

SCRUTINY REVIEW INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)

Review: **Business and Employment Support Team (BEST)**

Note that with effect from 1 April 2015 BEST will be merged with Islington Learning and Working to as part of the new Learning, Skills and Employment section within the Chief Executive's Department.

Scrutiny Review Committee: Policy and Performance

Director leading the Review: Lela Kogbara

Lead Officer: Ellen Ryan and Pete Courtie

Overall aim:

Establish the extent to which BEST currently delivers for residents that need help securing employment including those who are young, over the age of 50, parents, sick/disabled, ex-offenders, BME.

Objectives of the review:

- Identify gaps in BEST provision to unemployed residents
- Review plans in place to fill gaps as part of implementing the recommendations of the Islington Employment Commission
- Make recommendations to be taken on board by the new Learning, Skills and Employment service

How is the review to be carried out: (Use separate sheets as necessary for 1-4 below)

Scope of the Review

Types of evidence will be assessed by the review: (add additional categories as needed)

1. Documentary submissions:
 - i) Overview of BEST work to date
 - ii) BEST performance data
 - iii) Labour market information
2. It is proposed that witness evidence be taken from:
 - i) BEST managers and officers
 - ii) Apprentices placed with external organisations
 - iii) Young people looking for apprenticeships and/or jobs
 - iv) People with learning disabilities that have applied for jobs through BEST – a sample of those that have been successful and those that have not
3. Visits
None

Additional Information:

BEST was established in January 2012 to operate a Single Employer Face as recommended by the Islington Fairness Commission. It is primarily an employer facing service that seeks to coordinate efforts to get more employers to recruit disadvantaged residents as well as encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to support employability through activities such as mentoring.

The Islington Employment Commission report was launched on 26 November 2014. It made recommendations in three areas:

- Creating change for people who need it - expanding and improving the support for available to Islington people to get, keep and enjoy their job;
- Employers creating change - enabling employers to recruit better locally
- Creating change for the next generation - ensuring that all young people get the support they need to confidently pursue their ambitions and get the careers they deserve

In addition there were messages to Government to devolve employment services to the local level, make youth careers a priority and take vocational education seriously.

A team is now in place to implement the recommendations of the Employment Commission, which is mostly drawn from existing resources.

The council successfully bid for approximately £2m from the London Enterprise Panel (New Homes Bonus top-slice) to provide resources until March 2017 to support the employment agenda. This has meant that the council has resources to develop the work of BEST, Islington Working for Parents and careers work in Children's Services.

Consultation has been completed on a new organisation structure to deliver the ambitions of the Employment Commission. The result is that BEST will be merged with Islington Learning and Working from 1 April 2015 to form a new Learning, Skills and Employment service. The new structure brings together the strategic business engagement functions, the job brokerage and recruitment functions and the front line employment support functions together with Adult and Community Learning.

Programme**Key output:**

1. Scrutiny Initiation Document

2. Timetable

3. Interim Report

4. Final Report

To be submitted to Committee on: