



EALING EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STRATEGY 2014-18

Overcoming Barriers, Fulfilling Potential, Improving Lives

1. OUR AIMS

Ealing's Employment & Skills Strategy 2014-18 sets out how the council aims to enable its residents to overcome barriers to employment, improve their lives and so fulfil their potential in work. We want Ealing Council to deliver excellent services and be a leader in which:

- every part of the council promotes jobs and skills for residents
- we work effectively with businesses to create local jobs
- we strengthen partnerships to improve our local employment and skills offer
- we are a dynamic, local employer

The strategy has been developed to support Ealing's Corporate Plan 2014-18 Priority One "A Prosperous Borough", and focuses on four objectives:

Objective One – residents' employment and skills are a priority for every part of the council

Every council service will have a role in enabling residents to obtain the right skills and the ability to access quality, sufficiently paid work.

Objective Two – residents' employment and skills are a priority for the council's contractors and developers and local employers

Through its procurement and planning processes secure more local jobs and training opportunities in major contracts and capital projects, and work with employers to create jobs for residents.

Objective Three – the council is an effective and influential partner

Strengthening its role in shaping and supporting local and sub-regional delivery; maximising use of resources and influencing regional or national policy-makers and funders.

Objective Four – the council is a dynamic, business focused employer

Becoming an innovative local employer, and in spite of ongoing budget reductions offer more work experience and training opportunities for residents, growing talent and providing flexible working.

2. CONTEXT

Local context

The recession of 2008 had a significant impact on the whole of the UK. While employment is rising again, there remain concerns in some places that the benefits of economic growth are not being enjoyed by everyone, and that wage increases have failed to keep up with the cost of living. In many ways Ealing has coped well with the recession. It has a strong economic centre, with 15,000 businesses and a workforce of around 160,000. 2,200 new businesses opened in 2012, with high business survival rates. Skills levels are higher than average, with 37% of residents qualified to the equivalent of Level 4 or above. More than a third (39%) of residents work in professional or technical occupations.

While the borough generally enjoys prosperity, this is not shared by all of our communities. Poorer standards of health and education, lower household incomes and higher levels of benefit dependency are concentrated in pockets of deprivation. For example, Northfield, Southfield and Walpole were the wards with the highest percentage of their resident populations in employment (73.9%, 73.4% and 72.9% respectively); while Norwood Green, Southall Broadway and Southall Green were on the other end (54.4%, 55.3% and 56.5% respectively). More than a fifth of residents in the five Southall wards stated during the 2011 Census that they have 'never worked'. This is higher than the Ealing overall figure of 13.4% and much higher compared to around 6% in Northfield and Southfield wards. Areas with high levels of economic inactivity are also areas with low levels of skills and higher levels of deprivation and poor health. In Northolt West End 25.1% have no qualifications, compared with 16.5% for Ealing overall.

Additionally, we know that unemployment disproportionately affects certain people more than others. For example, more than 5,000 lone parents have dependent children but no employment. Over 12,000 working age residents are out of work due to health problems or disabilities. Residents from ethnic minorities are more likely to be unemployed or in lower skilled jobs than their white counterparts, with for example 20% of black residents unemployed compared to an average of 10% for the total population.

Employment opportunities remain a real concern for Ealing residents. In the 2012 Residents' Survey, 19% of people said that "lack of jobs" was one of their top 3 concerns, putting it into the top 4 concerns across the borough. 17% of young people were concerned about the lack of jobs.

Changes to Welfare Support

Alongside the recession, the reform of the welfare system has affected Ealing residents as well. The Government's Welfare Reform programme led to the introduction of a cap on benefits, along with changes to housing benefits such as the removal of the "spare room subsidy". Universal Credit is being introduced in phases around the country, which will see all benefits combined into a single payment. The aim of the reforms is to

ensure that no one on benefits receives more than the average salary of someone in work, with the intention that this will encourage more people to move into employment. The challenge for the council and its local partners is to ensure that people affected by the changes are supported into employment where possible, through appropriate training and support, while also offering what assistance it can to families facing real hardship as a result of the changes.

Links to council priorities and strategies

The Council's revised Corporate Plan for 2014-18 has as its first priority "A Prosperous Borough". This priority will be supported by one of the four key strategies, "Growth, employment and skills: delivering a thriving local economy and enabling access to employment that pays a living wage".

Enabling residents to have the right skills and the ability to access quality, sufficiently paid work has wider impacts on the borough, such as better lives for children, young people and families, improved health and wellbeing and more stable communities. Our aims will support a number of other local strategies including:

- Child poverty strategy
- 14-19 strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Target groups

The strategy has a high level aim of supporting any resident who is disadvantaged by a skills or employment barrier, from young people leaving school to adults needing to improve their job prospects. Through the annual action plans we will set out activities to tackle specific barriers, taking into consideration evidence of need and impact, corporate priorities and where we are able to target resources. This will enable us to adapt to changing needs and priorities through the lifetime of the strategy.

Partnerships

Although this is a council strategy, working with partners will be integral to its success. While objective four has a particular focus on partnerships, all areas of the strategy contain milestones which will require effective partnership working, and this will be drawn out in the action plans.

3. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

The strategy sets out high level objectives and milestones for where the council wants to be by 2018 which are informed by baseline evidence. The strategy will be underpinned by the annual action plans which will outline specific activities and targets to deliver milestones and objectives.

The delivery of the strategy will be led by the council's Employment Learning & Skills Group, which comprises officers from Corporate HR, Housing, Adult Learning, Economic Development, Corporate Policy, Housing Benefits/Local Welfare Assistance, and Children & Young People's Services as well as Jobcentre Plus. Successful delivery of the strategy will depend on the involvement of a wider range of services and external partners, details of which will be set out in the annual action plans (to be developed by the ELSG).

Monitoring & Evaluation

The ELSG will monitor delivery on a quarterly basis. Progress reports will be provided to Corporate Board every six months and an annual report to Cabinet. The ELSG will also conduct an annual review of objectives and milestones in light of any significant political, policy or budget changes.

Objectives

The strategy has four pivotal objectives, outlined in the figure below and given more detail in the pages overleaf:



Objective One – residents' employment and skills are a priority for every part of the council

2014

Where we are now

In the last 3 years over 600 residents have been supported into work through programmes and services provided or commissioned by the Council. Current support includes Think Family Plus, Welfare Assistance, Work Clubs and the Adult Learning Service. Co-ordination and joint working is improving however the council lacks a central information resource and way of recognising and tracking residents needing support.

