

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 26 June 2018** at **9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor A Batey (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, J Atkinson, M Clarke, R Crute, S Dunn, D Hall, T Henderson, P Howell, S Iveson, P Jopling, L Maddison, J Maitland, R Manchester, R Ormerod, A Patterson, E Scott, L Taylor and M Wilson

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr G Binney and Mrs R Morris

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Reed, P Sexton, J Charlton, J Considine, C Potts and H Smith

#### **Also Present:**

Councillors J Clare

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Reed, P Sexton, J Charlton, J Considine, C Potts and H Smith, Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members, invited to attend in respect of Item 8 – DurhamWorks.

### **2 Substitute Members**

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held 5 April 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor P Howell confirmed that following the last meeting he had met with the Principal Accountant as regards his queries in terms of how information was presented, information looking at outcomes and looking at the large changes between Quarters 2 and 3 in terms of accuracy and reporting.

He commented that he intended to have a further discussion with the Principal Accountant prior to the September meeting in relation to how the information is presented and to provide detail of questions that he would intend to ask at the Committee.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A Patterson declared an interest in Item 8 as an employer.

#### **5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

#### **6 Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Diane Close referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

The articles included: the County Durham Plan being considered by Cabinet on 16 June, highlighting the next stage – preferred options consultation, to last 6 weeks; Sheet metal firm doubles turnover, Hydram Engineering boosting profits after investing in new machinery; Kromek securing a 5 year contract to supply radiation detection technology; and DurhamWorks participants being celebrated at an awards ceremony, including both young people and employers.

#### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

#### **7 County Durham Economic Partnership - Overview of activity**

The Chairman introduced the Chairman of the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP), Professor Brian Tanner who was in attendance to provide the Committee with an overview of the activity in relation to the CDEP (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chairman, CDEP explained that the report and presentation would not differ greatly from the previous year, however, noting several new Members on the Committee it would be of benefit for those Members. He explained he was one of several Chairmen of thematic groups, under the umbrella of the County Durham Partnership (CDP). Members noted that the CDEP had a vision: “We wish to see County Durham as a highly valued centre for business growth and innovation; with a vibrant local economy, high value employment opportunities, a quality housing offer and a highly skilled local workforce”. It was added that the top priority was in trying to improve the employment rate for County Durham. The Committee were reminded that the CDEP had no funding of its own, rather it acted to help coordinate and foster cooperation between partners, not operate programmes of its own.

Councillors noted that in order to help judge levels of success, five measures were looked at: employment rate; gross value added (GVA); number of businesses; household disposable income; and employment deprived index deprivation.

The Chairman, CDEP noted it was important to note that the targets set out were for 2030, and that while there was progress in four out of five of the measures, GVA had lost ground, though the number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), those areas in the top 20% of employment deprived areas, was reducing. It was noted that while there was a general positive picture there was a deeper issue in terms of the employment rate, being better than the regional average, however, substantially less than the national average with the gap not closing. Members were referred to a graph showing the relative changes in employment rate over the period 2004 to 2017.

Councillors noted that GVA was a measure of the value added by the processes, products and services provided in County Durham, a measure of our productivity. Members noted a graph showing that there was a widening gap between the County Durham GVA and that of the North East and the rest of the United Kingdom. Members were reminded of an aim of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) to provide “more and better jobs” and noted that while “more” jobs was easy to quantify, “better” was more difficult. The Chairman, CDEP noted figures in terms of the GVA per filled job and Members were referred to a further graph showing this trend over time from 2002 to 2016, with the target for 2020 also shown. It was highlighted that this showed that there were better jobs being created and it was noted that the GVA per filled job in County Durham was roughly the same as the region, although the gap to the United Kingdom figure remained.

The Chairman, CDEP noted that productivity was a national challenge. He referred to a map of County Durham highlighting the areas of deprivation, and explained that it was not simply a matter of geography, with some of the most deprived areas sitting alongside the largest areas of development, for example Aycliffe, a deprived area sitting next to the largest industrial park in England. Members noted that place investment was not simple and that there were many factors including skills, infrastructure and transport. The Chairman, CDEP noted that the County had very good north/south transport links with the A1(M) and A19, though the links east/west were not so good.

The Committee noted that a partnership approach was undertaken in terms of “more and better jobs”, with this being the NELEP’s strategic economic plan. It was noted that this followed an investment approach, with place based regeneration, human capital and business growth. It was added that through the CDEP there was: work in terms of understanding and tackling barriers to investment; response to change and effective collaboration; and promotion of Durham as an area to do business - “playing to our strengths”.

Members were given several examples of place based regeneration and growth such as: the County Durham Plan, NETPark, Forrest Park, Aycliffe Strategic Employment Site; Auckland Castle and Horden Rail Station. Councillors noted in respect of business investment and growth there were opportunities via: Durham Business Opportunities Programme (DBOP) – European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); Enterprise Support in the North East (ERDF); North East Access to Finance (ERDF); Durham Finance; and the Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP).

The Chairman, CDEP explained that in terms of Human Capital, there were several examples such as: the Youth Employment Initiative Scheme, DurhamWorks - European Social Fund (ESF); Skills Support for the Unemployed (ESF); and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Support (ESF).

The Committee noted that there were challenges ahead, including Brexit and devolution. The Chairman, CDEP explained that Government had stated that funding would be made available after Brexit via a Shared Prosperity Fund. He added that it was hoped that it would be comparable in terms of previous EU funding, however, it was not known if this would be the case or how the funding would be distributed across the country in terms of need or opportunity, noting currently County Durham has special status as a Transition Region in terms of EU funding. Members were reminded that the Vice-Chair of the CDEP, Sue Parkinson was on the committee looking at these issues, providing a strong voice for County Durham.

The Chairman, CDEP noted in respect of devolution that the 3 “North of Tyne” Local Authorities were going ahead with devolution and added that there would be a need to ensure that County Durham was not left behind should an equivalent “South of Tyne” package develop.

The Chairman, CDEP concluded by reiterating that the CDEP was: working together with partners to add value; coordinating what we were doing in County Durham; and informing partners of opportunities.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman, CDEP for his update and asked Members for their questions and comments.

Councillor E Adam asked in relation to Brexit and funding, whether there had been any risk strategy in terms of not getting comparable funding to the EU funding we currently receive, especially as the plan was based on investment through to 2030. The Chairman, CDEP noted he did not think there was a risk of receiving no funding, however, the amount was the important issue, looking at examples such as Finance Durham, our own local investment fund. He added that the strategy was to try and influence policy before it was made, the work of the Vice-Chair, CDEP being very important in terms of this and greatly appreciated on behalf of the County. Members noted that a definitive course of actions would only become apparent once the rules in terms of funding were known.

Councillor J Atkinson noted the measures of success and asked why some of the data used was from 2015. The Chairman, CDEP noted that this was the most up-to-date data, noting there was an issue in terms of data-lag. Councillor J Atkinson asked in terms of what salary qualified as a “high value job”. The Chairman, CDEP noted that the absolute value of a job was not looked at in terms of salary and added that instead GVA was used, however, this did not represent the money within the economy. Councillor J Atkinson added he did not believe the amount of funding from Government would be comparable to the EU funding received currently. The Chairman, CDEP reiterated that there was not much clarity on this issue at this time and added the Shared Prosperity Fund that was in discussion would appear after Brexit, for those agreed programme beyond March 2019, however, what would happen next and beyond this was unknown.

Councillor L Maddison asked if he felt that this would create somewhat of a vacuum. The Chairman, CDEP noted that this was the danger citing examples in terms of programmes.

Councillor P Jopling noted that a high wage economy depended upon skills with the issue being how to deliver the right skills in County Durham, and asked if there was balance in terms skills and jobs.

The Chairman, CDEP noted that it was an element of both, noting that one area that was very good in County Durham was apprenticeships. He added that the Apprenticeship Levy was proving to be an issue for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) and that also there was a need to encourage post 16-18 level technical qualifications. He added there were a number of success stories in our County, especially in terms of engineering and that these needed to be highlighted more. Members noted that a general comment from employers at a recent local "Brexit meeting" was not that there was a lack of specific skills, rather more young people were not "employment ready", in terms of attitudes and their aspirations.

Councillor P Jopling asked as regards devolution, and the potential for County Durham to be left behind, and whether the Chairman, CDEP saw any positives. The Chairman, CDEP noted that this was a political question for elected representatives, and reiterated that it was an important decision to make.

