

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Social Mobility in Torbay

Recommendation 1:

To explore options for an external careers fair inviting representatives across all different sectors including professional and creative sectors.

Response:

Context and Challenge

Supporting young people into employment is integral to Torbay's ambition for a healthy, happy and prosperous place. This aligns with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, in particular the Economic Growth priorities to raise aspirations, increase skills, support full-time employment and deliver inclusive growth, as well as the Community and People priority to improve outcomes for children and young people.

In this context, Torbay's approach is focused on three connected priorities:

- Supporting our bedrock sectors – tourism, construction, fishing, health and social care, photonics, construction
- Developing new opportunities, particularly around high value sectors such as hi tech and creative industries
- Enabling growth through developing skills, helping people into work, and driving economic benefits through social value

Sector specific opportunities with businesses are facilitated through groups such as the Hi-Tech Cluster (EPIC) and Build Torbay for schools, that include work experience taster days and site visits. These have proven to be impactful in raising aspirations and awareness. Cabinet has requested that the Director of Pride in Place explores how a careers fair, or similar, can be facilitated with partners. This will build on the strong foundation of existing careers activity in schools, sector-led engagement and other employment led activity while maintaining a focus on the Council's strategic priorities.

Recommendation 2:

To identify the financial gap in funding following ending of UK Shared Prosperity Fund and consider how they will address this as part of the budget setting progress.

Response:

Cabinet recognises that the ending of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund requires a clear understanding of any residual funding gap. UKSPF replaced European Funding and has never formed part of a local authority's core spending. To fill the funding gap through internal budgets would likely require stopping other activities. Therefore a wider response through not only the Council's budget-setting process but maintaining an overview of available external funding opportunities, including successor local growth, skills, employment and regeneration programmes, so that opportunities to sustain priority activity can be identified at the earliest stage will be key.

Cabinet also recognises that economic growth activity contributes to wider corporate outcomes, including improved public health, reduced inequality, stronger routes into employment, and demand reduction in services such as adult social care by supporting greater independence, income and wellbeing. These connections will be considered as part of budget review and service planning, so that budget decisions reflect both direct economic outputs and the wider benefits delivered across the Council's priorities.