

Subject:	Employment and Skills update and City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan 2021-2023
Date of meeting:	3 rd March 2021
Report of:	Executive Director for Families Children & Learning
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Ward(s) affected:	All

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 This report presents the City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan 2021 – 2023.

1.2 At the 3 December Policy & Resources Committee, Members agreed to ask officers for more detailed reports on the areas covered by the Covid 19 recovery programme including the impact of the pandemic on employment and skills within the city. This was provided to the Sub-Committee on 6th January. The report outlined a commitment to provide a separate detailed paper on employment to the March meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 Approve the City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan 2021 – 2023.

2.2 To note the general Employment and Skills update.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

City Employment and Skills (Recovery Plan) 2021-2023 - Summary

3.1 Due to the social and economic impact of the pandemic the new City Employment and Skills Plan is limited to two years and focused on recovery. It includes a high-level action plan covering 9 objectives. The full plan is incorporated into the end of this document, supplementary information is provided in appendices 1-6.

3.2 Governance will be provided by the Adult Learning and Skills Partnership (ALSP) which was restructured as a strategic partnership in 2019, and regular reports will be provided to relevant committees. Members either represent a large organisation for example Coast to Capital LEP, or networks comprising of a number of organisations working together towards a common purpose or

supporting a specific cohort of learners, for example residents in supported accommodation. The focus of the partnership is collaboration to improve outcomes, members of ALSP have contributed to the development of the plan. The membership list and Terms of Reference for the partnership can be found in appendices 5 and 6.

- 3.3 As it is a flexible and evolving plan based on broad objectives, the council will facilitate engagement with a wide range of stakeholders during the lifetime of the plan.
- 3.4 The funding interventions announced by the government in response to the pandemic, together with reforms and policy change following the reviews of further and higher education, is resulting in unprecedented change
- 3.5 Regular reporting against the objectives will deliver transparency in policy adoption and implementation, to ensure that the city benefits from reforms and interventions introduced to aid recovery and drive systemic change.
- 3.6 The plan acknowledges that responsibility for implementing actions to support recovery are not the preserve of the local authority or individual organisations within the city, an effective plan involves multiple stakeholders. Steps to recovery and the success of the new City Employment and Skills plan will require:
 - 3.6.1 Implementation of the national policy drivers announced by the government for example, its 'Plan for Jobs', at a local level.
 - 3.6.2 Stakeholder participation and collaboration – the council, employers, training providers, further education, universities, the LEP, business and education networks, and the third sector, work together to address priorities
 - 3.6.3 Governance and accountability – monitoring and reporting, supportively challenging, and managing risks detrimental to recovery.

Employment and Skills general update

A brief overview of national and local interventions is included below.

- 3.7 National Skills Fund – Level 3 adult offer (Lifetime Skills Guarantee)

In December the government announced the [Level 3 courses](#) eligible for full funding to enable adults to train and gain the valuable skills they need to improve their job prospects and support the economy. Please refer to appendix 1.

- 3.8 Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a genuine job with an accompanying assessment and skills development programme. Apprentices can be new or existing employees. In addition to employing apprentices the council promotes apprenticeships to residents and employers, celebrates achievements and engages with providers and employers to understand the local offer, challenges and opportunities.

Reforms to apprenticeships include incentive payments for employers who recruit new apprentices, front-loaded training for certain apprenticeships, starting with construction, the facility to redistribute unspent Levy funds in bulk to SME's through a new pledge function. To date the council has transferred nearly £373k of Levy funds and has just launched a further application process to make available an additional £200k to support organisations in the city. Applicants must demonstrate that they are addressing one of a number of priorities, for example supporting an apprentice who has been made redundant through the COVID-19 pandemic or supporting business recovery through an apprenticeship.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-guide-for-employers>

3.9 The Kickstart Scheme

Led by the Department for Work and Pensions, the Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion national fund aimed at creating hundreds of thousands of new high-quality meaningful six-month roles for young people (aged 16-24) which includes employability support. Funding for Kickstart roles is available for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week. All opportunities are promoted and arranged by the DWP. Initially, employers who had less than 30 opportunities had to work with a Gateway organisation, however this is no longer mandatory, and employers can work directly with the DWP to promote their roles.

