

ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BY OFFICER

Subject Authorisation to spend £155k for Retail Skills/ 'Let's Talk Shop' Project

Officer taking decision Strategic Director for Communities

Date of decision 3 March 2014

Summary

The Retail Skills 'Let's Talk Shop' project aims to ensure that Barnet's residents are well placed to take advantage of the Brent Cross regeneration by establishing a local career pathway into retail through:

- Developing a new degree level career pathway in retail
- 'Creating a buzz' among young people about retail opportunities and careers
- Establishing a single point of contact through job brokerage to make it easier for Barnet employers to recruit Barnet residents.

Career pathways	£10,000
Jobs brokerage	£20,000
Promoting retail career pathways to young people, equipping schools to offer effective retail careers advice, helping to equip young people with skills retail employers want, providing opportunities for Barnet residents to try out retail and developing a social media campaign to raise retail employment stories	£125,000

Officer Contributors Elaine Runswick (14-19 Lead)
Val White (Lead Commissioner Schools, Skills and Learning)

Status (public or exempt) Public

Wards affected All

Function of (Council/Executive) Council

Enclosures None

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1. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

1.1 None.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 The project will help to implement the following council corporate objectives:

- Promoting responsible growth, development and success across the borough by developing a local, skilled workforce that meets employers needs in the retail sector
- Supporting families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being through equipping young people to take advantage of retail employment opportunities
- Improving the satisfaction of residents and business with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study through ensuring that local people can access local opportunities.

2.2 The project will realise the council's corporate objectives by:

- Ensuring that young people are appropriately qualified and equipped to access the world of work
- Supporting vulnerable young people into employment, education and/or training
- Ensuring that the provision of skills and training in the borough and surrounding areas is consistent with the demands of the local labour market to support the borough's ambition to grow
- Enabling Barnet residents to benefit from the employment opportunities that will become available through the council's large scale regeneration programmes
- Ensuring alignment with the welfare reform agenda to address where there is a skills barrier to accessing employment.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

3.1 The following risks and associated mitigation measures have been identified for this programme:

3.1.1 Risk: Barnet residents do not take up opportunities

Mitigation: Barnet and Southgate College has proven marketing strategies and has allowed a realistic budget to provide the level of input needed.

3.1.2 Risk: Schools do not engage

Mitigation: LBB will provide the introduction to schools who will receive a free service which will help enhance their offer to pupils.

3.1.3 Risk: Employers do not engage

Mitigation: Barnet and Southgate College has extensive expertise in engaging employers and imaginative strategies to take remedial action.

4. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 s149 requires all Public bodies, and all other organisations exercising public functions on their behalf, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those without; to promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.
- 4.2 Young people and adults will be able to access services, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, gender or disability. This will be checked during regular performance monitoring of contracts which measures reach by ethnicity, religion, gender and disability. Where monitoring data identifies hard-to-reach communities are not being sufficiently supported, plans to refocus delivery will be implemented with providers.

5. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.1 The Project will be funded from the 'Service Priorities Fund' which was agreed as part of the council's budget for 2013-14. This project is being funded from the Service Development Reserve. The cost to the council is £155k. The use of budget is outlined in the table below.

Barnet and Southgate College	Promoting retail career pathways to young people, equipping schools to offer effective retail careers advice, helping to equip young people with skills retail employers want, providing opportunities for Barnet residents to try out retail and developing a social media campaign to raise retail employment stories. Working with schools, Job Centre Plus and other partners	£125k
London Borough of Barnet	Career pathways	£10k
	Jobs brokerage	£20k
Total		£155k

- 5.2 £125k of the total fund will be used to commission activity from Barnet and Southgate College, the contract holder for the Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House in East Finchley.
- 5.3 Staffing and ICT will be covered by Barnet and Southgate College, and courses will be run at the Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House in East Finchley. Barnet and Southgate College will determine how they will use the funding with regards to staffing, in line with the targets and outcomes expected. The funding will also part fund an existing member of staff, i.e. the Employer Brokerage Officer. There are no other staffing, ICT or property implications in the context of this report.

- 5.4 Career pathways
£10k will be used to develop a part-time degree course with local universities.
- 5.6 Jobs brokerage
£20k will be used to match fund £20,000 of section 106 employment and training funding in order to create a one year Employer Brokerage Officer post based at the London Borough of Barnet.
- 5.7 The project will be monitored by an established Retail Skills Academy steering group with representation from key partners:
- LBB, Education and Skills Delivery Unit
 - LBB, Skills and Enterprise Team
 - Barnet and Southgate College
 - JCP
 - Hammerson – Brent Cross
- 5.8 As well as the costs for 'Let's Talk Shop' which will be directly funded (see section 5.1), Barnet and Southgate College will offer around £130K to deliver courses as part of the project funded through its Skills Funding Agency contract.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1 Under paragraphs 5.9 and 12.1 of Contract Procedure Rules, HB Public Law will approve the contract to be entered into with Barnet and Southgate College.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1 Council Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions – Section 7.1 provides that Chief Officers (i.e. the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service as listed in Article 12) can take decisions without consultation with the Cabinet Member concerned where it is a decision authorised to be taken by the Chief Officer under the Contract Procedure Rules or it is in respect of operational matters within the Chief Officer's sphere of managerial or professional responsibility and is not significant in terms of budget or policy.
- 7.2 Council Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions – Section 7.2 provides that Chief Officers may use whatever means they consider appropriate to discharge those functions allocated to them including placing contracts and procuring other resources within or outside the Council.
- 7.3 Section 25 of the constitution – Section 9.1 Single Tender Action states that a single tender action or commitment is not allowed unless approved in advance by the Commercial and Customer Services Director. This DPR has been approved by the Commercial and Customer Services Director.
- 7.4 Section 25 of the constitution – appendix 1 Table A – Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds states that an Assistant Director/Director is allowed to take this decision as its value is between £25,001-£173,934.

