

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 October 2015

Item number: 15

Title: Haringey Job Support Market – Final Report

Report

authorised by: Cllr Charles Wright, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Lead Officer: Martin Bradford, Policy Officer Tel: 020 8489 6950, email martin.bradford@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: ALL

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 Under the agreed terms of reference, Overview & Scrutiny Committee can assist the Council and the Cabinet in its budgetary and policy framework through conducting in-depth analysis of local policy issues and can make recommendations for service development or improvement. The Committee may:

- Review the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- Conduct research to assist in specific investigations. This may involve surveys, focus groups, public meetings and/or site visits;
- Make reports and recommendations, on issues affecting the authority's area, to Full Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees, the Executive, or to other appropriate external bodies.

1.2 In this context, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of the Job Support Market in Haringey. The aim of this work was to assess the nature and level of support available to those in long term unemployment and to identify:

- any gaps in local service provision;
- ways in which local providers can work more collaboratively;
- the role of the council in supporting such work.

1.3 The Committee commenced work in January 2015 and within its plan of work held a number of evidence gathering sessions with Council officers, partners and local unemployed people.

1.4 The final report, attached at **Appendix 1**, details the conclusions and recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

(a) Agree the Job Support Market Final report, attached at **Appendix 1**; and:

(b) Agree the recommendations contained in the final report.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 The evidence behind the Committees recommendations is outlined in the main body of the report (**Appendix 1**).

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 This review topic was selected after discussions with local stakeholders and was determined to be an area where scrutiny involvement may have beneficial impact.

6. Background information

6.1 Although there has been a marked fall in unemployment, there is concern at the level of long-term unemployment. Evidence would suggest that of those who are unemployed, the proportion that have been in long term unemployment (for 12 months or more) has been growing and now accounts for over 213,000 (25%) of those claiming JSA.

6.2 There is widespread evidence to suggest that the effects of long term unemployment can be profound for the individual concerned. It is noted that those in long term unemployment can experience severe financial deprivation, have higher levels of mental and physical ill health and can become socially excluded. Moreover, unemployment analysis would appear to suggest that the longer people are out of work the greater impact this will have on future employment in that:

- They may be more likely to have lower pay;
- The incidence future unemployment is greatly increased;
- The less likely they will ever return to the labour market.

6.3 Such effects of long-term worklessness may not just be restricted to those claiming JSA however, as there may be a far larger pool of people claiming other related benefits for similarly long periods of time. It is estimated that, with the inclusion of those claiming Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit for over 6 months, this would mean that nationally there could be approximately 2.4 million people in long-term worklessness.

6.4 In the period February 2013 to May 2015 the number of those claiming JSA for more than 12 months in both Haringey constituencies declined considerably: in Tottenham JSA claimants declined from 1,855 to 965, a 48% reduction whilst in Hornsey and Wood Green the number of JSA claimants declined from 895 to 540, a 40% reduction Such reductions in the number of claimants are however below that recorded for London (51%) and for England as a whole (53%).

- 6.5 There are a large number of agencies that provide wide ranging support for those seeking help back in to employment, education or training. These agencies are commissioned at all levels of government including national, regional and local authority level. Given the number of agencies involved in the job support market and the different levels of at which services are commissioned; there are inevitable questions as to the effectiveness of coordinated support for local unemployed people.
- 6.6 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee therefore commissioned a review of the job support market in Haringey to assess the nature and level of support available to those in long term unemployment and to identify:
- any gaps in local service provision;
 - ways in which local providers can work more collaboratively;
 - the role of the council in supporting such work.
- 6.7 In undertaking this work, the Committee have consulted the following stakeholders:
- Council officers;
 - Local partners (e.g. Job Centre Plus, Work Programme Providers, Voluntary Sector);
 - Local long term unemployed.
- 6.8 In assessing all the evidence received, the Committee have made 16 recommendations which are detailed in Appendix A.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The work of the Committee INR SPECT OF TEH Job Support Market contributes to Priority 4 of the Corporate Plan:

‘Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit.’

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

Finance and Procurement

The cost of undertaking this review has been contained within existing budgets.

Where recommendations within this report have a cost implication, for example recommendations around expanding HEST services or increased levels of advice or support being provided to job-seekers, appropriate budget will need to be agreed by Cabinet before the recommendations could be agreed and implemented. It should be noted that the Council has limited influence over funding in some areas, for example JCP, and is dependent on reducing external funding for some services that are provided internally such as HALS.

Legal

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report and confirms there are no legal implications at this stage.

Equality

The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

In completing this review of the Job Support Market, the Committee have highlighted that there may be disproportionate representation of protected characteristic groups within the long term unemployed including:

- Older people (those aged 55+);
- Younger people (under 24);
- Single mothers.

In response, the Committee makes a specific recommendation (Recommendation 1) that the newly established Job Support Forum (if agreed) should target the particular needs of target groups among long term unemployed, including those referenced above. In addition, other recommendations around could also have a positive impact on:

- Maternity (childcare recommendations)
- Disability (mental health and Guaranteed Interview Scheme recommendations)

The report highlights the perceived stigma of being a resident in Tottenham and how this may impact on job search activities as well a more generalised stigma of being long term unemployed.

The report highlights the policy tension in supporting the needs of the long term unemployed in that there are competing demands from respective equality groups (older people and younger people).

In considering the recommendations, the Council may wish to give further thought as to how this may impact on the protected characteristics of race and religion which were not fully explored within this review.

9. Use of Appendices

There are a number of appendices attached to the main body of the report in Appendix A:

- Tables and charts supporting the report
- List of all participants in the review

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985