

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 12

meeting date: 25TH SEPTEMBER 2018
 title: REPORT FROM SOCIAL MOBILITY WORKING GROUP
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
 principal author: MICHELLE HAWORTH – PRINCIPAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present this committee with the findings of the Social Mobility Working Group and some potential actions.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives –
 - Corporate Priorities –
 - Other Considerations -
 - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
 - To help makes people's lives safer and healthier
 - To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support social mobility

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the publication of the 'State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain report' in November 2017 questions were asked about Ribble Valley's ranking in the Youth area. The borough was ranked 13th worst in the cold spots.
- 2.2 The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.
- 2.3 Using 16 indicators, the index assesses the education, employability and housing prospects of people living in each of England's 324 local authority areas. The index highlights where people from disadvantaged backgrounds are most (hot spot) and least (cold spot) likely to make social progress.
- 2.4 Over recent years, the education system has benefited from significant investment in early years, rising standards in schools and growing numbers of working-class youngsters getting a university place, but there remains an entrenched and unbroken correlation between social class and educational success: the income gap is larger than either the ethnicity gap or the gender gap in schools. In short, Britain's deep social mobility problem, for this generation of young people in particular, is getting worse not better.
- 2.5 Policy and Finance Committee at their meeting on 20 March 2018 looked at the results of the report for Ribble Valley. It was agreed to set up a working group "to determine the reasons for the apparent lack of social mobility amongst young people in the Ribble Valley and to provide recommendations for the Council and partners as to how they should tackle the problems going forward".

3 MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 The working group agreed that 'socially mobile' means making meaningful progress in education / employment.
- 3.2 The group decided to look at all sources of evidence and further information available before coming to any conclusions. This included approaching the DWP (the Job Centre), CAB, Ribble Valley Food Bank, Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Local

Enterprise partnership (LEP).

3.3 The working group noted that:

- schools no longer have dedicated careers advisors to give help and advice to young people
- the only sixth form in the borough is CRGS, which has high entrance attainment levels. This means that those who do not achieve entry may have to travel long distances to colleges outside the borough, for example to Blackburn, Accrington, Craven, and Nelson
- schools are very much 'results based' and in some cases non-achievers may be seen as failures with few systems in place to support them. It was also felt that the aspirations of young people cannot be changed at 16
- in 2016 the number of disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 4 in Ribble Valley (classed as those that have claimed free school meals (FSMs) at any point during the previous 6 years / children that are looked after) totalled 105.

NEET data (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

3.4 The group felt the focus should be on young people who are NEET as well as those who are in employment but not doing any training as these are likely to be on minimum wage and therefore not as socially mobile.

3.5 School pupils are recorded and tracked from the age of 14. Information is updated by the schools at the end of year 11 when the school knows where the pupil has gone ie into employment or college etc. and also information is passed on by the colleges. It is possible that some information is not recorded if pupils transfer to a college out of the county area e.g. to Craven. The NEET team at LCC follow up on the unknowns by making direct contact with the pupil to ascertain what they are doing. However, the team is now much reduced and therefore data for all districts might not be as up-to-date as it once was. Reporting is done on a monthly basis with a big push for November/December reporting period as this forms the annual report. It is estimated that through this following-up process approximately 50% of unknowns are recorded as being NEET.

Apprenticeships

3.6 The Government is trying to develop the apprenticeship system by introducing an apprentice levy scheme for all employers with more than 250 employees. Apprenticeships enable training and development 'on the job' that give transferrable skills once qualified. There are 5 employers in Ribble Valley that have over 250 employees.

Information from LCC

3.7 LCC provided data relating to boroughs in Lancashire including the final destinations of 2017 school leavers and the data used to calculate the 16 indicators in the State of the nation report. The LCC link for more information on social mobility is <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/deprivation/social-mobility/>

3.8 A further request for information to the NEET team at LCC has received no response.

DWP

3.9 The DWP do not normally come across many school leavers, as young people (school leavers) cannot usually claim benefit until they turn 18 (unless there is an estrangement issue).

3.10 They have approximately five 18 year olds on their books at the present time. They are seeing a slight increase in the amount of 17-24 year old claimant's in Clitheroe due to The Sidings in Clitheroe housing young people who cannot live with their parents.

- 3.11 DWP are hoping that the amount of NEET customers will steadily decrease, as LCC are currently recruiting some Co-ordinator posts across Lancashire and these posts will be working with children from secondary schools, looking at options with 15-16 year olds (Year 11 students). They think this provision within schools has not been particularly well funded in the last few years (which could have had a bearing on the figures we have been looking at?)

