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Youth engagement - update

Purpose of report

For noting. The report updates the Board on the youth engagement campaign “Hidden Talents” which was discussed by lead members of both the Economy and Transport Programme Board and Children and Young People Programme Board on 5 October 2011.

Summary

Lead members agreed that youth engagement in work and learning is a key issue for both Boards. They agreed to a joint-Board campaign looking at the council role in making the system as effective as possible, a focus on improving services to young people, looking at the issue from early years to young adulthood and the importance of place.

They discussed the current problems with the system, for example weak careers advice in schools and skills mismatches and some of the opportunities, for example looking ahead to the future labour market.

Officers are now taking forward actions to get the campaign underway.

Recommendation

Members to note the update.

Action

Officers to take forward members suggestions.

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Background

1. In 2009 the LGA ran a “Hidden Talents” campaign looking at youth engagement in work and learning. Its guiding ambition was that all young people, aged 16 to 25 years should be engaged in productive activity, work, learning, volunteering or caring.
2. Against a background of high youth unemployment, the Board has discussed, along with the Children and Young People Programme Board, a fresh look at youth engagement. The economic, funding and institutional landscape has changed significantly in the last two years.
3. Lead members met recently and agreed that there should be a campaign reporting jointly to both Boards.
4. At the meeting, members discussed the roles councils play in engaging young people in work and learning, some of the key problems with the current system (skills mismatches, weak careers advice), the need to look ahead to the future labour market and the importance of engaging business and young people in the campaign. They stressed the importance of outcomes and influencing the key policy processes, including the Budget. A note of the discussion is **attached** at Appendix C.

The work plan

5. Officers have developed a work plan with 3 main components to be completed early in the New Year:
 - 5.1 A campaign document bringing together an analysis of the problems with the current system and thinking on proposed solutions
 - 5.2 Baseline research on youth engagement statistics, looking behind the headline numbers on youth unemployment to the underlying trends on participation in work and learning and the variation between places. This has been commissioned from the National Foundation for Educational Research

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- 5.3 A way of engaging young people, to hear first hand about their experiences and ideas, and to test our ideas with them. We are talking to the British Youth Council, the membership body for youth forums, about a February event with young people from up and down the country, which will need to dovetail with the proposed youth events planned for the Local Growth Campaign in Wakefield and the South West. The focus of the February event is likely to be on hearing from young people.
- 6. In the run up to next year's LGA conference in June, we will develop the campaign building on these outputs. We have also asked the NFER to look at future skills needs and the extent to which the education and training system meets them, and labour market demographics so that our analysis and recommendations are forward looking.
- 7. We will be updating members regularly as the campaign progresses.