Councillor R Ormerod noted the Brexit decision and asked if the idea of tariff free "free ports" had been mooted as an idea for County Durham and the North East. The Chairman, CDEP noted this had not been discussed and added he would ensure this was put into the mix. Councillor P Howell endorsed the idea of free ports for our area and added that GVA was misunderstood at the best of times noting it did not include the value of service sector jobs of which there were a great many in the County. The Chairman, CDEP confirmed that GVA did not include the service sector and added that for example the University would not have a very good GVA, however, it was very important in terms of the County. He noted that GVA was simply the best measure we had, despite the County having a strong service sector, and that this was why there were a range of measures, including GVA. Councillor P Howell noted that the Aykley Heads developments were very much back-loaded in terms of the numbers of jobs to be delivered.

Councillor S Dunn explained that he had noted the number of EU funded programmes and of need versus opportunity, and asked in worst case scenario if all the EU funding was effectively "lost" how much would County Durham lose. The Partnerships Team Leader, Tarryn Lloyd Payne noted Transition Region funding was around €147 Million over 5 years, and the Chairman, CDEP added that figure of around £1/4 Billion was one to think of.

Mrs R Morris noted the challenges as described and asked as regards the "Northern Powerhouse" as a strategy, with the County Durham being very much lesser a consideration than Manchester, Leeds or Liverpool. The Chairman, CDEP noted that as structured it did not favour County Durham, as we were beyond what it considered "north". He did note that there was a push in all communications in this regards High Speed Rail II (HSII) joining to the North East and to be part of the Northern Powerhouse infrastructure plans. Mrs R Morris asked as regards the Northern Powerhouse and public/private partnerships, and more in general in terms of this as a way of funding in the future. The Chairman, CDEP noted that Members would be aware that EU funding requires match funding and that this element would be similar in terms of private sector investment.

## **Resolved:**

That the report and presentation by the CDEP be received and comments made by Members be noted and reflected in the consideration of the Committee's 2018/19 Work Programme.

## **8 DurhamWorks Programme - Progress**

The Chairman introduced the Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning, Linda Bailey and the External Programme Manager, Helen Radcliffe who were in attendance to provide the Committee with an update on progress in relation to the DurhamWorks Programme (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning reminded Members of the target for the number of young people aged 16-24 to be engaged through DurhamWorks by July 2018, 5,830 and referred Members to a presentation slide setting out the verified statistics from May 2018. It was noted that the target would not be reached, with the current number being 4,606. Members were reminded that initially the programme was intended to be for 4 years, however, due to funding delays the actual time available to deliver the programme had been 2 years 3 months. It was noted that part of the strategy was to reach out into rural areas, however, this would be looked at again as the commissioned services in this area had not proved to be successful. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning referred the Committee to a map setting out the hotspots in terms of those Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET).

Councillors were reminded that the DurhamWorks model was such that the young people were followed through their journey, noting some individuals may require a light touch and some may require more intensive work. Members noted statistics in terms of those 4,606 young people engaged with: during the month of May 2018, those in EET – 994; those in activity with a delivery partner – 335; those with one-to-one wrap around support only – 1,738; those that had completed – 1,361; and those that left the programme, non-completed – 176. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted a breakdown of participants by age and gender, and also of the progressions by sector, noting the majority being Full-time employment, apprenticeships, Further Education and Part-time employment.

Members noted the position in relation to the number of NEETs, with it being explained that the position had stabilised and not fluctuated while DurhamWorks had been in place. It was added that further analysis would take place during the evaluation process for the Programme. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted comparative data in terms of NEETs and “not knowns” noting County Durham was similar to the regional average, better than statistical neighbours, however, below the national average. It was explained that employment had risen for 16-18 year olds in the period 2014 – 2018.

The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted in relation to vulnerable groups in the 16-18 age range, around a third had a self-declared mental health issue, and noted that staff had been developed in order to understand those issues.

It was noted that there had been good successes in terms of the number of care leavers, those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and those engaged with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) progressing into EET.

The Committee were referred to a graph setting out youth unemployment figures, with the Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noting some frustration in terms of the data in terms of a 10% confidence interval and fluctuations since the introduction of Universal Credit. It was added that this issue was an area of work being looked at by the Data Service in the Council.

The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted in terms of financial performance, the DurhamWorks Programme had a cumulative expenditure of £11.003 million to the end of March 2018. It was noted there was a projected underspend of £2.88 million if the Programme ended in July 2018, with reasons including: delayed start to the programme; underspend by some Delivery Partners; and delays in receiving approval for project change requests.

In relation to the evaluation of the Programme, it was noted that it had been found that there was evidence that the model of sustained wraparound support was resulting in positive progressions and that collaborative working between Delivery Partners was improving. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning added that the targeted support for young people in vulnerable groups was proving to be very successful. It was explained that a cost benefit analysis was being undertaken, through the Social Return on Investment (SORI) model which had 3 strands: fiscal; economic and social.

