



Work Outline

Birmingham Skills Offer: meeting the needs of current and future employment opportunities

Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group

Our key question:	How is the council responding to the Breaking Down the Barriers Report and what is the vision for Life-Long Learning and Skills across the city?
1. How is O&S adding value through this work?	<p>Birmingham has a persistently high unemployment rate and low skills which affects the opportunities for residents and the ability to grow the local economy and attract business to the City.</p> <p>In February 2020, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 6.3% of young people aged 18-24 in Birmingham and 6.1% in the West Midlands were unemployed. By March 2021, this had risen to 11.6% in Birmingham and 11.5% in the West Midlands – an increase of over 5%. When we remove economically inactive young people who are not currently seeking employment, such as students, youth unemployment in the city rose to approximately 20% as of April 2021. Almost one in five young people in Birmingham are now out of work - substantially greater than the current UK average of 13.5% for 18 to 24 youth unemployment. (Breaking Down the Barriers)</p> <p>The Scrutiny Inquiry will contribute to policy development through focussing on the recommendations of the Breaking Down the Barriers Report that relate to the skills agenda for young people.</p> <p>Grand Challenges addressed: Unemployment, skills and the economy</p> <p>Corporate Plan Priorities: A city that is Prosperous and Inclusive</p>
2. What needs to be done?	<p>Key questions:</p> <p>The 5 recommendations from the Breaking Down the Barrier Report that are relevant to are relevant to this Scrutiny Inquiry are:</p>



- Support young people to build confidence and resilience
- Develop a comprehensive city-wide mentoring scheme
- Facilitate accessible work experience opportunities
- Reshape careers advice and guidance services
- Deliver a locally designed scheme of employment support for young people and businesses

The Inquiry will also consider:

How marketing and communication strategies are used to inform disenfranchised young people of the skills and employment opportunities available.

How young people are supported to develop entrepreneurial skills?

The Inquiry may also identify specific sectors where there is a skills gap or groups of young people to consider in greater detail during the inquiry.

Members will also receive evidence on the data on employment and skills and the current arrangement for skills funding for children and young people and the position going forward.

Evidence from:

- Cabinet Members
- Birmingham City Council Skills Team: including data on jobs and skills funding (Committee Meeting November 2022)
- Employers* – identify 2 sectors (based on evidence)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)*
- Local Enterprise Partnership *
- Business Improvement Districts*
- Trade unions / Trades Council*
- Young People (including SEND and Care Leavers. City Youth Board*, Link with Beat Freeks)
- Schools
- Chamber of Commerce*
- Careers Enterprise Company*
- Small Business Association*
- Higher and further education institutions* (9 Further Education colleges and 5 universities)
- Examples of good practice from other areas*
- Birmingham Education Partnership*
- Young Women’s Trust*
- Prince’s Trust*

*These organisations do not have a statutory duty to contribute to the Scrutiny Inquiry but will be invited to contribute and give evidence.



	<p>The WMCA has the devolved power for adult skills but has a separate WMCA Scrutiny Committee that will consider this adult skills. The WMCA work recognises the importance of youth skills and employment and works with regional partners to support this. However, while not scrutinising the WMCA, it will be important to understand the regional strategic context for the skills agenda in Birmingham.</p> <p>The Breaking Down the Barriers report includes recommendations regarding reducing the cost of public transport, children and young people's mental health, digital inclusion, giving a voice to young people through the Brum Talks Festival and creating a one stop shop online hub. These issues are outside the scope of the Scrutiny Inquiry. It is noted that there is a separate Scrutiny Inquiry taking place on children and young people's mental health.</p>
3. What timescale do we propose to do this in?	<p>Inquiry report to City Council 4 April 2023.</p> <p>It is noted that a response to the recommendations in the Breaking Down the Barriers Report will be provided in December 2022. This will take into account the work being undertaken by the Inquiry and the Inquiry timescales.</p>
4. What outcomes are we looking to achieve?	<p>Reducing unemployment</p> <p>Increasing skills / retraining for better paid jobs</p> <p>Reducing long term unemployment / reducing poverty</p> <p>To consider the funding streams to deliver the skills agenda for young people</p> <p>Including the transition from European Social Fund (ESF) to the UK Prosperity Fund</p> <p>Careers – understanding what careers / job opportunities there will be in the city and how to train for them.</p>
5. What is the best way to achieve these outcomes and what routes will we use?	<p>The Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to undertake this Inquiry. Evidence will be presented to Committee meeting or meetings of the Task and Finish Group.</p>

Member / Officer Leads

Lead Member:	<p>Chair of Task and Finish Group: Cllr. Suleman</p> <p>Deputy Chair of Task and Finish Group: Cllr. Morrall</p>
Members of the Task and Finish Group	<p>Cllrs: Suleman, Aziz, Morrall, Brennan, Knowles</p>
Lead Officer:	<p>Fiona Bottrill. Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager.</p>