Due to the scale of the programme, there has been a slow start nationally and locally. There are number of Gateway organisations actively working with employers to create opportunities in the city, so far over 350 placements are progressing. Current Gateway organisations include:

- Future Creators (Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival) are working with the Creative, Cultural and Digital Sectors to create placements opportunities in theatres, colleges, arts organisations, digital agencies and production companies. All placements will be badged, providing a digital reference which demonstrate their experience when looking for future work.
- Clearline Recruitment Agency incorporating Next Steps Apprenticeships are working with SME's to provide placements in a number of sectors.
- The Greater Brighton Metropolitan College is working to secure Kickstart opportunities through its business networks.
- Projects Club a community of entrepreneurs, freelancers and businesses.

Subject to funding for the Youth Employment Hub being confirmed, the council will create a role which will facilitate pre-employment opportunities within the council including Kickstart Placements. The council are working closely with the DWP to monitor and support progress

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

3.10 Enterprise Adviser Network

Led by Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and funded by the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Enterprise Adviser Network connects schools and colleges with employers and careers programme providers and supports them to work together to provide young people with effective and high-quality encounters with the world of work.

The Enterprise Adviser Network is funded by the Careers & Enterprise Company, through C2C Local Enterprise Partnership. The city has a dedicated Enterprise Co-ordinator who supports our schools and colleges to implement their Careers Strategy and make progress in achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks, a common national approach for careers education and guidance. This is monitored by Ofsted through its Inspection Framework.

Schools and colleges are required to provide an effective careers programme including unbiased careers advice, experience of work, contact with employers, and supporting their students to make good choices and understand what they need to do to reach and succeed in the careers to which they aspire.

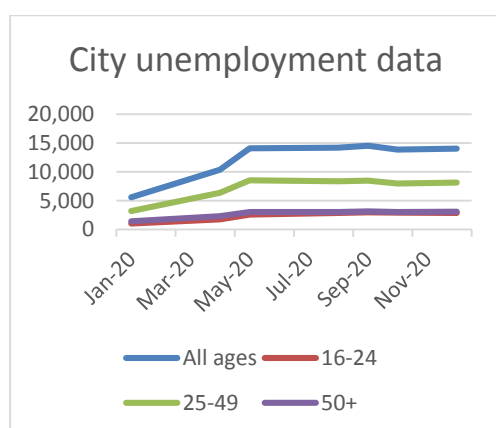
The Enterprise Adviser Network through its engagement with employers is pivotal in providing resources, research and supporting contact with employers in relation to experience of the world of work. All schools and colleges in the city are engaging with the network.

The council work closely with the Enterprise Co-ordinator, jointly leading half-termly meetings with school and college Career Leaders.

<https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/enterprise-adviser-network/>

3.11 Brighton and Hove Employment Data

Reporting of unemployment data and participation in schemes introduced by the government to provide financial support to business and the self-employed will be incorporated into the reporting mechanisms of the City Employment and Skills Plan. A summary of the take up of the financial interventions is included in appendix 4 City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan. The following table shows the level of unemployment in the city since January 2020.



	All ages	16-24	25-49	50+
Jan-20	5,570	1,000	3,180	1,385
Apr-20	10,335	1,720	6,320	2,295
May-20	14,080	2,540	8,540	3,000
Aug-20	14,210	2,850	8,340	3,025
Sep-20	14,510	2,950	8,435	3,120
Oct-20	13,845	2,895	7,965	2,985
Dec-20	14,000	2,825	8,105	3,075

3.12 White Paper - Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth

Prior to the pandemic the further and higher education sector was already preparing for structural reforms to transform post-16 technical education. These reforms, together with the policy interventions cascading from the Plan for Jobs, mean that the scope and rate of change to be implemented is unprecedented.

A White Paper - Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth was released in January it proposes to deliver the focus on jobs and growth by:

- Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills
- Investing in advanced technical and higher technical skills
- Creating a flexible, lifetime skills guarantee
- Reforming accountability, governance, and interventions
- Supporting outstanding teaching

A summary of the white paper can be found in appendix 7.

4 Conclusion

The objectives and action plan included in the City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan 2021-2023, set out a clear and collaborative route map for the next two years, with oversight and governance provided by the Adult Learning and Skills Partnership, and strategic and operational support from the Families, Children and Learning Directorate.

4.1 Financial Implications:

The report provides details re the City and Employment Plan and any additional costs that arise will be met from within existing budgets.

It is important that the financial position is reviewed regularly in line with the Targeted Budget Management Timetable (TBM)

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 4th February 2021

4.2 Legal Implications

The Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan will assist the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan priorities and to meet the expectations under the Enterprise Act 2016 and updated guidance in relation to apprenticeships. Decisions in relation to specific actions under the plan will need to be taken following the Council's normal decision making requirements.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 18 February 2021

4.3 Brexit Implications:

Recommendations from the Brexit Implementation Lead have been incorporated in the City Employment and Skills (Recovery) Plan

4.4 Equalities Implications:

The plan has been developed to focus on recovery following the impact of the pandemic on residents and businesses in the city. It is aligned with council priorities and supporting residents furthest from the labour market remains a core value. The Adult Learning and Skills Partnership includes representation from a number of organisations who support disadvantaged groups. Addressing digital inequality is a clearly identified as a priority in action plan, as are actions to address barriers for residents who are facing inequality in accessing the labour market (including linked to age, race, disability). As the action plans are further developed, they will consider how they support people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability in the city to develop the skills and knowledge required to enable them to achieve their full potential.

4.5 Sustainability Implications:

BHCC is aiming high in key sustainability and carbon reduction priority areas. The councils' Circular Economy Routemap and the overarching Carbon Neutral 2030 programme set ambitious targets for what we want to achieve over the coming 10yr period. This is going to place greater demand upon our local labour force and expectations from local SMEs. Although there are opportunities to help deliver on some of this through the new and emerging Decarbonisation Academy, and, hopefully, national government policy drivers will have some role to play in stimulating the change that is needed further, we cannot rely upon what may or may not transpire from this.

Brighton & Hove City Employment and Skills Recovery Plan 2021-2023

1. Introduction

We have developed the 2021-2023 City Employment and Skills Recovery Plan in response to the current and emerging impact on employment and skills in the city caused by:

- the Coronavirus pandemic
- the end of the transitional arrangements with the EU
- the extensive policy reforms to the further and higher education landscape and the Plan for Jobs announced by the government in July 2020.

The priorities of the previous City Employment and Skills Plan (2016-2020) remain core values underpinning the new plan. They include 'no-one left behind' and supporting 'learn to earn' transitions.

These support the council's corporate plan and its commitment to inclusive growth. It remains our ambition to ensure that residents are supported effectively to make the most of the economic opportunity that the city and its wider partnerships can offer.

The [Brighton and Hove Economic Strategy](#) continues to provide the evidence base for employment and the narrative for the city's economic priorities. This is supplemented with additional intelligence and information from stakeholders in relation to the implications and impact of the pandemic.

2. A flexible and responsive plan

The scale of the pandemic has meant that most of the city's employers and workers have been affected in some way since restrictions were introduced. Many have been impacted in a significant way, either through redundancy, business closure or insolvency. Locally, the Visitor Economy Sector has been significantly affected, and regionally the Aviation Sector and its supply chain.

In March 2020, as part of its financial support for business, the government introduced the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) (Furlough) and the [Self-Employed Income Support Scheme](#). According to government data, these schemes have been well utilised by the city's employers and self-employed residents. Both schemes have been extended into 2021.

The impact of the pandemic on unemployment in the city was swift. Across all age groups the increase in unemployment was high, increasing from 5,820 in February 2020 to 14,510 (September 2020). The young have been disproportionately impacted, with an 180% increase in unemployment for 18-24 year olds at the peak. The young are particularly vulnerable due to their lack of experience in work. Unemployment can have a long-term impact on individuals (and their families) irrespective of age, and appropriate levels of support will need to be provided to all of the age groups affected. (Appendix 4 – employment data)

At the time of writing (February 2021), the pandemic is still causing considerable disruption with a further national lockdown in place. The end of free movement of workers, and the impact of the new points based immigration system following the UK's departure from the EU, is unclear. A greater reliance on domestic recruitment and re-training to support sectors that have previously relied on overseas workers is likely. It is anticipated that following the relaxation of restrictions, pent up demand will provide

opportunities in the accommodation and hospitality sector, particularly if the trend for staycations remains during 2021.

This recovery plan is not static. It will continue to evolve over the next two years in order to:

- respond flexibly to emerging local priorities deliver regional projects funded through the LEP's Smarter, Greener, Stronger and Skills 360 Board's Skills Strategy and Action Plan
- implement and monitor national reforms and interventions introduced to aid economic recovery, increase productivity and close skills gaps.

Employment and skills is interwoven in every aspect of society. The impact of an imbalance between supply and demand manifests on many levels. These include unemployment, under-employment, and jobs that are hard to fill. This can be due to a lack of the level of skill required, or in the extreme, a shortage of specific occupations nationally.

At the other end of the spectrum are roles that have historically been considered not desirable by those seeking work.

Responding to these challenges is complex and dependent on many factors. These include:

- inward investment
- funding
- qualifications and provision that delivers the knowledge and skills needed
- information, advice and guidance that help people, whatever the stage in their lives, to make the right decisions about their career
- offering appropriate opportunities for residents who are facing disadvantage in accessing education or work.

It is not possible for this plan to include every action or initiative that will contribute to job creation, upskilling and reskilling of the city's current and future workforce. Every education provider and employer will develop a recovery plan based on their own economic priorities. However, there is a strong spirit of collaboration in the city to align these priorities and recognition as to the benefits of doing so. Ultimately, local recovery is dependent on the retention and creation of jobs, and the alignment of labour demand with skills supply.

Prior to the pandemic the education sector was already preparing for structural reforms to transform post-16 technical education. The sector was also anticipating higher education reforms to further align post-18 education in response to the evolution in skills and knowledge that employers need. The scope and breadth of the reforms are detailed in appendix 1.

These reforms, together with the policy interventions cascading from the new Plan for Jobs, mean that the scope and rate of change anticipated through the life of this plan is unprecedented. Announced by the government in July 2020, the 'Plan for Jobs', focuses on supporting, protecting, and creating jobs, in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. These interventions will support people to find jobs and gain the skills they need to get jobs, including targeted support for young people.

In acknowledging the complexity of the landscape, the role of the council is to lead this practical local plan. It will need to utilise intelligence from the Local Enterprise

Partnership, in its capacity of Skills Advisory Panel. This will facilitate a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved in order for the city to benefit from the national investment in innovation, education, skills and employment initiatives.

To be successful this plan will require:

- Implementation of the national policy drivers announced by the government – for example, its ‘Plan for Jobs’ – at a local level.
- Stakeholder participation and collaboration – with the council, employers, training providers, further education, universities, LEP, business and education networks and the third sector all working together to address priorities
- Governance and accountability – monitoring and reporting, supportively challenging, and managing risks detrimental to recovery.

The action plan, detailed in appendix 2, identifies objectives, actions and outcomes. These will be delivered collaboratively by stakeholders working together to address the priorities in this plan. The impact on stakeholders of the educational reforms and the policy interventions announced by the government to aid recovery, cannot be underestimated, particularly as limited resources are available to support delivery. Brighton & Hove is the most successful coastal city in the UK. It has a strong knowledge economy, an entrepreneurial workforce and high business start-up rates. With the right conditions, this will underpin economic recovery.

The city benefits from a strong collaborative ethos through formal and informal networks. It also has good partnerships with education, businesses and the third sector.

3. Objectives

The following objectives have been identified as essential to recovery. They are of equal priority. A high-level action plan for each objective is detailed in appendix 2.

