



Subject:	Employability and Skills Update
Date:	10 January 2018
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development Sinead O'Regan, Economic Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update Members on progress on the key Employability & Skills workstreams• Advise Members of the impacts of the work to date and the plans in place to achieve targets set out in the Belfast Agenda• Note the intention to hold a workshop with Members in February 2018 to ensure Member input into priority activity on Employability and Skills for the coming year.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the updates on the Employability and Skills workstreams and the impact of these interventions, including facilitating access to 735 jobs in the year to date • Agree to hold an additional Committee meeting in February 2018 to ensure a collaborative approach to developing the future work programme for the coming year.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress against target on Council support for Employability and Skills activity, focusing on how this aligns to Belfast Agenda priorities and targets.
3.2	The report includes details of key projects and investments and sets out how these will be developed in the short to medium-term. This is in line with the approach agreed by Members at the October 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. Current priority activities include Employment Academies in key employment growth sectors as well as career development and youth engagement activities.
3.3	<p>The following jobs creation and participant targets have been established for the current financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1,500 residents will be supported to find a job. To date, more than 1,000 residents have entered employment (735 through ESF and Employment Academies and 313 through our entrepreneurship (including Go for It programme) and business development support); • 4,000 residents will be engaged through employability interventions (e.g careers insight activities) and early engagement projects (with 2,928 people engaged to date); • Over 1,000 students and young people to be engaged through career events and digital skills programmes (715 young people engaged to date) • Over 290 work experience opportunities to be provided through the Council and key employers across the City (with 25 employers signed up to provide the 290 work experience opportunities to date).
3.4	<p><u>Employment Academies Update</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council is delivering a range of Employment Academies across a range of employment growth sectors. These Academies are based on the learning</p>

from a number of pilot programmes undertaken in the previous financial year where 100 participants were supported and 60 found employment.

3.5 Employment Academies are a very flexible support intervention. They are designed in conjunction with employers to meet their specific needs. Typically, they involve a training intervention of up to two weeks, after which the employer will provide a guaranteed interview for an existing job.

3.6 Officers are currently engaged in an intensive programme of delivery, supporting Employment Academies across a number of sectors including Hotels/Hospitality; Construction; Social Care and Transportation. These Academies will run until June 2018. By that point, they will support the facilitation of at least 285 people into new jobs. Details of these Academies are set out below.

3.7 Hotel Employment Academy

Members will be aware that Council Officers have been working closely with the HR teams from the Hastings Group and Dalata Group to provide candidates for more than 200 entry-level positions across their two new hotels which will open in the coming six months. 120 entry level jobs will be created in the period January-March 2018 in the Maldron Hotel which is scheduled to open in March 2018. Following this, the Grand Central Hotel will create 90 entry level jobs in the period May-June 2018 and the hotel will open in June 2018.

3.8 Both employers have been keen to ensure that significant effort is made to raise awareness of the employment opportunities across all of the City, and to work with the Council to consider how some of those farthest from the labour market can access the opportunities. As part of the programme delivery, a Stakeholder Engagement session took place in November 2017. This was attended by 42 organisations who work directly with those out of work across the city, including Jobs and Benefit Office (JBO) staff, European Social Fund (ESF) projects, training organisations etc. Those in attendance were made aware of the scale and spectrum of opportunities available as well as the timetable for training and recruitment.

3.9 In addition to the Stakeholder Engagement activity, Council officers, in partnership with staff from the Department for Communities (DfC) and the employers themselves, hosted community engagement sessions across the City. These took place in Conway Mill, Crumlin Road Gaol, Skainos Centre and Crescent Arts Centre. 221 people attended these drop-in

	<p>local job roadshows.</p> <p>3.10 Both hotels have also been willing to offer Job Insight Days. These provide interested applicants with a real life insight into the role so that they can decide whether they feel it would meet their interests and ambitions. The first Jobs Insight Day took place in early December 2017 and this was attended by 60 people. Further Insight Days have been set for January 2018.</p> <p>3.11 Interviews are currently under way for the 2018 Academies and 160 people have taken part in these interviews to date, with additional interviews scheduled for January. The first series of Hotel Employment Academies will commence on 15 January 2018. All of those completing the Academy will be guaranteed an interview for a post with Dalata or Hastings. Interest in the Academies has come from all across the City. The breakdown of participants engaged to date is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% are from North Belfast• 29% are from West Belfast• 19% are from South Belfast• 32% are from East Belfast <p>3.12 In addition to the above, the Council has already delivered an Academy programme with the newly-opened Titanic Hotel. 12 people took part in the Hotel Employment Academy for this hotel and 10 successfully completed the programme and entered employment. Due to the location of this hotel, the vast majority of participants are from East Belfast. Given the success of the initial programme, it is planned that a number of additional Employment Academy Programmes will be held with the Titanic Hotel – and in partnership with DfC – in the New Year. At this point, the hotel has agreed to support a programme for up to 15 participants in late January 2018. All those participating in the Academy will be guaranteed an interview with the Titanic Hotel.</p> <p>3.13 Given the success of the Hotel Employment Academies to date, there is now increasing interest and demand from the sector to look at how these Academies can be part of the solution for the range of new hotel openings and expansions that are expected in the coming year in particular. Employers are also keen to use the Academies as part of the recruitment for their existing facilities, given that there tends to be a significant degree of “churn” within the industry. A meeting is planned with the Sector Skills body – People 1st – and the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation to plan the co-ordinated provision of Hotel Employment Academies</p>
--	--

across the hotel sector in Belfast moving forward.

Construction Employment Academy

3.14 The Construction Employment Academy was designed initially to meet the Social Clause requirements of Heron Bros. who were awarded the Leisure Transformation Programme contract for the redevelopment of Brook Activity Centre, Andersonstown Leisure Centre and the Robinson Centre. The number of posts targeted for this Employment Academy is initially 14 jobs across a range of roles including plant operators, gate personnel and administrators. As was the case with the Hotel Employment Academy, Council Officers organised a Stakeholder Engagement event to promote the opportunities to training organisations across the City. 52 organisations attended the event. Officers also organised local job roadshows close to the vicinity of the developments – in Skainos Centre and Colin Glen Trust – with 45 people attending to find out about the employment opportunities. 21 people also took part in Job Insight Days at two of the Heron Bros. sites in order to gain an insight into the reality of the roles.

3.15 To date, there have been 56 registrations for the Construction Employment Academy which will commence on 8 January 2017. There are 30 places on this Academy and all participants completing the programme will be guaranteed an interview. Although the social clauses commitment is for 14 jobs, Heron Bros. have indicated that they will be willing to provide additional opportunities on other projects, should the candidates meet their requirements.

3.16 The postcode profile of those registering their interest in the Construction Academy to date broadly reflects the location of the opportunities. 33% of posts located in East Belfast and 66% located in West Belfast. The postcode profile of applicants is as follows:

- 18% from North Belfast;
- 29% from West Belfast;
- 32% from East Belfast;
- 9% from South Belfast.

3.17 The Construction Academy model is flexible and can work not only on Council contracts but on any construction contract. Officers have been engaging with partners across a range of organisations including the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to provide solutions for other major contracts. These include:

- Regular and structured engagement with Translink to deliver Construction Employment Academies aligned to the employment needs of the Belfast Transport Hub

- Engagement with both Radius Housing and Clanmil Housing to agree Construction Employment Academies aligned to their Social Clause requirements across a range of developments such as the building of social housing at the Visteon site
- Engagement with Graham Bam Healthcare Partnership to agree a Construction Employment Academy aligned to their Buy Social requirements within the Royal Maternity development; and
- Engagement with Lagan Somague to outline how the Construction Employment Academy model can be utilised to meet their Social Clause requirements within the UU Belfast Campus development.

Health and Social Care Employment Academy

3.18

Officers have held a series of engagements with a range of domiciliary care providers in partnership with DfC to identify barriers to recruitment and agree the delivery of an Employment Academy to remove these barriers. One of the main barriers identified has been the need for applicants to have a driving licence. A number of employers have agreed to waive this as an essential criterion for the post and to progress potential candidates to interview with the caveat that, if they are successful in their application, they will be expected to secure their driving licence within an agreed timeframe in order to take up the offer. A funding package will be put in place to cover the costs, with contributions from the Council and the employer. Other employers have not set the driving licence as a pre-requisite for the jobs. A total of eight employers from the sector will take part in a jobs fair in w/c 15 January 2018. It is expected that there will be at least 35 job outcomes from this planned approach.

Public Transport Black Taxi Employment Academy

3.19

Members will be aware that, at the October meeting of this Committee, an update was provided on plans to develop an Employment Academy for Public Transport Black Taxis. Officers have now agreed the content and delivery process for this Employment Academy directly aligned to the employment needs of Belfast Taxis CIC, who have an immediate need to recruit 20 new drivers for their public transport routes across west and north Belfast. The company is also keen to upskill 6 current Black Taxi drivers as coach drivers to be able to expand their tourism offer to meet demand. In order to progress this programme, the Council will host a 'Meet the Employer' event on 23 January in An Chultúrlann where the employer will undertake preliminary interviews for the Employment Academy. Subject to satisfactory completion of the Academy, 26 participants will be offered positions with the company.

3.20	<p>Based on the groundwork on this Academy model, Officers have also been working with the Shankill Public Transport Black Taxis company. While they are currently not in a position to take on any new drivers within the public transport element of their business, the company is engaging with Officers to develop and design a potential Employment Academy to expand the tourism element of their business. Working with the Tourism Team in the Department, Officers will ensure that the training reflects the skills required to improve the product development offer in the City, including customer care training and familiarisation with the tourism product offer across Belfast. It will also support delivery of the local tourism programme that was previously approved by this Committee.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Additional areas for development</u></p> <p>Clearly there is an interest in the Employment Academy Model among employers across a range of sectors. The flexibility of the approach means that employers can develop the content to meet their needs, meaning that employees have the necessary skills to move into the company without the need for re-training. From the Council's perspective in ensuring that the interventions have a positive impact and that the opportunities for employment outcomes are maximised, this approach is also positive. As demonstrated above, the Academy programme provides participants with a much better chance of finding a job than the other models currently in the market.</p>
3.22	<p>While the early engagement around Employment Academies was undertaken in a planned and targeted way, focusing on hospitality employers in the first instance (given the planned growth in hotel development), it has become clear that the model is transferable and can be implemented across many sectors.</p>
3.23	<p>In addition to the planned engagement with the Hotels Federation, Officers are also engaging with major public sector employers (QUB, Translink etc.) to explore the feasibility of implementing Academy programmes for their upcoming vacancies. In order to consider how this approach can be escalated and resourced, Officers are currently working on a development plan for the coming financial year. This will be presented to the proposed February meeting of Committee (see 3.26), focusing on how the Council can add value to the current provision without creating confusion in a very cluttered marketplace.</p> <p><u>Work Placement and Career Development Support</u></p> <p>Members have previously noted the value of work placements in providing young people with an insight into a career. This was also one of the priority issues raised as part of the</p>

3.24	<p>development work on the Employability and Skills Framework. The work experience will range from one week voluntary programmes for up to 250 young people to 4-6 weeks of paid employment in the summer of 2018. There may be opportunities to expand these numbers, based on additional engagement with employers and other partners.</p>
3.25	<p>In addition to the work placement activity, at least 2,000 post-primary students will receive additional careers guidance advice and support to help them develop a clear career pathway. As part of this support, there will be a focus on raising awareness of vocational pathways and self-employment, in line with the gaps and deficits identified as part of the Employability and Skills Framework and the Belfast Agenda. Officers will explore how this support can be delivered through formal school mechanisms as well as through other channels e.g. youth groups and community engagement activity.</p>
3.26	<p><u>Member engagement on future Employability and Skills activities</u></p> <p>At the November 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, Members confirmed their continued support for the work on Employability and Skills and agreed the broad programme for the short, medium and long-term activities. They also confirmed their willingness to engage in the more detailed development process for this area of work. The first agreed step was to organise a workshop for Members early in 2018. It is proposed that this will take place in February 2018, as part of the additional meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (scheduled for 21 February at 5.15pm). This engagement will, of course, be an evolutionary process as the external environment and the economy change, but it is the intention that this additional engagement with Members will help build an understanding of the key issues and lead to informed decision-making on how to best allocate our resources to deliver on the City ambitions in this field. This engagement may also offer an opportunity to consider the wider programme of work for the Committee in the coming financial year, with a view to prioritising activities for inclusion in the City Growth and Regeneration Committee's Plan for the year.</p>
3.27	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The budget for the Employment Academies and the Work Experience activities have been approved as part of this year's Departmental estimates process.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>The outreach and engagement activity has been designed to ensure that there are opportunities for participation by all groups.</p>

3.28	
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.