

EDEPS Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	3 rd April 2019
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Westminster Employment Service
Report of:	Barbara Brownlee, Executive Director, Growth Planning & Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cllr David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education and Skills www.westminster.gov.uk/cabinet)
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	<p>City of Opportunity is one of the five programmes of the Council's City for All Programme. City of Opportunity sets out the Council's ambition for everyone in the City to have the opportunity to build their lives, careers and families in Westminster.</p> <p>The Westminster Employment Service promotes opportunity for all through supporting residents into training and sustained employment. Outcomes which the Service supports include healthy, active lifestyles, economic independence, improve mental health and wellbeing and reduced isolation.</p>
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report summarises the progress which has been made by and the impact of the Westminster Employment Service.
- 1.2 The Service was launched in 2017 to support the *City for All* ambition - *Opportunity and Fairness* - and with the objective of transforming the lives of vulnerable residents, including the long-term unemployed through an effective back-to-work service.
- 1.3 In establishing the Service, the City Council recognised that there is (and remains) good provision for people who have low and moderate needs for support. The vast majority of this cohort returns to work within six months, either by themselves or with the assistance of Jobcentre Plus. However, for those who are out of work because of ill health: particularly anxiety, depression or low level mental health conditions, there is much less success at returning to work or, indeed, finding work in the first place.
- 1.4 The opportunity therefore for the Westminster Employment Service since has been to fill the gaps in provision through a network of employment coaches employed by the Council, working alongside local agencies, charities and the NHS to deliver an effective employment service.
- 1.6 The report and Background Information (Appendix 1) incorporates a wide range of information including independent evaluations, service user data, feedback from beneficiaries. The analysis provides Scrutiny with an overall assessment made during the first two years.
- 1.7 In summary, the Service is making a considerable impact on the lives of residents, including those with the most significant barriers to employment and children living in poverty. The quality of personalisation offered is seen as a key strength of our Service, as evidenced in the positive feedback from clients. Furthermore, the outcomes achieved represent considerable value for money for the Council – for every £1 invested in the Service by the Council, a further £89 of discretionary and external funds has been secured to support outcomes. Cost benefit analysis shows that just one project within our overall Service – the HELP project has delivered saving of roughly £450,000 over its two-year life time, primarily through reduced spend on welfare benefits and temporary accommodation
- 1.8. The Service outperforms comparable local and national services that are working with people with barriers to employment and the unit costs per sustained job are half the cost of comparable programmes. The ambition of the Service is to continue to improve the offer, focussed on increasing in-work support, doing more to help residents with mental health conditions and more effectively connecting in with skills providers to enhance the long-term careers prospect of residents.
- 1.9 A full Service evaluation is planned in 2019/20 and as set out below, the evaluation presents the Service and this Committee with an opportunity to understand in greater depth, how the Service is meeting local need.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

Committee is asked to consider:

- I. The progress made in the past 2 years since establishing the Service.
- II. The issues or lines of enquiry which Committee would like to see explored in more detail through the evaluation in the next 12 months.
- III. Our plans and ambition connecting to local need and demand.

3. Background

- 3.1 Appendix 1 sets out further information regarding the Westminster Employment Service and for consideration by Committee:

Section	What the Section covers
Introduction	Overview of the purpose of the Service, who we help and the Business Case
Context	Demand for our Service from residents & employers City wide information on need for employment support
Our Service offer	Our Services for those that need our help the most and the way in which we work with local partners and employers including Council suppliers, developers and within the Council
Partnerships	Sets out the way in which the Service works with and supports local partners including charities, Colleges, the NHS and Government sponsored back-to-work programmes
Service impact & effectiveness	Our key performance indicators and performance, value for money and return on investment analysis. This section also includes a summary from recent evaluations of our Service.
Service user intelligence & insights	The section sets out the characteristics of our beneficiaries.
Ambition & Plans for 2019	Including our plans to strengthen in-work support, the connection with skills programmes and a forthcoming partnership with the NHS to support residents with mental health conditions.
Sustainability	Information about how the Service is funded and our strategy for continuing and expanding our offer to help more residents in need and employers in the City.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Tom Harding x2244
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