

# Children and Young People Select Committee

## Scrutiny Review of Employment and Education



**March 2014**

Children and Young People Select Committee  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 1LD

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## **Select Committee – Membership**

Councillor Carol Clark (Chair)  
Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Ben Houchen  
Councillor Elliot Kennedy  
Councillor Ross Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Sylvia Walmsley  
Councillor Barbara Inman  
Councillor Ken Lupton  
Councillor Tracey Stott

## **Co-opted Representatives**

Phil Rigby  
R G Lupton  
Norah Moffat  
David Campbell

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Select Committee thank the following contributors to this review:

Richard Poundford – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development  
Louise McDonald – Regeneration Projects Manager  
Roland Todd – Labour Market Co-ordinator  
Lynda Brown – Head of Education, Early Years and Complex Needs  
Wendy Starks - Consultant  
Shaun McClurg – Head of Children and Young People’s Services  
Dave Willingham – Acting Youth Direction Manager  
Joanna Bailey – Principal – Stockton Sixth Form  
Phil Cook – Principal – Stockton Riverside College  
John Taylor – Education Funding Agency  
Ian Caley – Participation Team Manager  
Andy Hately – Guidance Services Manager  
Carolyn Chubb – Senior Practitioner  
Fujifilm Diosynth  
Cotswold Manufacturing  
Nifco  
Northfield School  
STEPS  
Eastern Ravens  
Let’s Take Action Group  
Stockton Youth Assembly

Contact Officer:  
Judy Trainer, Electoral and Scrutiny Team Leader  
Tel: 01642 528158  
E-mail: [judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk)

## Foreword

We are pleased to present the report of the Children and Young People Select Committee on its review of Employment and Education. The challenge for the Committee in undertaking the review was to seek to ensure that education and training equips young people with skills that businesses and employers across the Borough need and bring education and business closer together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need.

New analysis from the Local Government Association (LGA) has revealed that of the 2.5 million young people struggling to find enough work across England and Wales, only 340,000 are likely to find more work over the next four years, leaving 2.12 million still unemployed or underemployed. Almost a third of young people's time being unused, equating to 2 billion hours a year. This is what the LGA has defined as 'total hidden talent'.

The Committee's findings revealed that locally there is a jobs mismatch. In the Tees Valley, growth areas include digital and creative, advanced manufacturing, health, logistics, processing, and the carbon sector but what is less clear is whether we are attracting young people to these sectors. In May 2013, almost 1 in 3 people claiming Job Seekers Allowances in Stockton were aged between 16 and 24 years.

As part of the review, Committee Members took the opportunity to visit local businesses, observe careers interventions and targeted activities and speak to young people. Comments received from local businesses mirrored those from young people. They both highlighted young people's lack of awareness of the opportunities which existed in growth industries and the types of occupations/opportunities within them. There was also a recognition that young people tended not to be prepared for the work environment and needed to learn more about the personal qualities that employers want to see in potential employees.

The recommendations seek to provide a framework to achieve greater interaction between local employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers, to ensure there are robust, flexible and sustainable mechanisms to encourage co-operative working between education providers, the Council and industry.



Councillor Carol Clark  
Chair



Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE  
Vice-Chair

## Original Brief

### Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

- Stockton-on-Tees at the heart of a vibrant and economically successful Tees Valley
- No child left behind

### What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

It is essential that education and training equips young people with skills that businesses and employers across the Borough need, and helps to create opportunities to secure a prosperous future. School education and post 16 training provision across the Borough is varied and offers a range of courses including AS/A Level and academic programmes, vocational programmes, work based learning, apprenticeships and foundation level programmes. What is less apparent is whether the provision matches the needs of industry and growth sectors or if in fact young people are making informed choices about the prospects of securing employment on completion of their course at an early enough stage. The quality of careers advice will be an important aspect of the review.

The review will seek to establish how education and business can work together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need and will focus on the 14 – 19 age group (25 years for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)). In addition, all strands of the review will consider provision and support for vulnerable groups including LDD, looked after children (LAC), Young Offenders and Young Carers.

The review will examine the issues as they relate to Stockton within the context of the Tees Valley on the basis that many young people may choose to travel to learn/work outside of the Borough and seek to identify recommendations for improvement.

### The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

The review will be undertaken in three strands:

#### **Strand One – Demand** (Richard Poundford lead)

What do employers expect/ need?

What are the skills gaps?

What are the sector growth areas?

Funding Opportunities

- Does learning provision match the needs of industry and growth sectors now and in the future?
- Do we know what employers needs are?
- How do we ensure that learning pathways give clear progression routes to work?
- How do we support business in recruiting young people?

#### **Strand Two – Provision and Performance** (Lynda Brown lead)

Mapping out post 16 provision and travel to learn patterns

Performance at Key Stage 4, post 16, including vulnerable groups

- Are there gaps in provision in Stockton and opportunities to attract new providers?
- Why are young people choosing to travel outside of the Borough to learn?
- What are the key issues and how can we tackle them?
- Do young people make appropriate levels of progress between 16 to 19 and if not, how

we tackle performance?

- How do the new Principals at Stockton Riverside College and Stockton Sixth Form plan to improve their current Ofsted ratings?
- What are the implications of the reform of vocational education?

**Strand Three – Participation and Support** – (Shaun McLurg lead)

14 – 19 Partnership and Raising Participation Plan

Careers/ Quality of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Youth Direction

Targeted activities for those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and participation data

- How can we ensure that young people are getting the correct Information Advice and Guidance to inform the choices they are making?
- Are young people being given appropriate information and advice about the prospects of securing employment on completion of their course?
- How are schools and sixth form colleges providing Careers / Information Advice and Guidance and are they preparing them adequately for the world of work?
- NEETS - To explore the quality of preventative interventions and levels of collaboration between services and providers to target and join-up support around disengaged young people
- How do we ensure consistency of Career Information Advice and Guidance in the different types of schools i.e. academies, free schools etc.?

**Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Young people and their parents

Schools

FE and Sixth Form Colleges

Employers

Training Providers

14 – 19 Partnership

## 1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Employment and Education undertaken by the Committee during the Municipal Year 2013/14. The review sought to establish how education and business can work together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need. The review focused on the 14 – 19 age group (25 years for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)).

1.2 Evidence was from taken in three key stands:

### ***Strand One - Demand***

1.3 The first strand of the review examined employers' needs and expectations, skills gaps and sector growth areas. The Stockton on Tees Local Economic Assessment highlights the following key facts about the Borough's workforce:

1.4 There is a vast array of research available examining the link between young people and business and how best to meet the skills requirements of business both now and in the future. National research reveals that employers are not confident of meeting their need for high skilled employees in the future; they say that the need to provide businesses with the skills they require is the single most important reason to raise standards in schools and for those in the 14-19 age group. Employers believe schools and colleges should be prioritising development of employability skills as well as literacy, numeracy and technology. STEM (Science, Technology, English, and Maths) skills open up career opportunities at every level.