	<p>Priority Objective – Digital Inclusion</p> <p>Digital exclusion is caused by low pay or poverty. It affects residents who are already socially and economically disadvantaged, further deepening existing inequalities. It prevents access to education, learning, health, income benefits, employment and causes isolation and loneliness. Decreasing digital exclusion and increasing digital inclusion across the city is a priority objective which cuts across the 9 objectives. Digital inclusion measures should be embedded in the action plans as they are further developed with progress reported regularly.</p>
3.1	<p>Objective 1 - Interventions supporting young people into education, training, work and apprenticeships that lead to a decline of NEETs and youth unemployment in the city and address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employer participation with the Kickstart Scheme and creation of meaningful opportunities – resulting in young people moving into sustainable work • Local implementation of the expanded youth offer • Establish a physical and virtual Youth Employment Hub in the city • Creation of new high quality Traineeship opportunities in the city aligned to occupational standards – to support progression into apprenticeships and sector specific jobs

3.2	<p>Objective 2 - Local delivery of National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus interventions that support people into work, lead to a decline of unemployment in the city and support sector skills gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver high quality careers, information, advice and guidance to the unemployed and economically inactive seeking employment, utilising labour market information to respond to local sector demand. • Deliver a sector-based skills academy offer that responds to local employer demand for skills. • Maximise the city’s use of the Flexible Support Fund to fund projects or interventions that move people closer to employment. • Enhance local workforce capacity to support delivery • Local implementation of the JETS Work and Health Programme
3.3	<p>Objective 3 - High quality apprenticeships that meet employer skills requirements and provide progression pathways for residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote interventions that lead to an increase of high quality apprenticeships in the city. • Collaboration with providers and businesses to plan for future skills needs.
3.4	<p>Objective 4 - Accredited Adult Learning Programmes that meet employer skills requirements and provide progression pathways for residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers to work together to effectively utilise the Adult Education Accredited Learning Budget. This will ensure a varied and relevant curriculum offer with strong progression routes and pathways and for learners • Make the new level 3 offer available, varied and accessible to residents in the city and delivered by local providers (where possible) • Seek opportunities to introduce skills bootcamp programmes
3.5	<p>Objective 5 – Access funds that facilitate the delivery of employment and skills interventions in the city, and deliver projects that support the Grow Back Greener Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of Decarbonisation Academy Pilot project in partnership with Coast to Capital LEP • Deliver social housing decarbonisation retrofit programmes for homes and buildings at scale, working with LEP, academics and leading community sector providers. • Deliver public sector decarbonisation to fund energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrade measures (subject to successful funding bid)
3.6	<p>Objective 6 – Implement T-Levels and Further and Higher Education reforms in the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the infrastructure is in place to deliver T-Levels in the city by

	<p>September 2023, when T Levels become a mainstream offer for eligible 16-19 providers (note roll out to all providers from September 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with and respond to Department of Education consultation Level 2 and 3 curriculum reviews. Be an early adopter of Higher Technical Qualifications.
3.7	<p>Objective 7 - Effective support is in place to address barriers for residents who are facing inequality in accessing the labour market. Including but not limited to age, race, disability, health or homelessness/ insecure housing, digital poverty.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that residents can face significant, multiple and complex barriers which impact upon their ability to access and sustain employment. In response to this, the action plan supporting this objective will be further developed in consultation with stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make progress in supporting all age groups with a disability to access pathways to employment and sustain paid work Ensure appropriate provision and pathways for residents who are homeless or in supported accommodation Ensure appropriate community learning provision pathways for residents requiring first step confidence building pathways, digital, maths, English and family learning Make progress in supporting BAME residents to access pathways to employment and sustain paid work, including appropriate provision and pathways for ESOL learners
3.8	<p>Objective 8 - A varied career education and experience of the world of work offer is available to all young people in the city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting all young people in education to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work – in order to make informed choices about their future education and career choices
3.9	<p>Objective 9 – Ensure effective oversight and monitoring of funding streams which provide employability related support and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the impact on local services of the cessation of significant funding streams, including EU ESF Funding, and take mitigating action.

4. Governance and reporting

This plan aligns with the local and regional strategies included in appendix 3. The plan will be managed by the council's Employment and Skills Team with governance provided by the Adult Learning and Skills Partnership – appendix 5 & 6. Progress reports will be provided to council committees as agreed.

Appendices

- 1 Plan for Jobs/Spending Review 2020 interventions
- 2 Draft action plan
- 3 City wide strategies and plans

- 4 Brighton and Hove employment data
- 5 Adult Learning and Skills Partnership – Terms of Reference
- 6 Governance
- 7 White Paper – Skills for Jobs