the £80,000 and leave an underspend of approximately £40,000 that can be used to support 3B the following financial year. This could support x5 young people from 3B for six-months on the same terms as the Youth Employment Programme the following year. The table below provides an example scenario:

	22/23	23/24	24/25
Apprentices	X5	X5	X5
3A	X5 for six months	X5 for six months	X5 for six months
3B	~	X5 for six months	X5 for six months

There was an underspend in financial year 21/22 that could be used for both 3A and 3B to be operational within this current financial year.

3. *Convert x20 entry level positions into paid work placements*

Directorates to identify and put forward its proportionate amount (based on headcount) of x20 entry level positions each financial year that could be converted into a 12-month paid work placement following the Youth Employment Programme model. For example, a service looking to recruit a permanent grade 2 Projects Officer could put this position forward. If the young person meets satisfactory performance measures (i.e., attendance, competency in the role etc) during the 12-month paid work placement, this could then convert into the permanent role or apprenticeship.

This is incorporated into the pledge (fourth bullet point).

- 2.4 **RECOMMENDATION:** it is recommended Option 2 be approved. The measures proposed would show commitment and buy-in at the most senior level that will support with raising awareness and engagement amongst Directorates and services in the creation of high-quality opportunities. They would enable a deliverable number of opportunities to continue the YEP model in a sustainable way going forward, significantly enhancing the employability prospects for many young people and those from vulnerable / disadvantaged backgrounds. There would be no additional funding required in delivering any of the options other than what is already committed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer).
- 3.1.2 The Youth Employment Programme / Kickstart scheme was extended to 31st March 2022 for new candidates to join the scheme. Payment to these candidates will run to 31st March 2023. The financial implications for the extension of the scheme were captured in Appendix A of the Barnsley Youth Employment Programme Cabinet Report that was approved on 15th March 2021.

The table below shows the actual and forecasted position for the total program:

Expenditure/Income Type	Total Budget (£)	2021/22 (£)	2022/23 (£)	Total (£)
Salaries & Running costs	1,200,000	350,635	440,144	790,779
DWP Grant	(600,000)	(259,515)	(138,069)	(397,584)
Service Contributions		(2,177)	(754)	(2,931)
BMBC	(600,000)	(88,943)	(301,321)	(390,264)
Total	-	-	-	-

- 3.1.3 The paper recommends approving Option 2. No funding has been included in the MTFS for either the existing or any new Kickstart scheme to run beyond 31 March 2023 (i.e., candidates starting from 1 April 2022 onwards). Therefore, any decisions or proposals to create a new scheme need to be funded from existing budgets or a redesign of the existing programs. Any underspend from the £600k Kickstart budget will contribute towards the MTFS and not be available for any new schemes. This includes any costs resulting from the proposal under Option 2.1 above requiring officers to sign a pledge committing to facilitate a proportionate number (based on directorate headcount) of opportunities.
- 3.1.4 The Service has a permanent resource of £231,200 core funding for the Inclusive Offer to cover salary and on-costs for up to 10 apprenticeship positions for care leavers (x2 positions can be used for young people with EHCP's as well as the Pastoral Mentor). The highest number of ringfenced apprentice positions filled at any one time is five so it is always likely there will

be an underspend. It is recommended that any of this underspend is re-purposed as per Option 2.2 and 2.3.

- 3.1.5 As noted in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.14 above, the recommendations do not result in any additional funding requirement. No Appendix A is therefore required.

3.2 Legal

- 3.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 Equality

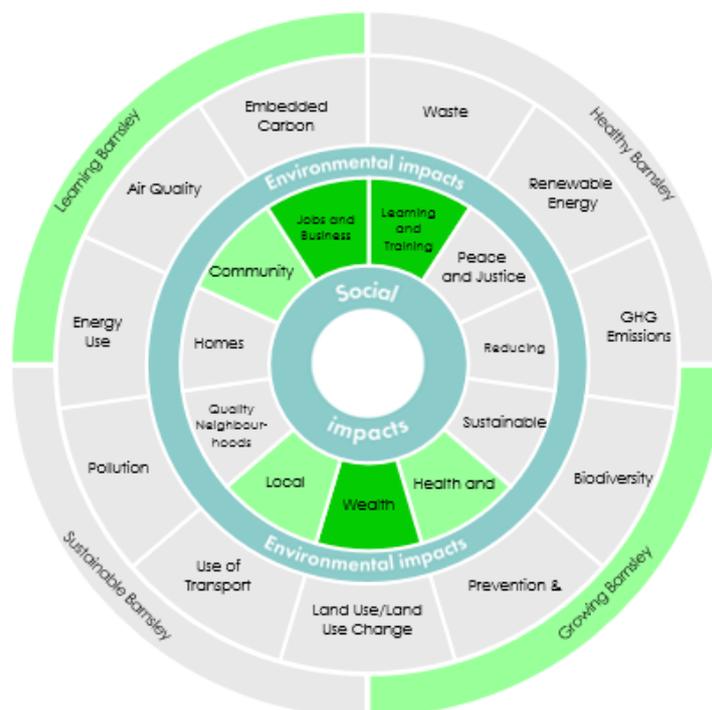
- 3.3.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as an appendix 4.

3.4 Sustainability

- 3.4.1 There are no foreseen negative environmental or socioeconomic impacts should any/all of the recommendations be approved.

- 3.4.2 There are positive socioeconomic impacts should some or all of the recommended options be approved, particularly around Learning & Training, Wealth and Jobs & Business. These high impact areas contribute towards Learning Barnsley and Growing Barnsley.

A copy of the decision-making wheel can be seen below.



3.5 Employee

3.5.1 There are no direct employee implications as a result of the recommended options.

3.6 Communications

3.6.1 Promotion of the scheme is embedded in the wider campaign to grow Youth Employment in the borough.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultations have taken place with a range of stakeholders including Berneslai Homes, Dept for Work & Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Unions, Organisation Development, Targeted Information Advice & Guidance, Children in Care Team, and young people.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 N/A

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The reasons for the recommendations within the report are to highlight the impact of the existing YEP programme, to recognise and thank the fantastic support and engagement from services and teams across the Council and Berneslai Homes in the creation of some excellent opportunities for young people, and for Cabinet to consider options put forward that will enable more young people and those from disadvantaged / vulnerable groups to access opportunities that will enable them to progress towards sustained paid employment.

7. GLOSSARY

N/A

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Barnsley Council / Berneslai Homes Placements
Appendix 2 – Transitions into paid employment / apprenticeships
Appendix 3 - Work experience/placements Pledge
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 5 – Case Studies

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	<i>See section 3 Financial Implications Ashley Gray, Strategic Finance Business Partner 24/08/2022</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>Jason Field 19/08/22</i>

Report Author: Neil Wilkinson
Post: Projects & Contracts Manager
Date: 10 August 2022