

Apprenticeships in Tameside



Services for Children and Young People
Scrutiny Panel

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Introduction by the Chair

I am pleased to present this report of a review undertaken by the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel into Apprenticeships in Tameside.

The recent downturn in the economy has had a significant impact on unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.

Businesses across the country require a consistent supply of appropriately skilled young people in order to replace retiring workers and to meet new skill needs.

If a young person is not in education, employment or training (NEET), this means that they are not acquiring the necessary skills that the economy needs and this potentially reduces their future employability.

Unemployment in Tameside has increased significantly during recent years. This can be monitored by reviewing the number of people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. The figures represent the number of people that are unemployed and actively seeking work.

It is important that Tameside Council work in collaboration with partners to address youth unemployment in the borough. Partnership working helps to create a support network for a person which has the potential to improve the accessibility of learning and employment opportunities.

The Panel are aware that apprenticeships allow young people to enter employment and also gain additional skills and qualifications. It is important that work is undertaken to ensure that permanent employment is achievable and sustainable for a person, once an apprenticeship is completed.

The review provides a snapshot of the current apprenticeship approach in Tameside. Review findings also demonstrate that it may be difficult to improve on the current situation, with the present restraints.

During the review the Panel were provided with evidence that apprenticeships do lead to full time employment. The Panel appreciate that it will be challenging for the Council to act upon recommendations, taking into account the current economic situation and the actions that are already being taken.

On behalf of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel, I would like to thank all those who have participated in this review.

Councillor Alan Whitehead
Chair of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

2. Summary

Tameside primarily attracts businesses from the manufacturing industry. The downturn in the economy has affected this sector more than others.

Compared with other authorities across the AGMA region Tameside residents have a relatively low skill level.

Apprenticeships are an alternative approach to conventional higher education that allows a person to gain skills and qualifications whilst working. This helps to improve a person's skill level and therefore positively affects their employability.

It is important that an apprentice receives comprehensive training. During recent years some providers have awarded apprenticeship certificates to people that have attended a 12 week training programme. It is important that the review looks at what types of apprenticeships are available and how they are regulated.

This review focuses on the work that is being carried out throughout Tameside to promote apprenticeships, as a way that young people can gain employment and work towards accredited qualifications.

It is important for the review to look at the work that is being carried out to ensure that employers work towards creating long-term and sustainable employment opportunities for apprentices.

3. Membership of the Scrutiny Panel

Councillor A Whitehead (Chair), Councillor C Patrick (Deputy Chair).
Councillors R Ambler, D Cartwright, J Cooper, P Dowthwaite, M Fowler, A Holland, D McNally, S Parker-Perry, G Roberts, M Whitley.

Mr A Moss (Citizens' Panel)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL – 2012/2013

Councillor A Whitehead (Chair), Councillor M Bailey (Deputy Chair)
Councillors W Bray, D Buckley, Y Cartey, J Cooper, P Dowthwaite, M Fowler, A Holland, B Holland, G Roberts, M Whitley

4. Terms of Reference

Aim of the Review:

To explore how Tameside Council and its partners are working together to promote apprenticeships and whether this is making a positive impact on unemployment, in particular youth unemployment in the borough.

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the national policy in relation to apprenticeship schemes.
2. To evaluate the situation with regards to unemployment at a local, regional and national level.
3. To evaluate Tameside Council's strategies in addressing unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.
4. To examine Tameside Council's apprenticeship scheme and how many people have/are taking place.
5. To evaluate the role of Tameside College, the largest local provider of apprenticeships.
6. To examine the future job opportunities for apprentices and how apprenticeships will help improve skills and enterprise in Tameside.
7. To produce workable recommendations for the council and partners to deliver sustainable improvements to the outcome of apprenticeships in Tameside.

Value for Money/use of Resources:

Apprenticeships play an important role in helping school leavers and young people improve their skills, qualifications and employability. Effective strategies to help promote apprenticeships within the borough are crucial to the future growth of Tameside's economy.

It is important that the council helps to support young people and the companies that offer apprenticeships. The work that the Council undertakes is also important to help improve resident's aspirations and opportunities.

Equalities issues:

Apprenticeships have an impact on all sections of Tameside's Economy. The review will consider strategies adopted by Tameside and partners to help encourage young people to improve their skills and qualifications, which will lead to a greater skills level for Tameside residents.

Tameside Area Agreements:

The following targets from the Tameside Area Agreement relate to Apprenticeships.

Key Quality of Life Measures	
Prosperous Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worklessness • (N)EET – (Not) Education, Employment or Training
Learning Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills – Level 3 (age 19)
Supporting Measures	
Prosperous Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships • Skills: No qualification, levels 2, 3 & 4 • Skills: Level 2 (working age) • Skills: Level 3 (working age) • Skills: Level 4 (Working age)
Learning Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills – Level 2 (age 19)

5. Methodology

- 5.1 The Panel met with John Symington, Head of Learning and Skills, Tameside MBC to provide an overview of the national approach towards apprenticeships, information relating to Tameside and the work carried out by the Council to promote apprenticeships.
- 5.2 The Panel met with Tracy Brennand, Assistant Executive Director, People and Organisational Design, Tameside MBC; and Alison Williams, Organisational Development Manager, Tameside MBC to provide an overview of the Council's apprenticeship scheme and the corporate commitment.
- 5.3 The Panel met with Peter Ryder, Principal, Tameside College; and Christine Quinn, Head of Work Related Learning, Tameside College to provide an overview of the college and its role as the largest provider of apprenticeship skills and qualifications in the borough.
- 5.4 The Panel met with Phill Brown, Managing Director, Benchmark Building supplies Ltd; and Tom Arrundale, Apprentice, Benchmark Building Supplies Ltd to provide an overview of the apprenticeship programme a local business currently offer.
- 5.5 The Panel met with Jane Blackburn, Director of Organisational Transformation, New Charter Housing Trust Group to provide an overview of the New Charter apprenticeship fair.

6. Background of the Review

- 6.1 Tameside currently has one of the highest rates of apprenticeship participation in the North West. It is important that apprenticeships allow a person to improve their skills and offer a route towards permanent employment.
- 6.2 Apprenticeships are offered throughout the public and private sector. It is important that partnership work is continually promoted throughout the borough, helping to ensure that the apprenticeships in Tameside are of the highest possible quality.

7. Review Findings

National Apprenticeships

- 7.1 Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes that enable a person to earn a wage whilst gaining relevant experience and skills which will lead to a nationally recognised qualification and permanent employment.
- 7.2 Apprenticeships have no set duration. The time it takes to complete an apprenticeship depends on the ability of the apprentice and the requirements of the employer.
- 7.3 Apprenticeships are open to all age groups above 16 years old. The only requirement is that a person lives in England and is not taking part in full-time education.
- 7.4 There may be different entry requirements which are dependent on the type of Apprenticeship and the industry sector.
- 7.5 Apprenticeships are designed with the help of employers so they offer a structured programme that allows a person to gain the skills required to be competent in the job.
- 7.6 There are over 200 different types of apprenticeships that are offered by more than 100,000 employers nationally in approximately 160,000 locations.
- 7.7 There are three levels of apprenticeships available:
 - i. **Intermediate Apprenticeships (Level 2)** – work based learning, functional skills and a relevant knowledge based qualification. On completion this is the equivalent of 5 A* - C GCSEs.
 - ii. **Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)** - work based learning, functional skills and a relevant knowledge based qualification. On completion this is the equivalent of 2 A-Levels.
 - iii. **Higher Apprenticeships** – work based learning, functional skills and a knowledge based qualification. On completion this is equivalent to a foundation degree.

National Apprenticeship Service

- 7.8 The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) supports, funds and coordinates the delivery of apprenticeships across England.
- 7.9 The service is responsible for increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities and providing a dedicated and responsive support service for both employers and apprentices.
- 7.10 An online system has been created which allows employers to advertise their apprenticeship vacancies, allowing potential apprentices to apply.
- 7.11 The range of apprenticeships on the market is vast and this is also matched with the differing lengths of apprenticeships. While some providers have previously offered 12 week apprenticeships, work is continually carried out by the NAS to monitor this. It is their job to approve the validity and eligibility of apprenticeships nationally.
- 7.12 The NAS have started to address certain circumstances where providers are offering short apprenticeships and they have the power to make employers change the criteria or even force them to remove the apprenticeship from the market.
- 7.13 As a result of work carried out by the NAS the minimum length for all national apprenticeships from August 2012 will be 12 months.