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8.1 The Brent Cross/Cricklewood regeneration scheme will generate up to 27,000 new jobs, many of which will be in the service industries requiring retail skills. Up to a further 10,000 other retail or related opportunities are projected to emerge across North London over the next 5-10 years, offering accessible opportunities for Barnet residents. We want to ensure that Barnet's residents are well placed to take advantage of these opportunities by developing a well-trodden local career pathway into retail. This project will work through the aegis of the locally-based Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House in East Finchley to inform and prepare Barnet residents for a career in emerging and future retail vacancies. This is a joint initiative with Barnet and Southgate College, as they are the regional contract holder for the National Retail Skills Academy.

8.2 'Let's Talk Shop' in Barnet

The Project aims to plug gaps in existing provision and provide links which are catalytic to connecting local people to local jobs through the following objectives:

- Creating a flexible retail career progression pathway combining earning and learning, from entry level through to degree level. This will involve working with Middlesex to create a degree programme in retail through a credit and accumulation transfer scheme.
- Creating an Employer Brokerage Officer post, which will establish a single point of contact for all retailers in the borough to liaise with in identifying and co-ordinating job opportunities and training. The Employer Brokerage Officer will also establish a single point of contact for developers to liaise with on construction job opportunities across the borough. The Employer Brokerage Officer will liaise with advisers and professionals working with young people to disseminate these opportunities.
- Equipping schools to offer current and future labour market intelligence on retail opportunities in Barnet and encouraging young people to consider retail as an exciting career opportunity that offers progression to management.
- Helping schools to equip young people with the skills that retailers say they want.
- Creating an increased awareness and understanding of careers and progression in retail within the wider Barnet community.
- Offering opportunities for residents to try out retail.

8.2.1 Barnet and Southgate College will deliver a range of activities including:

- Sessions for young people in Barnet delivered through secondary schools – at least one for each school. Where schools decline the offer, double sessions will be provided at targeted schools.
- Borough-wide events held at Hospitality House, dedicated for
 - i. Careers advice, and;
 - ii. Young people and families in year 10, 11, and 12.
- Taster sessions for young people planning to make transition to employment or career pathway in retail.
- Innovative marketing materials including a social media campaign to regularly raise retail employment stories where young people seek information.

8.3 Proposed Activity

- 8.3.1 The project will be delivered through a partnership between the council's Education and Skills Delivery Unit and Barnet and Southgate College's (B&S) Enterprise and Employment School (who will contribute an additional £130k to the project, not included in the costings in section 5.1). It will link closely to the Retail Skills Academy Steering Group of which LBB and B&S are both members and will be co-located with the Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House to ensure that activity adds value to existing provision. B&S is the only college that is a member of the Retail Skills Academy. Delivery will be undertaken by staff employed by B&S.
- 8.3.2 Barnet and Southgate College will work with LBB Education and Skills to facilitate the programme including taking 'Creating a buzz' into schools alongside a high profile marketing campaign. In schools, support and advice will be offered within the professional framework of schools' careers guidance responsibilities, but ensuring that Barnet's retail pathway is promoted in line with the labour market reality that the sector offers vacancies now and in the future. Taster days, retail focussed events and activities will be organised for schools to raise awareness of retail opportunities and offer hands on experience of what it is like to work in a retail environment. This may include:
- Simulating retail work experience for a day at Hospitality House or in school
 - Entrepreneurial projects e.g. running the tuck shop or a market stall
 - Employers from the sector offering expertise and advice e.g. 'a day in the life of a retailer'
 - Disseminating information imaginatively close to shops which are favourite haunts of young people
 - Helping young people to create CVs and to apply for part-time work as a first step into retail.
- 8.3.3 The project will also seek to work with unemployed adults to re-engage them in the labour market through the auspices of retail opportunities. Barnet and Southgate College will use their existing links to work with Jobcentre Plus to make appropriate interventions to connect unemployed residents in LBB to work. Activities may include:
- Tailor made promotion of retail for deprived areas
 - ESOL courses specifically focussed on retail
 - Taking 'Creating a buzz' into Jobcentres
 - Working with employers to create opportunities to connect people to retail.

8.4 Benefits

- 8.4.1 This project will create a clear pathway for young people to acquire skills, and will develop accreditations through to graduate level. Schools will be supported and equipped to promote retail career opportunities for Barnet's young people. The project will also help to reduce the number of young people who become NEETs by working with existing NEETs and preventing younger pupils from becoming NEET by supporting them to join a retail pathway of learning and work. Environmental benefits will accrue from the Project as local people are encouraged to reduce their carbon footprints through working locally and capitalising on existing and planned public transport links. Sustainable economic growth will be aided through equipping the workforce with the skills needed by businesses. 'Let's Talk Shop' will also

promote regeneration and sustainable employment in the Borough. The initiative will create new and effective networks and help to consolidate others between stakeholders e.g. schools, the Local Authority, FE and The Hospitality House Partners. Funding will be used catalytically to maximise the impact of Barnet and Southgate College's funding which its Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allows it to draw down. The project will also lead to learners successfully completing specific retail related courses such as Retail Works, World Host and the Higher Level Diploma in Retail.

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

10. DECISION TAKER'S STATEMENT

10.1 *I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations.*

11. OFFICER'S DECISION

I authorise the following actions:

- Authorisation to spend £155k for Retail Skills/'Let's Talk Shop' Project
- £125k of which will be used to commission activity from Barnet and Southgate College, the contract holder for the Retail Skills Academy at Hospitality House in East Finchley.

Signed Strategic Director for Communities

Date 03 March 2014