

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 21 October 2020

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PART I

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

REPORT ON SLOUGH APPRENTICESHIPS

1. **Purpose of Report**

To update on current situation of apprenticeships in Slough and other jobs and economic generation opportunities that exist in the Borough.

2. **Recommendation**

To note:

- The adoption of the Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-25 by SBC
- Covid 19 has impacted hugely on the delivery of existing and new Apprenticeship opportunities
- Phase 2 of Our Futures Programme launches on 21 October 2020, reorganising all roles of SBC with a pause on training and recruitment outside of the Programme
- the establishment of the Regeneration, Economy and Skills Group
- The Future Skills Hub
- The Slough Innovation Space
- The introduction of the emerging Construction Skills Academy
- The arrival of the Berkshire Skills Portal

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –**

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy and the emerging projects discussed in this report, align with the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy. By embracing the behaviours set out in the inclusive growth strategy, it can contribute to the realisation of all four Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities.

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy has the vision that “Slough will be an economy which epitomises inclusiveness, diversity and resilience – where small businesses flourish, where large employers invest, and where residents have the opportunity to aspire and prosper. We will harness the value of our international connections and the potential of redevelopment and regeneration to present a confident and dynamic image to the world, where a rounded and sustainable approach to growth is intrinsic to our collective success.”

The implementation of the Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy is therefore closely aligned with the Five-Year Plan Outcome that Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents.

It will also help to address the following outcomes:

- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay. Tackling inequality and taking a broader view of growth are two of the behaviours enshrined in the Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy. Improving job matching between residents and local demand for workers will raise the employment rate, directly impacting the income; employment; and education, skills and training domains of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful. In delivering the strategy and embracing the behaviours, particularly tackling inequality and taking a wider view of growth, pathways to high-quality employment can be created and promoted to Slough residents, including vulnerable young people. These pathways can lead to higher educational attainment across the Borough and help efforts to reduce the numbers of residents not in employment, education or training (NEET).

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications in this report.

(b) Risk Management

The issues around the way apprenticeships have been impacted by COVID- 19 are significant and need to be addressed.

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
Inclusive Growth Strategy was adopted June 2020	Partners on Board do not contribute or create the activity expected of them	The Board members are of high calibre and key stakeholders of the Borough	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Board has set out a Terms of Reference and meet regularly
Covid 19 has	Risk is that this	Setting up the		Continuing with

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
impacted hugely on the delivery of existing and new Apprenticeship opportunities	will cause higher number of youth unemployment as well as a growth in NEET	delivery of new alternative employment support programmes		employment support projects at the local level
Phase 2 of Our Futures Programme launches on 21 October 2020, reorganising all roles of SBC with a pause on training and recruitment outside of the Programme	This causes no new Apprenticeship opportunities at SBC	Looking to deliver alternative employment support opportunities	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Continuation of projects and supporting existing staff and new staff to engage in training
Slough Innovation Space is an ERDF funded project which will go live in April 2021	No new start up businesses take occupancy of the space.	Procurement for fit out has commenced. Marketing needs to commence	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Internal teams prepared for the arrival of this project
Future Skills Hub	Funding and delivery is not secured in time	Procurement for fit out has commenced	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Project Team established to monitor progress and success of the project
Establishment of the Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board	The right representation of Partners in not included on the Board who are inadequate to support the implementation of the Strategy	Ongoing engagement with Stakeholders during the development of the Strategy has ensured local views are represented and interest developed for them to be included on the Board.	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Governance Plans, Terms of Reference and Actions Plans will be developed jointly with Stakeholders

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal

It is not considered that there are any Human Rights Act implications resulting from this report.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Employment support initiatives must be targeted to those that are most risk of unemployment. This includes the youth, older workers and ethnic minorities.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1.1 Slough as a town has worked hard to create Apprenticeships Schemes over the last few years and undoubtedly apprenticeships are great way to give Slough's young people, aged 16–24 on the job training while continuing their education and earning a salary.
- 5.1.2 The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be significant. The OECD recently predicted that the UK could be the worst affected economy in the developed world, forecasting a fall of 11.5% in national income (gross domestic product) over the course of 2020.
- 5.1.3 In Slough Aug 2020 economic data figures show that unemployment rates have increased significantly since March 2020, and are currently at an all time high. (7940 claimants in Aug 2020 v's 2820 in Mar 2020). In these figures the most impacted group showing the greatest rise in unemployment were young people aged 16-24. Indeed, early figures suggest that younger people are already bearing the brunt of the fallout from the pandemic
- 5.1.4 Apprenticeships have been hugely impacted by the pandemic, redundancies, employer no longer hiring, and young people left without completing their qualification and no prospects of finding a replacement post part way through the course. Therefore apprenticeships are now perceived as a "risky" pathway by young people.
- 5.1.5 The Inclusive Growth Strategy provides a framework to develop a range of economic growth projects. The adoption of this Strategy enables project design which is aligned to the main priorities of the strategy.
- 5.1.6 The establishment of the Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board. This is a private sector led Board which acts as a group of stakeholders that oversee the delivery of the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the projects within it
- 5.1.7 The Future Skills Hub – this is a key project that will help deliver a range of employment and skills support activity in the centre of Slough. It is as a result of funding achieved from the LEP to bring together key Partners such as Windsor Forest Group of Colleges, Royal Holloway University, Job Centre Plus and others to align their services and provide a holistic approach to the job seeker. It opens in April 21 and will be delivered from Observatory House 5th Floor – north side
- 5.1.8 The Slough Innovation Space – an ERDF funded project which provides a space and specialist business support to start up businesses in the digital tech sector.

The project will be in operation from April 2020 in Observatory House 5th Floor, south side.

5.1.9 The introduction of the emerging Construction Skills Academy – under the banner of the Future Skills Hub, partners are coming together to set up an Academy which trains people to take on jobs created in this sector by the Regeneration Programme in the town centre.

5.1.10 The arrival of the Berkshire Skills Portal – a portal that contains all the vacancies across Berkshire on one site for job seekers to access. Training and skills development information also exists on this site
<https://www.berkshireopportunities.co.uk/>

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

Cabinet adopted the Inclusive Growth Strategy in June 2020

7. **Conclusion**

This report aims to highlight that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the Apprentices in Slough has been significantly impacted and need support. There are alternative opportunities and projects identified as a result of the work of the Economic Development team which can be taken forward until such time that employers can begin to take on Apprentices.

9. **Background Papers**

1. Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-25
2. Aug 2020 Economic Development Indicators