Conclusions

1. Recent examples of poor quality apprenticeships have resulted in the National Apprenticeship Service creating a minimum length of 12 months for all apprenticeships nationally.

Apprenticeships in Tameside

- 7.14 Tameside has a population of 219,300 (2011)¹ of which just over 140,000² are of working age (age 16 to 64).
- 7.15 Reviewing the number of people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) is an effective way of monitoring unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.
- 7.16 Figures from the Tameside Area Agreement show that there has been a large increase in the number of 18 to 24 year olds that are in receipt of JSA.
- 7.17 During the period from May 2004 to February 2012 Tameside's JSA figures have increased from 5.6% to 12.3%. Year on year Tameside's figures have been high in comparison to national statistics.
- 7.18 Tameside's current population of 18 to 24 year olds approximately stands at 20,000. This means that around 2,500 are in receipt of JSA.
- 7.19 Data from February 2012 shows that 765 of 18 to 24 year olds in Tameside have been in receipt of JSA for over 6 months³.
- 7.20 Plans set out by the Government would like to see 1 in 5 young people participating in an apprenticeship by 2020.
- 7.21 Tameside Council are committed to improve on this by having 1 in 4 young people across the borough in an apprenticeship by 2015. This will have a positive impact by helping to reduce the number of young people in the borough who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 7.22 Tameside Council has developed a Skills and Apprenticeships Strategy, which highlights the benefits of working collaboratively with Job Centre Plus and other partners.
- 7.23 Tameside Council is currently the highest local authority in Greater Manchester and North West regions for the amount of people aged 16 to 18 that have started an advanced apprenticeship. The advanced apprenticeship is the equivalent of A-Levels.

Table 1: Apprenticeship starts for 16-18 year olds (Advanced)

LA/Region	July 2010	July 2011	% difference
Bolton	188	165	-12.2%
Bury	115	95	-17.4%
Manchester	175	240	37.1%
Oldham	151	158	4.6%
Rochdale	143	178	24.5%

¹ National Census, 2011.

² Nomis, population aged 16-64, 2010.

³ Nomis, JSA claimants by age duration, February 2012

Salford	166	186	12.0%
Stockport	173	307	77.5%
Trafford	93	123	32.3%
Wigan	237	286	20.7%
Tameside	132	284	115.2%
North West Average	4591	5686	23.9%
National Average	26910	33189	23.3%

- 7.24 The table above shows the number of advanced apprenticeship starts for 16-18 year olds. The data is recorded over a 12 months period from July 2010 to July 2011. From the table it is clear to see that the number of starts in Tameside is significantly higher than other neighbouring authorities and almost five times the North West average.
- 7.25 It is important that work is carried out to ensure that employer adoption of apprenticeships remains high, ensure apprenticeships meet the needs of the local economy and apprenticeships are promoted as a training route to residents, helping to increase participation.
- 7.26 Tameside has experienced year on year growth in the number of apprenticeships that have been started. The key to ensuring that the growth is maintained is to work in partnership with employers, apprentices and training providers which will have a positive impact on the number of apprenticeships completed.
- 7.27 A large majority of apprentices attend college on a day release basis. However it is also possible for them to receive training on the job by a local provider or a qualified person from the company.
- 7.28 Apprenticeships can last from 12 months to 4 years, offering a range of qualifications equivalent from GCSE to foundation degree. The length can depend on the type of apprenticeship, what people want to achieve and also the level the employer wishes to take it to.
- 7.29 Government funding is used to pay for the training costs. The funding that a company receives is dependent on the age of the apprentice. There are three categories.
- Age 16 to 18 – all training costs are paid for by the Government
 - Age 19 to 24 – 50% of the training costs are paid for by the Government
 - Above age 24 – the employer pays the full training costs.
- 7.30 It is important that Tameside Council help providers work closely together to ensure that companies in the borough have the capacity to continue to recruit apprentices.
- 7.31 Previous schemes have been introduced to incentivise employers to recruit apprentices. The 50/50 scheme was used to give employers a £1000 incentive. The payment was made to the employer once the apprentice had been employed for a minimum of 20 weeks.
- 7.32 During 2010/11 there were 52 apprentices employed as a result of the 50/50 scheme. By 2012 only two people had dropped out.
- 7.33 It is also important that work is carried out with children in schools to help raise the awareness of apprenticeships. Tameside Council work hard to engage young people in the borough through the apprenticeship fair, apprenticeship extravaganza, employer engagement events and a dedicated website.

Conclusions

2. The number of 18-24 year olds in Tameside in receipt of JSA has more than doubled during the last 8 years.
3. Tameside Council are outperforming other local authorities from across Greater Manchester and the North West with regards to advanced apprenticeship starts.
4. Previous schemes to promote the benefits of employing an apprentice have increased the number of employers that recruit apprentices in Tameside.

Recommendations

1. That the Council work with partners to monitor the number of 18 to 24 year olds in receipt of JSA for more than 6 months. Providing a comprehensive network of support to help reduce long term unemployment in the borough.
2. That the Council work towards creating new initiatives that encourages local businesses to employ apprentices, allowing apprenticeship growth in the borough to be sustainable.

Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy

- 7.34 Tameside Council has created an Apprenticeship Strategy 2012 to 2015.
- 7.35 Tameside's Apprenticeship Strategy has four main priorities which can be delivered through increased partnership working. How well the strategy will work depends on the work the Council undertakes with a range of agencies, including public and private sector employers, education and training providers and the voluntary and community sectors.
- 7.36 The four priorities are:
- Stimulate increased employer adoption of apprenticeships in Tameside.
 - Ensure that apprenticeships meet the needs of Tameside's economy.
 - Promote apprenticeships as a quality to Tameside residents and increase participation.
 - Ensure that apprenticeships delivered in Tameside are of the highest possible quality.

Tameside Council's Apprenticeship Programme

- 7.37 Tameside Council has successfully delivered apprenticeship schemes over the last 25 years.
- 7.38 As part of the new Organisational Development Plan steps have been taken to review the current apprenticeship programme in order to create a more streamlined process. This has been done to improve experiences for both apprentices and managers.
- 7.39 It is important that Tameside Council review national apprenticeship schemes to ensure its own scheme continues to improve and deliver the highest possible standard of apprenticeship.
- 7.40 The Council works closely with local partners through Tameside Strategic Partnership (TSP) to encourage local employment opportunities and looks for 'best practice' to make the Council's scheme exemplary.

- 7.41 One of the main aims of the Council is to increase youth employment in the borough and to encourage individuals to work in the public sector.
- 7.42 The Council's apprenticeship scheme has strong elected member and senior officer support. Through the TSP, the Works First scheme was developed to encourage local businesses to commit to the use of local labour. This included the Council's partners and contractors, such as Carillion.
- 7.43 Tameside Council currently employ 107 apprentices and further efforts are being made to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by the Council.
- 7.44 Through building projects such as BSF Carillion have exceeded their apprenticeship target and also successfully created and safeguarded many local jobs. The target was 21 apprentices, by January 2012 Carillion had employed 53 apprentices (22 placements on sample schemes and 31 on non sample schemes).
- 7.45 It is important that a similar approach towards apprenticeships and local employment is carried forward to future partnership working and the design of contracts.
- 7.46 There are currently three different types of apprenticeships within Tameside Council. They follow the same national standards of intermediate, advanced and higher apprenticeships.
- 7.47 The Tameside apprenticeship fair allows the Council to take the lead role on behalf of the community. Staff from the Organisational Development Team provide coaching workshops during the fair.
- 7.48 Information is also provided to young people on what the expectations of employers are, such as the type of work and additional learning requirements.
- 7.49 Tameside Council's apprenticeship scheme is planned to be a 2 year programme. During this period work is done to ensure help is provided to allow people to network, gain relevant skills and feel fully supported throughout the process.
- 7.50 There are future plans to introduce a rotational process which will allow apprentices to experience a wider range of Council departments and services. This will also include a more central based approach towards the monitoring of apprentices, which will ensure that qualifications are achieved and any issues are dealt with.
- 7.51 The current apprenticeship programme allows apprentices to apply for internal job vacancies. This potentially allows them to leave their apprenticeship, before completion and start a different position within the Council.
- 7.52 Apprentices have the same employment rights as permanent members of staff. They are subject to a six month probationary period and regular supervisions will take place. If the apprentice chooses to leave employment they are subject to the same exit interview as all other Council staff.
- 7.53 The Council are planning to review this approach, with the possibility of introducing a nine month restriction on apprentices being able to apply for internal job vacancies. This will ensure that people have benefitted from the scheme and reached the required development stages before entering permanent employment.

Conclusions

5. The Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy highlights how partnership working will improve the quality of apprenticeship delivery in the borough.
6. Tameside Council continually review its apprenticeship programme to ensure the scheme is exemplary and is delivered to the highest possible standard.
7. Tameside apprenticeship fair allows residents to benefit from a multi-partnership event and allows people to access a wide range of apprenticeship opportunities.

Recommendations

3. That through effective workforce planning, the Council ensures that where possible long term employment is available to people that have completed an apprenticeship.
4. That where possible the Council work closely with partners and contractors to incorporate apprenticeship targets within contract design.
5. That through the delivery of the Tameside apprenticeship fair the Council and partners offer work placement and volunteering opportunities to allow people to gain experience and improve their employability.
6. That the Council introduce a rotational system during the first year of the apprenticeship programme, allowing apprentices to gain experience across a number of service areas.
7. That the Council introduce a new exit interview for apprentices, to improve support mechanisms and allow the Council to adapt and meet the needs of apprentices.

Tameside College

- 7.54 Tameside College is the largest provider of apprenticeship skills and qualifications in the borough. They can accommodate a range of apprenticeships, ranging from joinery and brickwork to childcare and customer service.
- 7.55 The number of apprenticeships available at the college has increased significantly over recent years to help meet the growing demand for a variety of vocations.
- 7.56 The college also has the ability to provide bespoke apprenticeships for large employers. The college currently provides the Morrisons Apprenticeship Scheme on a national level. Apprentices from across the country attend the college in four one week sessions.
- 7.57 Assessments are carried out in the workplace and the college provides the support of a Business Development Advisor that works directly with Morrisons and the apprentices.
- 7.58 The college have seen the success rates of apprenticeships increase over recent years. In 2008/9 78% of apprenticeships were completed, by 2010/11 this had risen to 85%.
- 7.59 The increase in success can be linked to the work undertaken by the college to ensure that young people are starting an apprenticeship which is of interest to them and which they feel is achievable.
- 7.60 Current apprenticeships require people to study towards formal qualifications. This requires the college to ensure that young people reach a minimum standard of Maths and English. The college undertake interviews and diagnostic tests to ensure that young people are best matched with apprenticeships that are realistically achievable.

- 7.61 The college are committed to ensuring people can complete the apprenticeships they start. It is felt that the college would be failing young people in Tameside if they were to allow people to start apprenticeships which potentially can be technically and academically unattainable.
- 7.62 The college also work hard to support apprentices and provide advice, guidance and support. The college provide an assessor who works closely with the person throughout the apprenticeship.
- 7.63 Around 80% of apprentices secure long term employment. The college work closely with employers to ensure they are fully informed about the long term commitments of employing an apprentice.

Issues and Challenges

- 7.64 Tameside College currently receive a large amount of applications for apprenticeships and they are unable to satisfy them all. In September 2011 the college received around 800 apprenticeship applications.
- 7.65 The college reviews all applications from an academic perspective as well as inviting people for interviews and group work.
- 7.66 If a young person is not suitable for an apprenticeship the college will seek to offer the person a full time position at the college, where possible. This helps to raise attainment and allows them to understand what is expected from an academic perspective.
- 7.67 It is also important that the college collaborate with employers across the borough to ensure there is an available supply of employers in a position to continually employ apprentices.
- 7.68 The college is committed to educating employers about the benefits of employing apprentices and also promote apprenticeships to potential employers.
- 7.69 Tameside College has good working relationships with schools in the borough. Representatives provide small workshops in classrooms at secondary schools to provide information on the courses available at Tameside College, as an alternative to full time higher education.
- 7.70 The college also meet with head teachers on a regular basis to provide feedback on how pupils have found the school to college transition and whether any work can be done to help prepare students.

Conclusions

- 8. Through interview and diagnostic testing the college ensures that apprenticeships are achievable and therefore right for the individual.
- 9. The college has seen the demand for apprenticeships rise significantly during recent years.
- 10. The college are committed to improving the partnership work that takes place in Tameside, helping to create a constant supply of employers looking to recruit apprentices.

Recommendations

8. That the Council work in partnership with Tameside College and local schools to ensure that secondary school pupils continue to receive information and guidance about apprenticeships.

Benchmark Building Supplies Ltd

- 7.71 Benchmark Building Supplies Ltd was founded by Phill Brown in 1996, and since then has grown to be Greater Manchester's largest independent builders merchant, with the head office being located in Audenshaw.
- 7.72 The company had previously experienced an ageing workforce and a decision was made to start employing apprentices. It was felt that introducing a younger workforce alongside existing employees would help towards the sharing of information and knowledge.
- 7.73 Benchmark recruited their first apprentice through the Tameside apprenticeship fair and continues to recruit five apprentices each year.
- 7.74 The company work hard to ensure that apprentices become familiar with all aspects of the work carried out by the business. A rotational system has been introduced to allow people to gain experience in all areas, which also allows them to find an area of the business which they are interested in and would like to focus on.
- 7.75 Benchmark provide support to their apprentices which allows them to raise the awareness of what is expected from them with regards to time keeping, customer service and general contractual commitments.
- 7.76 Benchmark has recently received recognition for the work they carry out with apprenticeships by receiving the National Apprentice Award for builders merchants.
- 7.77 Benchmark play a key role in Tameside apprenticeships, working alongside the Council, Tameside College and local businesses to help promote apprenticeships and build awareness of the advantages of employing an apprentice.

New Charter Housing Trust Group

- 7.78 New Charter support the Great Opportunities programme, which is a series of coordinated activities aimed at tackling worklessness.
- 7.79 New Charter Housing Trust Group held an apprenticeship fair on 21st April 2012 at the New Charter Academy in Ashton-under-Lyne. The event was advertised through local radio and papers as well as in the New Charter tenant's newsletter.
- 7.80 The aim of the day was to recruit a new intake of apprentices for New Charter and New Charter Building Company. It was also an opportunity to help signpost people to other learning opportunities and provide financial inclusion information.
- 7.81 New Charter had a total of ten apprenticeships on offer, of which three were trade positions and seven based around business administration.
- 7.82 New Charter offers a 3 year apprenticeship programme, which is highly respected within the borough. All apprenticeships are funded within existing budgets and work is carried out to ensure efficient workforce planning takes place. This ensures that New Charter can offer apprentices long-term permanent jobs.

- 7.83 Due to the level of support and guidance provided by New Charter the success rates of apprenticeships is extremely high. During the last 6 years only one apprentice has failed to secure a permanent role with New Charter after completing their apprenticeship.
- 7.84 It is important that New Charter monitor their workforce on a regular basis, this allows them to accurately calculate the future need for staff. One way of doing this is to look at the age of staff and how close people are to retirement.
- 7.85 The apprenticeship fair attracted approximately 2000 people, of which 726 carried out assessments. The initial assessments were literacy and numeracy based tests. 374 people passed the initial test and progressed onto basic and key skill builder (BKSB) computer based test.
- 7.86 When the final assessments had been completed people received confirmation as to whether they had been successful and were invited for an interview. A large amount of follow up work also took place to provide unsuccessful candidates with telephone feedback.
- 7.87 The event attracted a lot more people than New Charter anticipated, which reflects the desire amongst young people for an apprenticeship opportunity in Tameside.
- 7.88 The event requires a large number staff to provide information, advice, support, conduct interviews and provide feedback. The large attendance created longer waits for people to take tests and the event was heavily demanding on resources.
- 7.89 New Charter is committed to supporting unsuccessful candidates. Additional information was provided at the event with regards to volunteering and work placement opportunities with New Charter.
- 7.90 Work placements with New Charter last approximately 6 to 8 weeks. There is currently no maximum to the amount of work placement opportunities. By working closely with Job Centre Plus, such initiatives allow people to gain experience of work through entry level jobs.

Conclusions

11. Some businesses across Tameside are keen to employ apprentices to work alongside experienced members of staff, which allows them to gain skills and experience while working.
12. New Charter is committed to ensuring they provide a comprehensive apprenticeship programme which offers long term employment opportunities.

Recommendations

9. That the Council work in partnership with New Charter and other organisations to provide a joint apprenticeship event in the future, which will share the demand on resources and improve outcomes.
10. That the Council, New Charter and partners work in collaboration with approved local businesses to provide unsuccessful candidates with the details of additional apprenticeship opportunities.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Recent examples of poor quality apprenticeships have resulted in the National Apprenticeship Service creating a minimum length of 12 months for all apprenticeships nationally.
- 8.2 The number of 18-24 year olds in Tameside in receipt of JSA has more than doubled during the last 8 years.
- 8.3 Tameside Council are outperforming other local authorities from across the North West with regards to apprenticeship starts.
- 8.4 Previous schemes to promote the benefits of employing an apprentice have increased the number of employers that recruit apprentices in Tameside.
- 8.5 The Tameside Apprenticeship Strategy highlights how partnership working will improve the quality of apprenticeship delivery in the borough.
- 8.6 Tameside Council continually review its apprenticeship programme to ensure the scheme is exemplary and is delivered to the highest possible standard.
- 8.7 Tameside Apprenticeship Fair allows residents to benefit from a multi-partnership event and allows people to access a wide range of apprenticeship opportunities.
- 8.8 Through interview and diagnostic testing the college ensures that apprenticeships are achievable and therefore right for the individual.
- 8.9 The college has seen the demand for apprenticeships rise significantly during recent years.
- 8.10 The college are committed to improving the partnership work that takes place in Tameside, helping to create a constant supply of employers looking to recruit apprentices.
- 8.11 Some businesses across Tameside are keen to employ apprentices to work alongside experienced members of staff, which allows them to gain skills and experience while working.
- 8.12 New Charter is committed to ensuring they provide a comprehensive apprenticeship programme which offers long term employment opportunities.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That the Council work with partners to monitor the number of 18 to 24 year olds in receipt of JSA for more than 6 months. Providing a comprehensive network of support to help reduce long term unemployment in the borough.
- 9.2 That the Council work towards creating new initiatives that encourages local businesses to employ apprentices, allowing apprenticeship growth in the borough to be sustainable.
- 9.3 That through effective workforce planning, the Council ensures that where possible long term employment is available to people that have completed an apprenticeship.
- 9.4 That where possible the Council work closely with partners and contractors to incorporate apprenticeship targets within contract design.

- 9.5 That through the delivery of the Tameside apprenticeship fair the Council and partners offer work placement and volunteering opportunities to allow people to gain experience and improve their employability.
- 9.6 That the Council introduce a rotational system during the first year of the apprenticeship programme, allowing apprentices to gain experience across a number of service areas.
- 9.7 That the Council introduce a new exit interview for apprentices, to improve support mechanisms and allow the Council to adapt and meet the needs of apprentices.
- 9.8 That the Council work in partnership with Tameside College and local schools to ensure that secondary school pupils continue to receive information and guidance about apprenticeships.
- 9.9 That the Council work in partnership with New Charter and other organisations to provide a joint apprenticeship event in the future, which will share the demand on resources and improve outcomes.
- 9.10 That the Council, New Charter and partners work in collaboration with approved local businesses to provide unsuccessful candidates with the details of additional apprenticeship opportunities.