1.5 Employability skills are cited by Employers as the most important factor taken into account when businesses recruit graduates. The research argues the need to sell the case to employers for employing young people and highlights that employers need support to do this. There is also an appetite from employers to play a greater role in delivering careers advice with more than half willing to do more.

1.6 The national research is borne out locally. Stockton's employers are demanding a more skilled workforce. Over the past five years the share of employment has grown fastest in associate professional and technical occupations, professional occupations and managers, directors and senior officials. The Stockton economy contains significant specialisms and niches of national significance including scientific research and development, manufacturing of other transport equipment, manufacture of other organic based chemicals and banks. Five of Tees Valley Unlimited's eight priority sectors are important for Stockton-on-Tees: oil and gas; chemicals and metals processing; advanced manufacturing; life science, healthcare and biotech; and transport, ports and logistics.

1.7 Stockton-on-Tees has good levels of qualifications and evidence of up-skilling as employers are becoming more demanding. However, although consistent with the England average, GCSE attainment rates have not kept pace with improvements in the North East.

1.8 In Stockton-on-Tees, unemployment among young people is particularly high (28.3% of all claimants continue to be higher than the national average). As an overall measure of worklessness, it is estimated that 14,900 residents (12.1 per cent of the working-age population) are not in work, but want a job.

1.9 The Committee visited a number of local businesses as part of Strand One of the review. The visits revealed that a common problem was that young people tended not to be prepared for the work environment and that applicants displayed a lack of training on writing



CVs and interview skills etc. All the businesses visited commented that young people were not ready for interview. One business reported problems in filling particular types of posts and that it was difficult to find candidates with the right attitude and flexibility. It was felt that young people seemed unaware of the various industries which existed, the types of occupations/ opportunities within them and the qualifications which would help them obtain employment. There was a general feeling that education was too subject based and that schools and colleges were not devoting enough time to careers guidance. All felt that careers advisers were not up to date and the majority of teachers had little or no experience of industry. The businesses visited were interested in being part of a more co-ordinated approach and having a higher profile with local schools/ colleges.

### ***Stand Two – Provision and Performance***

1.10 The second strand of the review mapped out post 16 provision and travel to learn patterns and also examined performance at Key Stage 4 and post 16.

1.11 Post-16 learning and skills needs in Stockton are supported by one general FE college, one sixth form college, two school sixth forms, four work based learning (WBL) providers offering Apprenticeships and one WBL provider offering Foundation Learning. There are approximately 200 providers delivering education and training in the Stockton local authority area. Some of this may be specialist delivery tailored to a particular employer need, or national employers who use the same college/provider to deliver throughout their business.

1.12 Teesside University is the main higher education establishment that Stockton residents attend, with approximately 933 applicants (aged 19 or under from across the borough) accepted in 2009. Durham University has a large site with over 100 post-graduates learning from the Stockton site.

1.13 Stockton is a net exporter of learners, which means that a higher number of learners (34%) travel out of the borough to take part in education and training, than those who travel into the borough (16%). The majority (70%) of those learners that travel out of the Borough go to Middlesbrough.

1.14 There have been improvements in performance at key stage 4 with Stockton Secondary Schools achieving the highest percentage of students achieving the key indicator of five or more GCSE passes at GCSE, however, 43% of pupils are coming out of school without English and Maths GCSE (A\* - C).

1.15 In respect of post 16 providers, all four have exceeded the national average pass rate of 98.1% and on the higher grade measure (A\*-B), Egglecliffe exceeded the national figure by almost 6% and Conyers and Stockton Sixth Form both improved the % of students achieving A\* - B grades from 2012 but were below the national figure of 52.8%.

1.16 From September this year, new 16 to 19 study programmes were introduced, supported by changes to post-16 funding. All students in full or part-time education will be expected to follow a study programme tailored to their individual needs, education and employment goals, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Study programmes for 16 – 19 year olds must:

- Not be wholly occupational
- Include one qualification of substantial size which offer progression into education/ employment

- Include high quality work experience or internships (where appropriate) and other enrichment activities
- Include GCSE A\* - C in English and Maths or qualifications leading to this level for students who have not already achieved them

1.17 The new Traineeship Programme supports young people aged 16 – 24 to develop the skills they need to secure employment including apprenticeships. This programme forms part of the Study Programme framework.

1.18 Apprenticeships are open anyone living in England, over 16 years-old and not in full-time education whether they are just leaving school, have been working for years or are seeking to start a new career. Apprenticeships are advertised by the National Apprenticeship Service. In August 2013, there were 206 apprenticeship vacancies advertised in the Tees Valley. 2633 applications were received, 129 Tees Valley employers advertised and the vacancies were supported by 37 learning providers, 12 of which are based in the Tees Valley.

### **Strand Three**

1.19 The third strand of the review focused on the quality of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance, Integrated Youth Support and targeted activities for those not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

1.20 **Local Authorities** have responsibilities to support young people into education or training, which are set out in the following duties:

- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision
- Make available to young people aged 13-19 and to those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training
- From 2013, all young people will be under a duty to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From 2015, this will rise to their 18th birthday
- A Local Authority in England must promote the effective participation in education or training
- A local authority in England must make arrangements to enable it to identify those who are failing to fulfil the duty to participate in education or training

1.21 In order to discharge this duty, Local Authorities must collect information to identify young people who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, to target their resources on those who need them most.

1.22 **Schools and Colleges** are now held to account for the destination of all their leavers. In addition, from September 2012, schools have been under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils in years 9-11 on the full range of post -16 options, including Apprenticeships. This will extend to years 8 -13 and will include colleges. Guidance secured should be independent and face to face where it is the most suitable support for young people to make successful transitions.

1.23 In Stockton, 56.8% of initial destinations are to colleges within the Borough, 34.2% are colleges outside Stockton, 6.3% are to employment, MA, training and foundation learning and 2.7% of initial destination activity is NEET (64yp)

1.24 **Sixth forms, colleges and other training providers** must promote good attendance of 16 and 17 year olds and inform Local Authority support services if a young person (aged 16 or 17) has dropped out of learning, so the young person can be contacted swiftly and offered support to help them re-engage.

1.25 The Education Act 2011 placed schools under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial **careers guidance** for all Year 9 to 11 pupils from September 2012. Stockton Borough Council is offering a Local Authority traded service via dedicated Careers Advisers within Youth Direction, which schools can purchase to meet this requirement.

1.26 There is a clear correlation between a young person knowing what they want to do and attainment. The benefits of careers guidance includes lower course switching/ drop outs, motivated students, success rates and better informed about labour market information.

1.27 The 14 – 19 strategy for education and training is closely linked to the local skills and economic development agenda led by the Tees Valley Local Employer Partnership (LEP), Tees Valley Unlimited, to ensure that education and training prepares young people for employment and economic stability and also ensure that the local offer clearly meets employer need.

1.28 **NEET** for 16 – 19 year olds in Stockton has reduced steadily over the past decade. In May 2009 there were 988; in May 2013 there were 607 (a 39% reduction).

1.29 Young people across all schools become NEET for a number of reasons. In Stockton, the top six reasons for becoming NEET are:

- Completed college course (41.6%)
- Didn't like what they were doing (19.5%)
- Finished school and wanted support over the summer (13.9%)
- Illness/ health/ pregnancy (9.1%)
- Employment ceased (4.8%)
- Chose the wrong option (4.6%)

1.30 A common theme is unrealistic expectations of world of the world of work.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1.31 The challenge for the Committee was to seek to ensure that education and training equips young people with skills that businesses and employers across the Borough need and how to bring education and business together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need. It was clear from the outset that the quality of careers advice will be play a key role in achieving this.

1.32 Comments received from local businesses were consistent with those from young people. They both highlighted young people's lack of awareness of the various industries which existed and the types of occupations/ opportunities within them (including growth sectors). There was also a recognition that young people tended not to be prepared for the work

environment and that applicants displayed a lack of training on writing CVs and interview skills etc.

1.33 The review has highlighted the need to:

- Get more employers involved in schools
- Provide young people with impartial independent careers guidance
- Provide more information about the various local industries and employment opportunities
- Develop structured and planned work placement programmes
- Provide more support in getting young people ready for work including help with interview skills

1.34 The recommendations seek to provide a framework to achieve this in dialogue with local employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Council work with local businesses and employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers to develop an action plan to deliver the following objectives:
  - greater interaction between schools/ colleges and local business
  - helping young people remain in education and training which leads to progression into further education and employment
  - promoting awareness of the job market, growth sectors and employment opportunities both locally and further afield, as part of independent careers guidance for Key Stage 4 and post 16, including the development of a job search tool and improved website access to job information and access to an annual job fair event/ promotional activities
  - enhance the employability of young people
  - provide more and varied opportunities for work experience
  - provide support in applying for further education and employment opportunities including practical support in making applications
2. That funding avenues are pursued in order to deliver these objectives.
3. That Council services continue to work closely together to deliver the action plan.
4. That the Committee welcomes and supports Stockton Youth Assembly's local campaign topics which include better work experience and apprenticeships.
5. That the Director of Children, Education and Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People write to all Stockton Schools and Chairs of School Governing Bodies drawing attention to the Select Committee report and emphasising the importance of interaction with local businesses and employers as part of the provision of quality careers information and guidance and encouraging all Secondary Governing Bodies to appoint a governor champion for Enterprise and Employment and consider placing a regular item on Governing Body meetings.

6. That the Children and Young People Select Committee receive reports on the performance of post 16 education providers as part of their quarterly performance reporting framework.

## **2.0 Introduction**

2.1 This report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Employment and Education undertaken by the Committee during the Municipal Year 2013/14. The topic was identified for review at Scrutiny Liaison Forum and included in the 2013/14 Work Programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 The review sought to establish how education and business can work together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need. The review focused on the 14 – 19 age group (25 years for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)).

## **3.0 Background**

3.1 It is essential that education and training equips young people with skills that businesses and employers across the Borough need, and helps to create opportunities to secure a prosperous future. School education and post 16 training provision across the Borough is varied and offers a range of courses including AS/A Level and academic programmes, vocational programmes, work based learning, apprenticeships and foundation level programmes. What is less apparent is whether the provision matches the needs of industry and growth sectors or if in fact young people are making informed choices about the prospects of securing employment on completion of their course at an early enough stage.

3.2 Evidence was from taken in three key stands:

### **Strand One – Demand**

What do employers expect/ need?

What are the skills gaps?

What are the sector growth areas?

Funding Opportunities

### **Strand Two – Provision and Performance**

Mapping out post 16 provision and travel to learn patterns

Performance at Key Stage 4, post 16, including vulnerable groups

### **Strand Three – Participation and Support**

14 – 19 Partnership and Raising Participation Plan

Careers/ Quality of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Integrated Youth Support

Targeted activities for those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and participation data

3.3 The Committee undertook a range of site visits as part of the review, including:

- Visit to Local Employers/ Businesses
- Stockton Youth Assembly
- Stockton Sixth Form
- Stockton Riverside College

- Observed careers interventions in secondary schools and in Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) settings (for NEETs)
- LDD STEPS placements
- Matty's Bistro - NEET targeted activity
- Let's Take Action Group discussion for Looked After Children
- Round table discussion with pupils at Northfield School on careers advice and guidance
- Visit to Eastern Ravens (to seek views from young carers)

### **The Stockton Economy**

3.4 The Stockton on Tees Local Economic Assessment provides the following picture of the Stockton Economy:

***While Stockton-on-Tees has convincingly recovered from recession, its economic output per capita still lags significantly behind the UK average.***

3.5 Although the Stockton-on-Tees economy has demonstrated resilience and growth post-recession, the area has not closed its long-term economic performance gap with the UK. In 2012, economic output per capita was 27 per cent below the UK average. However, the future prognosis for economic growth looks favourable, with several strong industrial specialisms and high rates of employment growth.

3.6 Recent economic recovery has generated strong growth in jobs. The Stockton-on-Tees economy supports 83,800 jobs and, combined with Hartlepool, is part of a £4.6 billion economy. After strong nominal growth of 3.9 per cent in 2010-2011, the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees economy contracted by 1.6 per cent in 2011-12, compared with 1.6 per cent and 2.5 per cent growth respectively in the same years for the UK. Since 2005, the number of jobs has increased by 8.5 per cent, a higher rate of growth than Tees Valley (-0.4 per cent), the North East (1.9 per cent) and Great Britain (4.1 per cent).

***Manufacturing remains important and there are several related industrial specialisms of national significance.***

3.7 Production (including manufacturing) remains an important industrial sector, despite its declining share of local economic output. Manufacturing and processing activities contributed 23.1 per cent of economic output in 2010, the largest share of any sector, with 9,600 employees. Manufacturing and processing activities' share of economic output has declined from 41.1 per cent since 1997. Retail, health, and manufacturing industries are the largest employers. Employment growth between 2008 and 2012 has been greatest in the following sectors: electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning (+600 jobs), real estate activities (+400), professional, scientific and technical activities (+400), human health and social work activities (+1,300), and arts, entertainment and recreation (+400).

3.8 The Stockton-on-Tees economy contains significant industrial specialisms and niches of national significance. Important industrial specialisms include scientific research and development (with 1,000 employees, this is 3.2 times the national average for all local enterprise partnerships); manufacturing of other transport equipment (900 employees, 2.6 times the LEP average); manufacture of other organic based chemicals (1,000 employees, 31.1 times the national average); banks (1,900 employees, 1.7 times the national average). Five of Tees Valley Unlimited's eight priority sectors are important for Stockton-on-Tees: oil

and gas; chemicals and metals processing; advanced manufacturing; life science, healthcare and biotech; and transport, ports and logistics. It was not possible to estimate the number of businesses and employment in the low carbon priority industry.

***There are now more local businesses than before the recession and recent business survival rates are above the national average.***

3.9 Although Stockton-on-Tees has fewer businesses per capita, business formation rates are higher. With 224 businesses per 10,000 residents in 2013, business density in Stockton-on-Tees is below the national average (340). This may be partly explained by the dominance of very large employers. Over half (52.5 per cent) of all people who work in Stockton-on-Tees are employed by an enterprise with more than 1,000 staff. In some respects Stockton-on-Tees is more entrepreneurial than average. Its 'churn rate' (births added to deaths as a share of total enterprises) is slightly higher than Tees Valley, the North East and nationally. While business survival rates fell during the recession and recovery period from 2008 to 2010, they have improved since 2011.

## 4.0 Evidence

### Strand One - Demand

4.1 The first strand of the review examined employers' needs and expectations, skills gaps and sector growth areas. The Stockton on Tees Local Economic Assessment highlights the following key facts about the Borough's workforce:

- **A growing borough.** Stockton-on-Tees has a population of 194,800 residents and has experienced significant population growth of 9.3 per cent over the 20 years since 1992. This growth is set to continue to grow by 7.4 per cent over the next ten years.
- **A growing workforce.** The working age population in 1992 was 112,600. By 2012 this had increased to 123,700, and it is projected to continue to increase to 126,200 by 2021. Although the population is ageing, with a growing share of residents aged over 65, the working age population has also grown, and this is forecast to continue.
- **High levels of economic participation.** Stockton-on-Tees has higher levels of economic participation than the national average. In 2013, 96,600 working-age (16-64) residents were economically active, 78.4 per cent of the working age population. This is higher than the rate for Tees Valley (74.6 per cent), the North East (74.0), and Great Britain (77.4 per cent).
- **Stockton-on-Tees supports 83,800 jobs.** A total of 83,800 people work in Stockton-on-Tees. The borough is part of a wider labour market catchment and travel to work area, with 87,600 or 71.1 per cent of Stockton's working age residents (aged 16-64) in employment.
- **The unemployment rate is 9.1 per cent, above the national average of 7.7 per cent.** In December 2013, 5,862 people were claiming unemployment related benefits, representing 4.7 per cent of the working age population compared with 2.9 per cent across Great Britain, while 8.3 per cent of 16-18 year olds were not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- **Youth and long-term unemployment remain a challenge.** Stockton-on-Tees has a high unemployment rate, and youth unemployment is particularly high. In 2013, the local

unemployment rate was 9.1 per cent, above the national average of 7.7 per cent. In December 2013, 5,862 people were claiming unemployment related benefits, representing 4.7 per cent of the working age population, compared with 2.9 per cent across Great Britain. Unemployment among young people (28.3 per cent of all claimants) and the long-term unemployed (38 per cent of all claimants) continues to be higher than the national average. As an overall measure of worklessness, it is estimated that 14,900 residents (12.1 per cent of the working-age population) are not in work, but want a job. Those out of work in Stockton are more likely to be actively seeking work. The national unemployment rate more significantly masks those who are not seeking work but want to work.

- **Local employment demand may not be enough to substantially reduce unemployment over the short-to-medium term.** The number of unemployed claimants is significantly higher than Jobcentre Plus vacancies. In November 2012, there were 7.6 unemployed claimants per unfilled vacancy. There were 18.4 claimants seeking a job as a process, plant and machine operative for every relevant vacancy advertised through Jobcentre Plus, which demonstrates the limited number of vacancies relative to interest.
- **A well-qualified workforce:** 27.6 per cent of Stockton's workforce (working-age adults, aged 16-64) are qualified to degree level or higher or equivalent and 21.2 per cent are qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent. In 2012/13, 81.3 per cent of Key Stage 4 pupils in Stockton-on-Tees attained five or more GCSEs at grades A-C. This is consistent with the England average. Although GCSE attainment rates have grown in line with the national average, they have not kept pace with improvements in the North East.
- **Stockton's employers are demanding a more skilled workforce.** Over the past five years the share of employment has grown fastest in associate professional and technical occupations (+33 per cent); professional occupations (+23 per cent); and managers, directors and senior officials (+23 per cent).

Stockton-on-Tees has good levels of qualifications and evidence of "up-skilling" as employers become more demanding. More than one quarter (27.6 per cent) of Stockton's workforce (working-age adults, aged 16-64) are qualified to degree level or higher or equivalent and 21.2 per cent are qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent. In 2012-2013, 81.3 per cent of Key Stage 4 pupils in Stockton-on-Tees gained five or more GCSEs at grades A-C. Although consistent with the England average, GCSE attainment rates have not kept pace with improvements in the North East. Local employers are demanding a more highly skilled workforce.

- **The number of unemployed claimants is significantly higher than Jobcentre Plus vacancies.** In November 2012, there were 7.6 unemployed claimants per unfilled vacancy. There were 18.4 claimants seeking a job as a process, plant and machine operative for every relevant vacancy advertised through Jobcentre Plus, which demonstrates the limited number of vacancies relative to interest.

### What the research says

4.2 There is a vast array of research available examining the link between young people and business and how best to meet the skills requirements of business both now and in the future.

### Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 2012



4.3 This research report argues the need to sell the case to employers for employing young people (e.g. growing talent and workforce planning, cost effectiveness) and identifies the support employers need to bring in more young people:

- A more joined up skills and employment system of support for young people
- More direct support for taking on young people – pastoral, advice not just financial
- Better careers advice and guidance in particular for alternatives to university education
- Employer engagement with schools needs to start earlier; evidence that young people listen more to employers rather than teachers or parents. Employers think they could help to offer career insight talks, provide work experience and internship placements

#### **Public Sector Research Centre (PSRC) – Closing the Gap – How employers can change the way young people see apprenticeships**

4.4 This paper comments that employers can play a role through:

- Attending careers fairs and give careers talks
- Offering work experience or job shadowing
- Bringing recruitment processes to life

#### **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 2013 – Employers are from Mars, Young People are from Venus**

4.5 This paper recommends that:

##### **Employers need to:**

- Make the business case for recruiting young people to managers
- Adapt their expectations of young people
- Think about roles and access routes
- Take action to attract from a wider pool of young people
- Ensure selection processes are youth friendly and transparent

##### **Policy Makers need to:**

- Provide greater support for young people during transition
- Careers advice and guidance and work preparation should be part of the national curriculum and schools need to be assessed in how well they are performing

##### **What do young people say?:**

- Don't rely on teachers but get external experts including employers into schools
- Pay attention to those areas where greater advice is needed
- Careers advice and guidance needs to be part of the curriculum
- There needs to be more information on what choices are available for those leaving school
- More support should be given to encourage employer contact and work experience opportunities

#### **Confederation of British Industry (CBI) - Skills Survey 2012**

4.6 The CBI Skills Survey highlighted the following key findings:

- The proportion of employers involved in apprenticeships has risen to almost two thirds
- Employers say that the need to provide businesses with the skills they require is the single most important reason to raise standards in schools
- Employers want to see primary schools concentrating on the key enabling skills of numeracy and literacy
- For those in the 14-19 age group, employers believe schools and colleges should be prioritising development of employability skills as well as literacy, numeracy and technology
- There is an appetite from employers to play a greater role in delivering careers advice with more than half willing to do more
- Employers are not confident of meeting their need for high skilled employees in the future
- STEM skills open up career opportunities at every level
- One in five jobs now require degree level skills
- Employability skills are the most important factor taken into account when businesses recruit graduates

### **Local Findings – Business Visit Feedback**

4.7 In order to explore whether the national findings were borne out locally, the Committee visited a number of local businesses. This confirmed national findings.

4.8 This visits revealed a common problem that young people tended not to be prepared for the work environment and that applicants displayed a lack of training on writing CVs and interview skills etc. All the businesses visited commented that young people were not ready for interview.

4.9 The businesses recognised the need for succession planning (commenting that the older workforce tended to lack the experience of the new technologies). One business reported problems in filling particular types of posts and that it was difficult to find candidates with the right attitude and flexibility.

4.10 There had been mixed experiences of apprentices. Where there had been problems, apprentices could be time consuming (although utilising mentors had worked well in one business). One idea was to introduce a pre-apprenticeship induction programme as a way of introducing young people into the work place and provide a safe training environment. Quality assurance work was identified as an area which would suit an apprenticeship route as no formal qualification existed for this type of work. There is a need to promote apprenticeships as the start of a rewarding career pathway.

4.11 It was felt that young people seemed unaware of the various industries which existed and the types of occupations/ opportunities within them. There was a general feeling that education was too subject based and that schools and colleges were not devoting enough time to careers guidance. One company felt that some schools wanted to “hang on” to their pupils and were therefore not properly advising them about other options available. All felt that careers advisers were not up to date and the majority of teachers had little or no experience of industry. The businesses visited as part of the review were interested in being part of a more co-ordinated approach and having a higher profile with local schools/ colleges.

### **Strand Two – Provision and Performance**

4.12 The second strand of the review mapped out post 16 provision and travel to learn patterns and also examined performance at Key Stage 4 and post 16.

4.13 Post-16 learning and skills needs in Stockton are supported by one general FE college, one sixth form college, two school sixth forms, four work based learning (WBL) providers offering Apprenticeships and one WBL provider offering Foundation Learning. The table below shows who they are and the level of qualifications/training they deliver. However, there are approximately 200 providers delivering education and training in the Stockton local authority area. Some of this may be specialist delivery tailored to a particular employer need, or national employers who use the same college/provider to deliver throughout their business.

Provider	Type	Skills for Life	Below L2	L2	L3	L4	Apprenticeships	
							Int	Adv
Conyers	School Sixth Form			✓	✓			
Egglescliffe	School Sixth Form			✓	✓			
Nacro	Private Training	✓	✓					
NETA	Private Training			✓			✓	✓
Stockton Riverside College	General Further Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tees Achieve	Local Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stockton Sixth Form College	Sixth Form College	✓		✓	✓			
Cablecom	Private Training	✓		✓			✓	✓
Janard	Private Training			✓			✓	✓

4.14 Teesside University is the main higher education establishment that Stockton residents attend, with approximately 933 applicants (aged 19 or under from across the borough) accepted in 2009. Durham University has a large site with over 100 post-graduates learning from the Stockton site.

4.15 Stockton is a net exporter of learners, which means that a higher number of learners (34%) travel out of the borough to take part in education and training, than those who travel into the borough (16%). The majority (70%) of those learners that travel out of the Borough go to Middlesbrough.

4.16 Although there are a number of providers delivering to Stockton learners, the most popular are Middlesbrough College and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College based in Darlington – both with good Ofsted grades - whilst our two Stockton colleges show Ofsted ratings as 'requires improvement'.

4.17 The Committee received presentations from the new principals at Stockton Riverside College (SRC) and Stockton Sixth Form College (SSFC) on their plans for improving the Ofsted judgement and were encouraged by progress to date. The presentations also outlined how the colleges were seeking to work more closely with local employers and businesses and local universities on the course offer at both colleges.

4.18 There have been improvements in performance at key stage 4 with Stockton Secondary Schools achieving the highest percentage of students achieving the key indicator of 5 or more GCSE passes at GCSE, however, 43% of pupils are coming out of school without English and Maths GCSE (A\* - C).

4.19 In respect of post 16 providers, all four have exceeded the national average pass rate of 98.1% and on the higher grade measure (A\*-B), Egglecliffe exceeded the national figure by almost 6% and Conyers and Stockton Sixth Form both improved the % of students achieving A\* - B grades from 2012 but were below the national figure of 52.8%.

4.20 Colleges do not currently collaborate with each other on a complementary curriculum. Although it is recognised that education providers are in competition with each other, there is evidence of collaboration e.g. Conyers and Egglecliffe sponsored bid for post 16 Maths and English at Billingham site.

4.21 The Education Funding Agency:

- Allocates 16 – 19 revenue funding and learner support budgets (and fund apprenticeships?)
- Funds youth contract for disengaged 16 and 17 year olds
- Funding changed to support more demanding study programmes and flat rate of funding per students not payments for each qualification studied
- Can cease funding or require improvement where institutions are failing

4.22 From September this year, new 16 to 19 study programmes were introduced, supported by changes to post-16 funding. All students in full or part-time education will be expected to follow a study programme tailored to their individual needs, education and employment goals, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

4.23 When designing Study Programmes, providers should encourage students to:

- Progress to a level of study which is higher than their prior attainment;
- Take qualification(s) which are stretching rather than easy to pass;
- Take qualification(s) that are judged to be of good/suitable size and level of rigour that will enable genuine progression to meaningful employment, training or higher levels of education;
- Achieve English and maths GCSE A\*-C or take English and maths provision that will lead to significant progress towards this if this has not already been achieved;
- Participate in value-added non-qualification activity and work experience, whenever appropriate.

4.24 In addition, study programmes for 16 – 19 year olds must:

- Not be wholly occupational
- Include one qualification of substantial size which offer progression into education/employment
- Include high quality work experience or internships (where appropriate) and other enrichment activities
- Include GCSE A\* - C in English and Maths or qualifications leading to this level for students who have not already achieved them

4.25 FE colleges and sixth forms can recruit 14 – 16 year olds from September 2013. Colleges enrolling this age group must offer them a full KS4 programme either alone or in collaboration with schools.

4.26 The new Traineeship Programme supports young people aged 16 – 24 to develop the skills they need to secure employment including apprenticeships. This programme forms part of the Study Programme framework.

4.27 Apprenticeships are open anyone living in England, over 16 years-old and not in full-time education whether they are just leaving school, have been working for years or are seeking to start a new career. As employees, apprentices earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills whilst working towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). There are three levels: intermediate, advanced and higher.

Apprenticeships are advertised by the National Apprenticeship Service. In August 2013, there were 206 apprenticeship vacancies advertised in the Tees Valley. 2633 applications were received, 129 Tees Valley employers advertised and the vacancies were supported by 37 learning providers, 12 of which are based in the Tees Valley.

4.28 Professor Alison Wolf, in her 'review of vocational education, recommended that study programmes be introduced to offer students breadth and depth and without limiting their options for future study or work.

### **Strand Three – Participation and support**

4.29 The third strand of the review focused on the quality of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance, Integrated Youth Support and targeted activities for those not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

4.30 **Local Authorities** have responsibilities to support young people into education or training, which are set out in the following duties:

- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and for those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment in their area.
- Make available to young people aged 13-19 and to those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training. Tracking young people's participation successfully is a key element of this duty.
- The Education and Skills Act (ESA) 2008 places two new duties on Local Authorities with regard to 16 and 17 year-olds. These relate to the raising of the participation age (RPA): From 2013, all young people will be under a duty to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From 2015, this will rise to their 18th birthday.
- A Local Authority in England must ensure that its functions are (so far as they are capable of being so) exercised so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area to whom Part 1 of ESA 2008 applies, with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training.
- A local authority in England must make arrangements to enable it to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of persons belonging to its area to whom Part

1 of ESA 2008 applies but who are failing to fulfil the duty to participate in education or training

### **Delivering the existing duty to support participation:**

4.31 In order to discharge this duty, Local Authorities must collect information to identify young people who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, to target their resources on those who need them most. The information collected must be in the format specified in the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) Management Information Requirement. Young people's current activity information should be made available at regular intervals.

4.32 Local Authorities will be expected to continue to work with schools to identify those who are in need of targeted support or who are at risk of not participating post-16. They will need to agree how these young people can be referred for intensive support, drawn from the range of education and training support services available locally. Tools such as risk of NEET indicators (RONI) support this.

4.33 Local Authorities are expected to lead the September Guarantee process, which underpins the delivery of this duty. This is the process by which local authorities aim to ensure that all 16-17 year olds receive an offer of a suitable place in education or training by the end of September each year.

4.34 Information will be required on the number and proportion of young people in each area who:

- ✓ receive an offer under the September Guarantee,
- ✓ are participating in education or training,
- ✓ who are NEET, or
- ✓ whose current activity is not known

4.35 This information will be taken from the CCIS data reported to Department for Education (DfE) and made available publically via the DfE website on a regular basis.

4.36 Local Authorities are expected to pay particular attention to young people who are not in any form of education, employment or training.

4.37 Local Authorities should continue to maintain close links with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that young people who are NEET and receiving benefits get support that is appropriate to their needs

### **Duty to promote effective participation**

4.38 The participation of young people in education and training should be actively supported through local authorities' wider functions wherever possible and practical including:

- post-16 transport policy statement,
- Where possible, ensuring a focus on participation is embedded throughout their education and children's services
- local authorities, schools and colleges will need to set out what services they provide for young people with SEN in the area – the 'local offer' – up to the age of 25.

4.39 Local Authorities should provide strategic leadership in their areas, working with and influencing partners locally to support participation.

4.40 The three primary routes for young people to participate are:

- a. Full-time education;
- b. An Apprenticeship;
- c. Full-time work combined with part-time education or training.

### **Duties on Schools**

4.41 Schools and Colleges are now held to account for the destination of all their leavers.

4.42 From September 2012, schools have been under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils in years 9-11 on the full range of post-16 options, including Apprenticeships. This will extend to years 8-13 and will include colleges. Guidance secured should be independent and face to face where it is the most suitable support for young people to make successful transitions.

4.43 Schools also have specific responsibilities for young people with statements of SEN leaving school, including arranging an annual review of the statement which focuses on transition from school. The responsibilities placed on young people by RPA should be clearly built into that transition plan. Local Authorities will need to work with schools to identify and support those young people at risk of being NEET post-16.

**4.44 Schools and colleges will be held to account for the destinations of all their leavers** through the annual publication of Destination Measures.

4.45 In Stockton, 56.8% of initial destinations are to colleges within the Borough, 34.2% are colleges outside Stockton, 6.3% are to employment, MA, training and foundation learning and 2.7% of initial destination activity is NEET (64yp)

4.46 Stockton have developed a PAT tool to help determine the needs of young people who are NEET.

4.47 During the course of the review, the Committee heard from the principals of Stockton's Sixth Form Colleges about the actions they were taking to help young people remain in education and training including the use of in year enrolment on shorter courses.

### **Duties on sixth forms, colleges and other training providers**

4.48 The primary duties are to promote good attendance of 16 and 17 year olds and inform Local Authority support services if a young person (aged 16 or 17) has dropped out of learning, so the young person can be contacted swiftly and offered support to help them re-engage.

4.49 The Education Act 2011 introduced a statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent, impartial careers guidance for their pupils in year 9 – 11.

### **Careers**

4.50 The Education Act 2011 placed schools under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all Year 9 to 11 pupils from September 2012.

Stockton Borough Council is offering a Local Authority traded service via dedicated Careers Advisers within Youth Direction, which schools can purchase to meet this requirement. The service is currently subsidised by the Council which will cease in July 2014. If the service cannot obtain full cost recovery, then the service will cease.

4.51 All of the Careers Advisers are professionally qualified to at least Level 6, the minimum standard recommended for schools purchasing Careers Guidance by the Department for Education and the Career Development Institute. Stockton Youth Direction is also externally accredited to the Matrix Standard, the national quality benchmark for information, advice and guidance services. This quality standard is recommended by the DfE in their statutory guidance to schools to provide Careers Guidance.

4.52 There is a clear correlation between a young person knowing what they want to do and attainment. The benefits of careers guidance includes lower course switching/ drop outs, motivated students, success rates and better informed about labour market information.

#### **“Going in the right direction” – Ofsted Thematic Review published September 2013**

4.53 The thematic review revealed that only one in five schools were effective in ensuring that all its students in Years 9, 10 and 11 were receiving the level of information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision-making.

4.54 The review recommended that

#### **Schools should:**

- develop and implement a clear strategy for careers guidance
- use destination data on students’ progression
- ensure that every school governing body has an employer representative, and that the vocational route, including apprenticeships, is given equal status to the academic route, for example, by fostering greater links with employers so that young people and their parents/carers are exposed to a wider range of career options
- promote the wider range of progression routes available at further education colleges, independent learning providers, and communities and skills providers.

and **Ofsted** should ensure that inspectors take greater account of the quality of careers guidance and of students’ destinations in judging the effectiveness of a school’s leadership and management

4.55 The Government Response to Ofsted’s Thematic Review of Careers Guidance (Sept 2013) stated that the Government

- will revise the statutory guidance for schools on their duty to secure independent and impartial careers guidance. The revised statutory guidance will provide an opportunity to set clear expectations and highlight Ofsted’s recommendations for schools.
- Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, has already confirmed that he will give careers guidance a higher priority in school inspections from September 2013. Ofsted’s lead inspector for careers guidance has contributed to training for inspectors, raising awareness of this issue.

### **Committee Visits**

#### ***Careers Interventions***



4.46 The Committee observed careers intervention interviews at Northfield and Ian Ramsey Schools as well as with NEET young people at the Stockton One Stop Shop.

#### ***Feedback from Northfield School***

4.47 A discussion took place with Year 10 pupils at Northfield School. The discussion mirrored the comments made by local Stockton businesses and employers.

4.48 Most of the pupils did not know what they wanted to do after leaving school and had done work with the careers advisers regarding their interests to help them decide next steps. None knew what the growth sectors or skills shortages were or what opportunities there were locally. They commented that they needed someone to explain what opportunities were out there.

4.49 Those that were clear about what they wanted to do understood the qualifications they needed to get to where they wanted to be. Half of the pupils planned to go to university; two would be embarking on apprenticeships. Barriers that prevented them from doing what they wanted included negativity and cost.

4.50 All had been on work experience although there was a shortage of placements and a lack of choice. Those pupils who had been on relevant placements had found the work experience useful. They commented that it gave them an idea of what the work environment was like.

4.51 All the pupils said they would be interested in hearing from local business/ attending jobs conventions etc. They also felt they needed extra practical help with preparing for interview and references during transition.

#### **Review of Stockton's Careers Guidance Service - 2014**

4.52 This qualitative review was commissioned by the managers of the service from an independent consultant to inform decisions about the continuation and further development of the service.

4.53 The review concluded that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had provided good support to its schools as they take on their new responsibility for careers guidance. The local authority has demonstrated that it is possible not only to work together with its schools but also to adapt and tailor its services so that the support is bespoke to meeting the particular needs of each of the schools.

4.54 The report recognised that cuts in public expenditure on local government will continue to present challenges. It should be possible, however, to devise a business plan that is not based on a requirement that all schools will need to use the service. As long as a viable number of schools wish to continue to work with Youth Direction, this should be achievable.

4.55 The report commented that the consequence of not pursuing this option is that schools are likely to put in place less effective arrangements for careers guidance support for pupils, with the result that more students will find themselves on the wrong courses at 16 and drop out. The NEET figures will rise, so increasing the caseload for the participation advisers and adding to the costs of the targeted IAG service. The report recommended that the service should also explore options for offering its services to schools outside the borough, as this would help to sustain the service for schools in Stockton and, more

significantly, ensure that young people in Stockton continue to have access to the good careers guidance support that currently exists.

#### **14 – 19 Full Participation Plan**

4.56 The 14 – 19 strategy for education and training is closely linked to the local skills and economic development agenda led by the Tees Valley Local Employer Partnership (LEP), Tees Valley Unlimited, to ensure that education and training prepares young people for employment and economic stability and also ensure that the local offer clearly meets employer need.

#### **NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)**

4.57 NEET for 16 – 19 year olds in Stockton has reduced steadily over the past decade. In May 2009 there were 988; in May 2013 there were 607 (a 39% reduction).

4.58 Young people across all schools become NEET for a number of reasons. In Stockton, the top six reasons for becoming NEET are:

- Completed college course (41.6%)
- Didn't like what they were doing (19.5%)
- Finished school and wanted support over the summer (13.9%)
- Illness/ health/ pregnancy (9.1%)
- Employment ceased (4.8%)
- Chose the wrong option (4.6%)

4.59 A common theme is unrealistic expectations of world of the world of work.

#### **Lost in transition – The Work Foundation - 2012**

4.60 This research paper highlights that many young people are struggling to make the initial transition from education into sustained work, that the NEET cohort is a diverse group with young people becoming NEET at different points. NEETs face a number of barriers to work, In addition to lack of work experience, there are other barriers such as health problems and poor qualifications. Skills needs have also changed in way that makes it harder for some young people to access the labour market. For example more emphasis is now placed on “soft skills” and for young people to be “work ready”. The paper recommends that NEET policy must focus on NEET prevention during transition periods.

#### **Committee Site Visits – Targeted NEET Activities**

4.61 As part of the review, Committee Members visited a number of the targeted activities

##### ***Matty's Bistro***

4.62 This successful engagement activity was targeting at hard to reach young people and aimed to build confidence, discipline and team working in a sympathetic environment to help participants to become work ready; IAG is also provided to young people. The scheme has good progression to work (78% of cohort of 60 young people).

##### ***STEPS service - LDD Young People***

4.63 The Committee learnt that STEPS work with people to identify their skills, abilities and development needs. They also provide advice and guidance to employers of people with a disability. STEPS support disabled people into college, voluntary work, work experience and paid work. Young People often start by carrying out voluntary work then progressing into employment. Employment provides work experience and income and also builds confidence. The Committee met with a young person on placement at Durham University Sports Centre and another at Greengates School.

4.64 Both of the young people found the work rewarding and enjoyable and were helping them to achieve their own personal aspirations and gain work experience. STEPS supported them in getting started and building their confidence including practical help with travelling to work/ getting used to bus routes etc.

4.65 The service was keen to encourage more local employers to consider areas of work which would be suitable for a placement from STEPS.

#### ***Stockton Youth Assembly – Getting Ready for Work Discussion Feedback***

4.66 Committee Members met twice with young people from the Stockton Youth Assembly around the topic of “getting ready for work”.

4.67 The young people felt that they were uninformed about the types of jobs available. They felt that more information was needed on the jobs/opportunities and the best way to pursue them. Feedback from the young people revealed that schools were not providing enough of this kind of information. Schools needed to give more help to young people making choices (not just Plan A).

4.68 Travelling to work and lack of experience limited young people’s opportunities. Young people felt that there were negative perceptions about particular sectors (e.g. engineering, manufacturing) and that these sectors needed to do more to attract young people (particularly girls).

4.69 Most felt that work experience was useful in helping young people to make choices about their futures and that there should be more opportunities for work experience.

4.70 Young people commented that they were motivated by what they enjoyed rather than where there were employment opportunities. They stressed, however, that these two things were not ‘mutually exclusive’.

4.71 The Youth Assembly recommended that more should be done to:

- Get more employers involved in schools
- Get schools to provide impartial independent guidance
- Get better and more information about jobs into schools including information about obscure jobs
- Develop structured and planned work placement programmes
- Ensure equal opportunities
- Work with employers to help them realise how hard it is to get experience and how unfair it is to penalise young people who haven’t got experience

4.72 In addition, the Chair and Vice Chair, of the Youth Assembly (in their role as Stockton Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP)), had consulted with and encouraged young people to get involved in the British Youth Council's

Mark Your Mark campaign, identifying the top five issues from the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) manifesto to be debated in the House of Commons. A record number of returns were received from Stockton, compared to previous years, and the MYP and DMYP were successful in encouraging new schools, voluntary groups and SYA members in supporting the process.

4.73 The Committee noted that the top three issues for Stockton included better work experience (268 votes) and apprenticeships (233 votes). The Committee supported the SYA in their plans to develop a local campaign around these issues as part of the National Campaign Curriculum for Life.

***Feedback from Lets Take Action Group (for looked after children)***

4.74 Member of the Committee visited this Group to gain an insight into the experience of Looked after Children (LAC) in the context of the review. On the evening of the visit there was mixed age group of nine children/ young people.

4.75 Overall, Members felt that the looked after children received good support and guidance – probably better than a lot of other children.

4.76 In respect of the issues discussed, the findings were similar to discussion with other young people at Northfield School and at the Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA). When asked what kinds of jobs were available, the group referred to well-known occupations rather than employment opportunities locally. Most of the group had a clear idea about what they wanted to do and some knew the qualifications etc. they needed to get there.

4.77 Things that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do included other peoples' opinion, employers and bad grades (cited by three of the group). They felt that employers often had a poor opinion of young people but commented that young people needed to display the right attitude, obtain the necessary skills, present themselves properly and be enthusiastic.

4.78 There were some comments about it being 'who you know' and the difficulty of getting a chance to demonstrate what they were capable of doing.

4.79 A number of the group had the opportunity to go on work experience and they felt that this has been useful. A number commented that work experience was something that was being reduced or discontinued by their school. A number had received careers advice – mainly from Youth Direction several had received advice from the Job Centre, Matty's Bistro and myplace (Middlesbrough).

4.80 Some had received support with getting ready for work, although it was suggested that more help was needed with practical skills such as CVs, applications and interviews.

***Eastern Ravens – Support Group for Young Carers***

4.81 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee attended a session at Eastern Ravens which was attended by young carers aged 16 – 18 years. As with other young people, there were mixed experiences in relation to careers advice and whether schools organised work experience. Again, the young people were unaware of local employment opportunities and growth sectors. The young people were interested in understanding what employers were looking for in applications and at interview. Barriers identified by the young people to doing what they wanted to do included parents' views and cost (particularly in relation to attending

university). The support workers commented that, in reality, their situation as young carers would for many limit their opportunities and may prevent them from being able to attend university.

## 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 In Stockton-on-Tees, unemployment among young people is particularly high (28.3% of all claimants continue to be higher than the national average). Stockton's employers are demanding a more skilled workforce. In addition, the Stockton economy contains significant specialisms and niches of national significance. Five of Tees Valley Unlimited's eight priority sectors are important for Stockton-on-Tees: oil and gas; chemicals and metals processing; advanced manufacturing; life science, healthcare and biotech; and transport, ports and logistics.

5.2 Stockton-on-Tees has good levels of qualifications and evidence of up-skilling as employers are becoming more demanding. However, although consistent with the England average, GCSE attainment rates have not kept pace with improvements in the North East.

5.3 The challenge for the Committee was to seek to ensure that education and training equips young people with skills that businesses and employers across the Borough need and how to bring education and business together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need. It was clear from the outset that the quality of careers advice would play a key role in achieving this.

5.4 Comments received from local businesses were consistent with those from young people. They both highlighted young people's lack of awareness of the various industries which existed and the types of occupations/ opportunities within them (including growth sectors). There was also a recognition that young people tended not to be prepared for the work environment and that applicants displayed a lack of training on writing CVs and interview skills etc.

5.5 The review has highlighted the need to:

- Get more employers involved in schools
- Provide young people with impartial independent careers guidance
- Provide more information about the various local industries and employment opportunities
- Develop structured and planned work placement programmes
- Provide more support in getting young people ready for work including help with interview skills

5.6 The recommendations seek to provide a framework to achieve this in dialogue with local employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers.

### Recommendations

1. That the Council work with local businesses and employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers to develop an action plan to deliver the following objectives:

- greater interaction between schools/ colleges and local business
  - helping young people remain in education and training which leads to progression into further education and employment
  - promoting awareness of the job market, growth sectors and employment opportunities both locally and further afield, as part of independent careers guidance for Key Stage 4 and post 16, including the development of a job search tool and improved website access to job information and access to an annual job fair event/ promotional activities
  - enhance the employability of young people
  - provide more and varied opportunities for work experience
  - provide support in applying for further education and employment opportunities including practical support in making applications
2. That funding avenues are pursued in order to deliver these objectives.
  3. That Council services continue to work closely together to deliver the action plan.
  4. That the Committee welcomes and supports Stockton Youth Assembly's local campaign topics which include better work experience and apprenticeships.
  5. That the Director of Children, Education and Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People write to all Stockton Schools and Chairs of School Governing Bodies drawing attention to the Select Committee report and emphasising the importance of interaction with local businesses and employers as part of the provision of quality careers information and guidance and encouraging all Secondary Governing Bodies to appoint a governor champion for Enterprise and Employment and consider placing a regular item on Governing Body meetings.
  6. That the Children and Young People Select Committee receive reports on the performance of post 16 education providers as part of their quarterly performance reporting framework.

## Glossary

LDD	Learning Difficulties and Disability
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
CIAG	Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
IYSS	Integrated Youth Support Service
LEP	Learning and Education Partnership
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
PSRC	Public Centre Research Centre
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
FE	Further Education
KS	Key Stage
ESA	Education and Skills Act
RPA	Raising the Participation Age
DfE	Department for Education
CCIS	Client Caseload Information System
RONI	Risk of NEET Indicator
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SYA	Stockton Youth Assembly
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
STEM	Science, Technology, English, Maths
SRC	Stockton Riverside College
SSFC	Stockton Sixth Form College
MYP	Member of the Youth Parliament
DMYP	Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament
UKYP	UK Youth Parliament
PAT Tool	Participation Assessment Tool