Members noted that in terms of the future of DurhamWorks, it was felt the brand was valuable and would be retained and built upon. It was explained that there was an ESF Investment Priority 1.2 fund which had been bid for, which would support 5,129 15-24 year olds who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, with £7.98 million of funding, of which £4.79 million was ESF and £3.19 million to be match funding. In relation to an extension of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funding, there was a potential to look to support 4,100 15-24 year olds who are NEET, in addition to the 1,000 shortfall from the current Programme. It was noted this potential fund was £12 million, with £9.0 million being ESF and £3.0 million being match funding.

The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning concluded by noting the successes of the DurhamWorks participants, with an Achievement Awards Ceremony in May 2018, and referred to photographs of the Portfolio Holder, Councillor O Gunn, presenting young people with awards for their hard work.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning and asked Members of the Committee for their questions and comments.

Councillor M Clarke asked whether the underspend could be utilised to extend the programme for a longer period. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that payment was only made if the spend was evidenced and therefore it would not be possible in this programme. She added that as part of the funding request in terms of the extension to the current YEI programme, we had asked that, if successful, the £2.88 million underspend was used first, prior to the £12 million from the new programme.

The External Programme Manager noted that a request had been made for an additional 3 years, up to July 2021, to complete the programme.

Councillor E Scott asked as regards the NEETs figures and who was supported. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning explained that over 5,100, 16-24 year olds were unemployed, however, NEETs referred to those aged 16-18 years old. The External Programme Manager noted there had been engagement with 4,606 young people in the 2 years 3 months from the Programme starting, adding now there were staff structures and partnerships in place which would create a strong platform from which to work however the timescale was still challenging. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that each year there were approximately 2000 “new” NEETs, illustrating the ‘churn’ in the cohort with between 900-1000 young people being NEET at any one time. The External Programme Manager explained that many of the young people aged 18-24 had become fatigued in relation to employability training and therefore activities offered in DurhamWorks were looking to focus more on jobs, rather than CV building.

Councillor J Atkinson noted that at the previous item, the Chairman, CDEP had mentioned the need for engineers/apprenticeships when speaking about skills and the feedback from employers had been that young peoples’ attitudes towards work was very important. He added that through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) work he had been involved in he felt that the attitudes of children could be best influenced at the Primary School age rather than when they were older. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that the DurhamWorks Programme did not engage with that younger age group, and noted in the past there was some Council work in relation to that age group. She added that from her experience a lot of young people aged 16-24 were thinking about their futures, and careers in those sectors. She noted that many did not achieve 5 GCSEs at A-C and added that should the ESF 1.2 bid be successful, there could be scope to engage with younger children, however, this was not possible with the YEI programme.

Councillor E Adam noted percentages in respect of vulnerable NEETs and asked what numbers that represented and also if there would be some analysis of the Delivery Partners underspend, to be better informed moving forward should the other bids be successful and work continued through to 2021. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that DurhamWorks had been “paid in line with actual expenditure” and those Delivery Partners that had proven they could deliver would be those we would move forward with. It was added that the use of sub-contracts would help in terms of flexibility. Councillor E Adam asked as regards why sub-contracts were used, the Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning and confirmed that they are required to match fund, whereas sub-contractors were paid on outputs. The External Programme Manager noted figures in relation to vulnerable groups and agreed that the information would be circulated to Members, Councillor E Adam noted the good work and agreed that the focus on those groups was correct.

Councillor D Hall noted that he thought that DurhamWorks was an excellent programme, and asked if there were any lessons that could be applied to cross-cutting issues and projects in other services, in order to reach young people prior to any contact with DurhamWorks. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning reminded Members that it was known that mental health problems were exacerbated by long term unemployment and noted that more work within schools would likely help in the longer term.

She noted that having a financial boost to undertake such works at that age was difficult, though the excellent work of one delivery partner SHAID (Single Homeless Action Initiative in Durham) was noted. It was added that in the wider work of the Local Authority, partners now tended to work in multi-agency teams, for example Team Around the Family, and any lessons from the Programme evaluation would be taken forward as appropriate. The External Programme Manager noted that she felt the DurhamWorks Programme had also helped the Council in terms of internal partnership working.

Councillor P Jopling noted the information as regards young people and “programme fatigue” and asked whether they dropped out of the programme entirely or whether there was a process whereby we could go back and re-engage. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that of those engaged with, around 1,700 received one-to-one support and therefore they were still receiving help. It was added that of the 170 or so that had failed to complete their programme, it was not likely that they would re-engage, however, it was hoped that through the work and interventions of other professionals they could be engaged with. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning suggested that the final evaluation report was circulated to the Members of the Committee.

Mrs R Morris noted that the report set out as regards some financial help young people received in order to get into work and asked what form it took and how this assistance scheme was advertised. The External Programme Manager noted that there were wrap around support staff and that the flexible fund could be used for clothing, bus passes, taxis, and even to provide a month’s “wage” if a young person had not received their wage. It was noted that it was a sign of the levels of deprivation that in some cases the fund had been used to buy young people suitable work shoes. It was added that some young people were able to access “Wheels for Work”, and it was highlighted that that YEI funding could not be used for capital purchases. The External Programme Manager noted that the flexible fund was not a general fund, it was only accessible by young people within DurhamWorks and was therefore not advertised outside of the programme. Mrs R Morris noted that advertising of the scheme to young people may be a way of encouraging young people to engage with the Programme, if they could see how the fund could be used to remove some of the barriers they may be facing. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that a case study may be beneficial in this instance.

Councillor L Maddison reiterated that the Chairman, CDEP had noted that in general young people had specific skills, however, some employers had felt that many were not “employment ready”. She asked if there was any work that was undertaken with employers themselves in order to understand and address the issue. The Strategic Manager, Progression and Learning noted that should funding bids be successful work experience elements could be built into the future DurhamWorks programme. It was added that there may be the opportunities to provide help and guidance for employers and also to use more examples to demonstrate to young people the benefits of engagement. The External Programme Manager added that while job and apprenticeship opportunities were being created, it was important to help young people be ready to be able to take up those opportunities.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the report be noted.

- (ii) That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further progress report on the future of DurhamWorks as part of the 2019/20 work programme.

## **9 Quarter 4, 2017/18 Performance Management Report**

The Chairman thanked the Strategy Team Leader, Gemma Wilkinson who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 4, 2017/18 Performance Management Report (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategy Team Leader reminded Members of the different types of indicators reported, Tracker indicators and Target indicators and the performance reporting arrangements for 2017/18 would be via a number of key performance questions (KPQs), aligned to the "Altogether" framework of six priority themes.

Councillors were referred to the "dashboard" page within the report setting out the key figures in Quarter 4 which included the employment rate for the working age population being above the regional average, though below the national average. It was added that the number of young people ages 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit was below the regional level, however, was above the national average. The Strategy Team Leader noted in terms of apprenticeships, the percentage of 16-17 year olds in apprenticeships was above the regional and national averages.

The Committee noted that the number of jobs created or safeguarded through the activity of Business Durham was 1,066, below the target of 1,300, however, it was noted that the target had been aspirational. It was also highlighted that the number achieved last year had been 2,404, albeit with 1,200 of those coming via ResQ.

The Strategy Team Leader noted the performance in terms of apprenticeships, with 913 being created through Durham County Council schemes being sustained for 15 months or more, at March 2018, equating to 85% of all the apprenticeships starts through those schemes. It was added that the number of registered businesses in County Durham had increased, and occupancy rates of retail units in 11 out of 18 centres was at a rate higher or in line with the national average. In terms of housing, it was noted that 198 empty properties had been brought back into use through Council intervention, above target and more than in the previous year. Members learned that the net number of new homes completed had increase in comparison to the previous year and the number of clients for whom homelessness had been prevented had also increase in comparison to the previous year.

The Chairman thanked the Strategy Team Leader and asked Members for their comments and questions on the performance report.

Councillor E Adam noted the information in terms of NEETs that had been discussed at the previous Item relating to DurhamWorks. He noted however that the figures did not seem to improve and asked if there were issues in terms of the reliability of the data. The Strategy Team Leader noted that the best statistics available at this time were those relating to the number of people out of work, claiming JobSeekers Allowance or Universal Credit.

It was noted that the DWP were working on a new measure and consultation was ongoing in this regard.

Councillor L Maddison noted the 17,120 businesses within County Durham and asked if they were all active and what types of businesses and numbers there were.

The Strategy Team Leader noted this was a national measure that came via the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and noted it may be possible to provide a break down by size of business. She suggested that information within the occupancy surveys carried out by the Council would have more information in relation to retail businesses. Councillor L Maddison noted she would also be interested in technology and service industry businesses in addition to retail businesses.

Councillor J Atkinson noted Barnard Castle and Ferryhill had high occupancy rates and asked why this was, and how could lessons be learned from these different town centres. The Strategy Team Leader noted she would speak to colleagues and provide feedback.

Councillor P Howell asked as regards the percentages in terms of young people 18-24 claiming Universal Credit and those in apprenticeships. The Strategy Team Leader noted that the figures provided at the previous item referred to those aged 16-24 and added that there was also issue in terms of data lag. Councillor P Howell noted his frustration in terms of data and noted that information was only useful if accurate and timely.

Councillor S Dunn noted the figures in terms of youth employment and asked if there was additional information in terms of: how many people were NEET; how many were in apprenticeships; how many were in employment; and how many were in education. He added that it would be useful to have both numbers and the percentages, as well as information in terms of how many apprentices then move into jobs, and the number of Council apprentices that moved into jobs with the Authority. The Strategy Team Leader noted she did not have the information to hand and would look into the matter. She added that in terms of apprenticeships, there was those through the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme, working with local providers and there was also those internal Council apprentices. The Chairman noted that the Committee's review of Apprenticeship was due to come back to Members for an update. Councillor S Dunn asked how apprenticeships operated, in terms of whether young people progressed through to employment or were young people "parked" in apprenticeships. The Chairman added that there was sustainability in terms of moving beyond 2 years and progression into a job, noting that figures as regards this had recently been reported to Cabinet.

Mrs R Morris asked if there was information in terms of occupancy rates and business rates, as she noted that business rates could vary and could be very high. She added that high business rates could be sufficient to prevent a new small and micro business from getting on to the "first rung of the ladder". The Strategy Team Leader noted she would speak to colleagues as regards this matter. Councillor A Patterson noted she had information in terms business rates schemes and would speak to Mrs R Morris after the meeting as regards this.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## 10 Refresh of the Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the report in the agenda papers relating to the Review of the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members noted the report set out the work programme for the year ahead and Councillors were reminded of the need to include some ability to look at any emerging issues within the year.

The Committee noted that Appendix 2 set out the work programme and priorities and noted topics to be monitored include: EU Funding; DurhamWorks; Digital Durham; Private Housing; Visit County Durham; Business Durham; refresh of the Masterplans; and transport locally and regionally. Members noted that reviews of the progress against the recommendations from previous work on Skills Development and the Support for the Retail Sector Review, once completed, would be built into the Work Programme. It was added that new issues for 2017/18 had included: empty properties project; the Homelessness Reduction Act and the impact for County Durham; the funding rationale in terms of major investments; and overview of the work of the NELEP.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted there were proposed special meetings of the Committee to look at topics including: the County Durham Plan, Private Sector Housing and Transport.

The Chairman noted that normally Members would look at a potential focused piece of work, however, it was suggested that with a great deal of work to be undertaken by the Committee, and the topics of the County Durham Plan and Brexit falling under the remit of Economy and Enterprise, that the Committee did not take on a focused piece of work.

Councillor E Adam noted that Brexit was not until March 2019, the Chairman noted that there was the Support for the Retail Sector Working Group to be concluded within the new cycle, as well as the CDP element and several additional Special Meetings as described by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. She therefore asked Committee Members to raise their hands if they agreed in terms of no focused piece of work being undertaken during the current municipal year. This was agreed.

Councillor D Hall added that he felt that the topic of Brexit would simply entail a number of updates on the position, rather than feeding into any process and that he felt that a light touch review on some topic may have been preferable, such that there was a "product" at the end of the year. The Chairman noted that there was already heavy commitment in terms of Member time in the items as set out within the work programme, including the additional Special Meetings and workshop sessions and any focused piece of work would impact even further on the Members of the Committee.

Councillor R Ormerod noted the inclusion of workshop sessions on the County Durham Plan and noted while he understood the rationale as regards session in July 2018, he asked as regards a session to take place in February 2019. Councillor E Adam noted the link to the Government's Industrial Strategy and if there would be reports back to Committee in terms of Council business parks.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that when Business Durham attend Committee they would provide feedback on this and there would be links to key milestones in terms of the Strategy White Paper, at the meeting in January 2019.

**Resolved:**

That the Work Programme at Appendix 2 to the report be agreed.

**11 Minutes from the County Durham Economic Partnership**

The Minutes of the meeting of the County Durham Economic Partnership held 24 April 2018 were received by the Committee for information.