2018

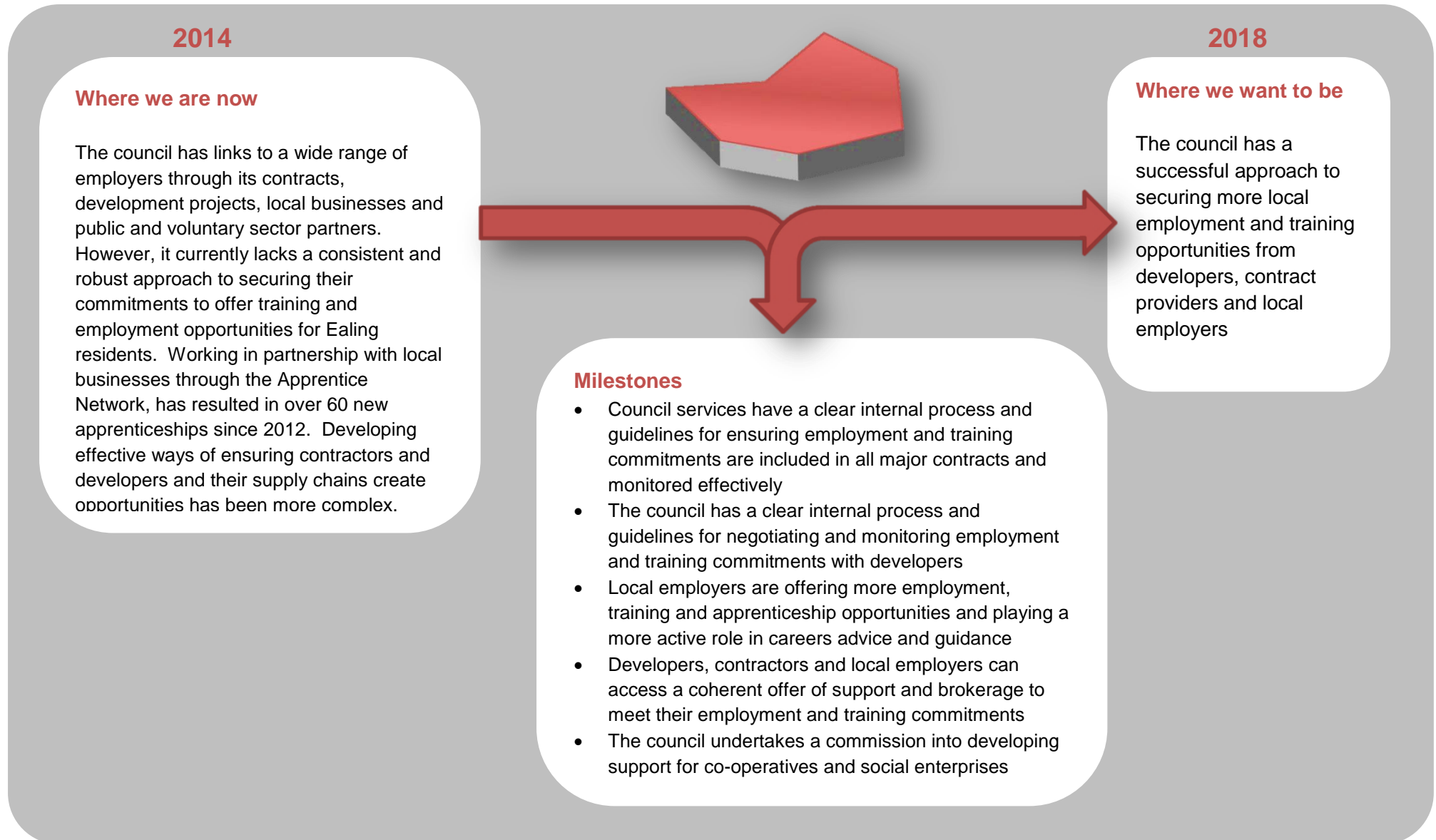
Where we want to be

Supporting the employment and skills of residents is a priority in every council service plan, with an effective single framework to co-ordinate its delivery and measure impact

Milestones

- The council has a system to enable all services to identify, refer and track residents with skills or employment needs
- There is an improved offer of online information and support, with residents' digital literacy and access increased
- Single employment needs assessment is in place across council services and key partners to support and measure change for out of work residents, introduce a common language and streamline access to services
- Adult Skills courses are developed in collaboration with resident-facing services, and adult learners are tracked into employment or further training

Objective Two – residents' employment and skills are a priority for the council's contractors and developers and local employers

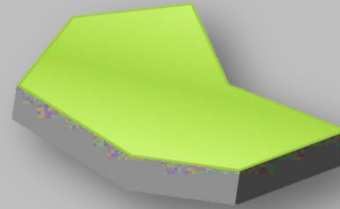


Objective Three – the council is an effective and influential partner

2014

Where we are now

The council has strong links with a wide range of partners who are essential in delivering the employment and skills agenda, ranging from local to regional and national. However these partnerships could do more to maximise opportunities to work together to provide information and support; increase funding and resources for areas of need or lobby and influence regional or national government.



2018

Where we want to be

Through successful partnership working Ealing has the resources to help residents overcome their barriers to employment

Milestones

- Ensuring Ealing plays a full part in West London Alliance and sub-regional initiatives, including the Community Budgets programme, leading to an improved cross-borough employment and skills offer.
- Residents and services have access to a co-ordinated resource of information and guidance on local provision, including schools careers services, adult employment support and business advice
- Ealing partners deliver effective joint activities to tackle key employment barriers faced by residents
- Local partners develop a more strategic approach to maximising funding opportunities, raising Ealing's profile and extending best practice

Objective Four – the council is a dynamic, business focused employer

2014

Where we are now

The council is a major local employer with a current workforce of around 3,400 people. Over 200 16-24 year olds have been through its Apprenticeship and Pathways (pre-apprenticeship) schemes and it offers a range of training and development and flexible working for existing employees. However, in the light of major reductions to its budget the Council has the challenge of finding new and creative ways of working, providing a wider range of opportunities to staff and jobseekers.

2018

Where we want to be

The council offering a range of flexible training and employment opportunities, from entry to graduate level, enabling more residents to enter the labour market and reach their potential

Milestones

- Council recruitment is more effective at reaching local jobseekers
- Opportunities for young people are increased through a Graduate Internship scheme and continuing to grow the Apprenticeship and Pathways programmes
- Out of work residents gain experience through work or volunteering placements
- The council is a model employer for flexible working and skills development opportunities

Case Studies

Objective 1

Ealing Pathways & Apprenticeship programmes

'The best decision of my life' says Yazmine who applied for Ealing Council's apprenticeship scheme after leaving school with no GCSEs and spending three years in training and jobs that did not engage her. Being part of the programme has, she says, 'taught me to have self-belief which I massively lacked before and has given me opportunities that I couldn't imagine doing'.

Objective 2

Think Family Plus

After being out of work for twenty years Mrs Yates was offered employment support in addition to the parenting advice she had initially accessed services for. Mrs Yates was supported to enrol in a Customer Service course at her local college which she passed with a high grade. She said 'the course has given me so much confidence in my abilities and I feel like a person, not just a mother or wife'. Mrs Yates feels positive about her prospects and is continuing to access employment support.

Objective 3

Dickens Yard

This development project in Ealing Broadway will create 698 homes and over 10,000m² of retail space. Commitments to provide local apprenticeships were agreed, however, problems with the approach during first phases of development led to a very limited number of opportunities and real difficulties in matching local candidates to those roles. The council worked closely with the developer, identifying an external partner to support recruitment and training. To date Dickens Yard has 12 apprentices on-site.

Objective 4

Accession

In 2010 Accession Social Enterprise was conceived through a Council and West London Mental Health Trust partnership. Training and rehabilitation projects were brought together to offer jobs and training for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. By 2014 Accession was an independent company with business activities in retail, print, horticulture, picture framing and catering. It now has 100 employees, trainees and volunteers and partners include MIND, MENCAP, Catalyst Housing and SEGRO plc.