The Ribble Valley Food Bank and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

- 3.12 The Ribble Valley Food Bank has not responded to email requests for information.

- 3.13 CAB does not keep detailed statistics specific to NEET.

LEP

- 3.14 Janet Jackson who works in the LEP Skills Hub came to talk to the working group about what they are doing to increase social mobility and was able to share some up-to-date data on the number of NEETs (and unknowns) for 2017/18 (as at April) and 2018/19 (as at April). In Ribble Valley the number of NEETs had increased from 13 to 26 and the number of unknowns from 26 to 70 – a combined marked increase from 2.8% to 6.6% of school leavers who are NEET or unknown. This data was based on all pupils not just those that are disadvantaged (claiming FSMs).

- 3.15 Janet informed the working group that there is now an Enterprise Advisor Scheme working with 120 schools in Lancashire to match employers with schools to enhance work experience opportunities or careers support. This includes talks in school, as well as visits out of school. Employer encounter activity is reported as having a positive impact on social mobility. Unfortunately there had been no take up from either CRGS or St Augustine's RC High. From September there will be a legal requirement to have a careers lead in all schools. Usually these posts are filled from existing teaching staff rather than a trained careers specialist. It was felt that schools should be encouraged to get employers in to talk to pupils about work and help them understand that there are a variety of options available post 16, not all of which involve continuing in academia. The working group discussed rural based college courses as much of our borough is rural. These courses aren't offered everywhere - with only Myerscough and Burnley catering for such subjects.

- 3.18 Janet informed the group about a new initiative called 'Moving On' whereby the opportunities in Lancashire that are available all year round for those who have not started college or 'dropped out' are marked on a map.

- 3.19 She also reported that there are more than 50 apprenticeships currently available in the borough, which is quite normal for the area. The data showed that:

- most of the vacancies are in catering/hospitality
- some of the apprenticeships may be in areas which are harder to travel to for young people
- 10 out of the 76 available apprenticeships have had no applicants
- some vacancies have been advertised for some length of time
- North Lancashire Training Group and the colleges are the main training providers

4 ACTIONS

- 4.1 The 'State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain report' listed some recommended actions in the Youth area:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) should follow the approach of the North East LEP, which works to improve careers support for young people by facilitating collaboration between employers, schools and colleges via joint groups and websites.

- Universities should play a more active role in their local community by encouraging local employers to hire graduates and organising student volunteering in isolated areas nearby
- Government should develop education and skills policies to better support disadvantaged young people in isolated areas, for example, by targeting any unused apprenticeship levy at regions that have fewer high-level apprenticeships.

Possible Actions that RVBC can take

- 4.2 Encourage the take up of the Enterprise Advisor Scheme in CRGS and St Augustine's RC High. The Enterprise Co-ordinator working with schools in Ribble Valley would be willing to come to a future meeting and talk about their work in schools and to discuss where they need some support to reach CRGS and St Augustine's in particular. (Longridge High, Bowland and Ribblesdale are already involved and St Cecilia's has just come on board.)When looking at the Apprenticeships available in the borough and the take-up the working group agreed that there is perhaps an opportunity to change the aspirations of young people and to emphasise that there are skills to be learned by young people even if the initial apprenticeship isn't their preferred line of work.
- 4.4 It was suggested that it might be worth carrying out a mapping exercise to look where the NEETs are located in comparison to the apprenticeships available. The group is concerned about the transport systems available. See map at Appendix A for the distribution of apprenticeships. Unfortunately however, the LEP has, as yet, been unable to provide the distribution data of NEETs. There might be the opportunity to look into a 'Wheels to Work' scheme.
- 4.5 The main way the Council can help is by signposting what is available. For example spreading the word about upcoming job fairs (there will be one in the Cathedral Quarter in Blackburn in September that we could help share information about with schools/employers). The Families and Well Being Service can text NEETs/unknowns with information regarding events if done with plenty of notice. Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum have been involved with recent recruitment events in the area and could provide a good link if we decide that additional promotion of apprenticeships is needed in the area. The new website could be used to signpost to where to look for apprenticeships.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – None identified.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – None identified.
 - Political – None identified.
 - Reputation – Enhance the reputation of the Council in working in partnerships to improve the quality of life for residents.
 - Equality & Diversity – To extend opportunities to all sections of the community.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Consider the above actions and agree to the Council taking a more pro-active approach to signposting and encouraging partnerships.
- 6.2 Agree that any future 'State of the Nation: Social Mobility in Great Britain' reports are reported to this Committee in order to monitor the situation and any progress made.

Michelle Haworth
PRINCIPAL POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE OFFICER

Jane Pearson
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

REF:

For further information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421