

Maidstone Borough Council

Regeneration & Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 27 March 2012

Worklessness Stakeholder Event Update

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee has within its terms of remit the following areas:
 - Economic development; and
 - Support for Business;
- 1.2 The Committee had included in its Future Work Programme the topic 'worklessness'.
- 1.3 The Chairman felt it appropriate to receive a progress update following the recent Stakeholder Event held on Monday 12 March 2012 at Senacre Skills Centre.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are recommended to consider the progress update given and, noting the outcomes of event, make recommendations as appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1 On Monday 12 March 2012 an event took place at the Maidstone Skills Centre. Expert speakers and practitioners were invited to address the key challenges in helping people access training, support, apprenticeships and employment in the current economic climate.
- 3.2 Organisers put the event into the following context: 'This year saw the Government intensify its focus on economic growth and job creation with the national roll out of its Work Programme to address the challenges of creating joined-up local solutions for reducing unemployment. Methods for effectively targeting support to have the greatest impact will be under the spotlight, as local authorities, housing associations, businesses and training and employment providers seek to leverage greater efficiencies from partnership working. Tackling worklessness involves a total multi-agency commitment and for worklessness programmes to have the maximum impact it is imperative to stay on top of the latest reforms in welfare, social housing and skills development.'
- 3.3 The aims of the event were to:
 - Increase awareness of the issues of worklessness in the Maidstone borough;
 - Identify gaps and share good practice;

- Identify priorities for action;
- Advertise and display the benefits of mentoring, apprenticeships and work experience for young people; and
- Establish who is working with young people effectively in Maidstone.

3.4 The Committee may wish to consider how they can scrutinise the Council's and partner's commitment to worklessness in Maidstone going forward and how the outcomes of the recent event will be addressed.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 The Strategic Plan 2011-15 states the Corporate Priority for "Maidstone to have a growing economy" with the outcome of "A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy".