

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

5th December 2024

REPORT OF HEAD OF SUPPORT SERVICES AND TRANSFORMATION

RHIANNON CROWHURST

MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARDS AFFECTED: All

Title of report: Employability and Skills Strategy Overview

Purpose of report

1. To update members on the progress of the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Employability and Skills Strategy.

Executive summary

2. In 2022 work began on an NPT Employability and Skills Strategy, however during the time the strategy was being developed a number of significant changes took place across NPT.
3. This report details the current position and the next steps.

Background

4. In 2022 work began on an NPT Employability and Skills Strategy with the aim of outlining challenges and opportunities to grow the economy and provide our communities with good quality jobs.

5. During the time that the strategy was being developed a number of changes took place in NPT, including the decision to close the blast furnace at Port Talbot's Tata steel works, the changes in UK Government and the potential impact on funding streams such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and more positively the progress of the Swansea Bay City deal and Celtic Freeport projects.
5. Additionally, internally there has been a change in the structure of employability and skills, with changes in the way Environment and Education, Leisure and Lifelong learning directorates share responsibility for the delivery of different aspects, and with the move within this directorate for Employability, Skills and Poverty to now sit with the Head of Support Services and Transformation.

Current Position

6. As a result of all the changes it became clear that the draft strategy wasn't fulfilling its ambition of providing a clear and concise plan for everyone involved across NPT in supporting and providing employment and delivering skills, and as such it was felt that further work was needed with the key partners who will be responsible for delivery.
7. Discussions have taken place internally and with partners, including NPTC Group, around how this work could be progressed, recognising the already considerable amount of time and effort that has been committed to the strategy to date.

Next Steps

8. Officers have been in discussions around how the strategy could be reshaped to ensure that key elements for NPT are highlighted, and have concluded that the strategy needs to focus on clear pathways that show progression in education from a young age (e.g. primary schools) through to adult learning, with an emphasis on the need to equip young people and adults with skills that are going to be needed for the future. The strategy should set out the steps needed along any given pathway to employment, and will involve close working between education, business and training providers. It will be bespoke to NPT and recognise the unique

challenges and opportunities that exist in this borough, and will set out clear responsibilities and work streams to effect improvement.

9. Discussions have commenced with partners and to date there is a willingness to work together to deliver the change needed to the strategy in the coming months.

Financial Impacts

10. There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

11. An integrated impact assessment is not required as this report is for information only.

Valleys Communities Impacts

12. There is no impact on Neath Port Talbot's valley communities as a result of this report.

Workforce impacts

13. There is no impact on the workforce as result of this report.

Legal impacts

14. There are no legal impacts as a result of this report.

Risk management

15. No risks have been identified as a result of this report.

Consultation

16. There is no requirement for consultation.

Recommendation

17. That Members note the information provided in this report.

Reasons for proposed decision

18. No decision required as this report is for information only.

Implementation of the decision

19. This report is for information only.

Officer Contact

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