

SLIM - *Comment*

Building Britain's Future

01/07/2009

The Prime Minister has this week published a plan for **Building Britain's Future**. It is described as 'a radical vision for a fairer, stronger and more prosperous society'.

As well as being a report, it is the start of a process whereby Government will attempt to engage with people on the big issues facing the country today. New measures aim to drive economic growth and create jobs and public service entitlements will, for the first time, be guaranteed to parents, patients and communities.

So what are the highlights in terms of Skills? Well essentially this is a re-stating of the more recent commitments and new pledge/threat (you decide) for young people who have been unemployed for a year. The highlights are:

- There will be a guarantee of a sixth form, college or apprenticeship place to all school leavers.
- From next year, every person under 25 who has been out of work for a year will have to take a job, training, or work experience place.
- Adults who have been out of work for six months will get help with setting up a business, skills training, or volunteering opportunities.
- The £1 billion Future Jobs Fund will provide 100,000 jobs for young people and a further 50,000 new jobs in areas of high unemployment.
- An extra 35,000 apprentices to start work, bringing the total to over 250,000.

In other areas of the report we see:

- 10 hours of one-to-one English or Maths tuition for thousands of seven to sixteen-year-olds.
- All secondary school pupils to have a personal tutor from September 2010.
- Up to £42.5 million support for volunteers, charities and social enterprises plus an additional £16.7 million hardship fund.
- Youth Community Service plans – so that in time, all young people will 'have the opportunity to give something back to the community'.

I hope you find this SLIM-*Comment* useful.

Andrew Dean

Dr Andrew Dean
Editor – South West Skills Newsletter
a.dean@exeter.ac.uk

The Report

The Prime Minister has this week published a plan for Building Britain's Future. The Press Release states it is a, "radical vision for a fairer, stronger and more prosperous society."

Essentially the big idea behind this latest announcement is to replace often criticised public service targets with new public service entitlements for parents, patients and communities. New measures will also aim to drive economic growth and create jobs.

Building Britain's Future is the start of a process to engage with people on the big issues facing the country. To facilitate this process, Cabinet and Regional Ministers will be holding a number of town hall events up and down the country during July and August to explain more about the plan and to consult with members of the public on how to take it forward.

In this SLIM-Comment we take a look at what Building Britain's Future means for skills and employment.

Jobs and Skills

"The future prosperity of Britain depends on the talents, skills and ambitions of the British people. With an industrial strategy focused on long-term sustainable growth and getting people in training and back to work, we can unlock the potential of every person in this country to build a stronger Britain of shared opportunity."

We already knew about the 'September Guarantee' where a sixth form, college or apprenticeship place will be guaranteed to all school leavers who want one, but it is worth re-stating.

The report pledges an extra 35,000 apprentices to start work, bringing the total to over 250,000 and a new 'Young Persons Guarantee' - of a job or training place introduced for all 18-24 year olds before they reach long term unemployment, defined here as 12 months. This will be compulsory or will result in a significant loss of benefits. There will be subsidised training or employment for adults unemployed for over six months.

There is a re-emphasis of the £1 billion Future Jobs Fund, anticipated to deliver 150,000 jobs. Though critics are concerned at how quickly some Local Authorities can deliver this, and indeed there was lobbying at the time for others to be given the role of making this particular 'investment'.

Infrastructure

"Returning the UK to growth must be our first priority. To do this we will maintain an environment that encourages enterprise and accelerates our support for science, R&D and skills."

There is a new £150 million Innovation Fund which will over time lever in up to £1 billion of private sector funding To support the key technology based sectors of the future. There is also

the new £750 million Strategic Investment Fund - to drive innovation and growth in high-tech manufacturing and the green economy, that the chancellor announced in April.

To bring more focus to the Government's strategic work to ensure the development of the most up to date infrastructure for the economy, in areas like energy, waste, water, communications and transport the Government will establish an advisory body – 'Infrastructure UK'.

In terms of housing infrastructure, in addition to the £8 billion planned to be invested between 2008/11 in affordable housing (through the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Housing Programme) and the £500 million of new money to support housing construction in local communities, there is a new £400 million housing kick-start scheme which will deliver up to 9,000 additional homes and get building work restarted across the country.

A further £100 million will be invested in new council-built and owned social rented homes, which will meet high environmental standards. This funding, for provision of both social-rent and low cost home ownership, represents a 50 per cent increase on the previous three years' investment.

Schools and Parenting

"Parents will now be guaranteed an education that is individually tailored for their child, including catch up tuition for those who need it."

There is a move to tailor school education for the individual needs of the child, including: a personal tutor for every pupil at secondary school; 'stretching teaching for all pupils', with catch up tuition for those who need it, including one to one; and qualifications that suit every child's strengths whether practical or academic.

The emphasis here is on fostering a collaborative relationship between teachers, parents and children – giving every parent the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of their children's learning and development. The details include:

- 10 hours of one-to-one English or Maths tuition for thousands of seven to sixteen-year-olds
- All secondary school pupils have a personal tutor from September 2010
- Offer of five hours PE and sport for young people

Through the new Youth Community Service, all young people will be expected to 'give something back to their communities', and this will become a customary part of the growing up process for every young person. Every young person will give at least 50 hours of service to their community in their teenage years.

New Technologies

There is plenty here for the environmental technology sector with up to 1,000 additional wind turbines on and offshore, £1.5 billion to deliver 20,000 additional energy efficient affordable homes over the next two years and a 'Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation' that ensures 5% of

all road fuels sold come from bio-fuels. Many Authorities are looking to the Future Jobs Fund as a further means of supporting this sector.

Other Related announcements

There is a re-packaging of money for the New Growth fund – to provide over £18 million to support an extra 45,000 affordable loans and up to £42.5 million in support for volunteers, charities and social enterprises.

The points-based system to applications for citizenship or permanent residence will be modified to introduce a new stage of ‘probationary citizenship’ – requiring newcomers to ‘earn the right to stay’.

SLIM Comments

As well as something of a re-launch, Building Britain’s Future is clearly also a pre-election manifesto, seeking to reinforce the "Labour investment or Tory cuts" message that Government has been eager to promote. Unfortunately, the weak nature of the UK economy has meant that any desire from Number 10 to promise more money for exciting new things has had to be curtailed by a Treasury, insistent upon ensuring the markets continue to view their actions as economically prudent. Indeed the Treasury were keen to stress that this was not really new money at all – but rather a reallocation of existing resources, whether from one Government department to another or within departments.

In terms of its impact upon the South West, there were some welcome moves in the right direction: job guarantees for the young unemployed; subsidised training or employment for adults unemployed for over six months and the £1 billion Future Jobs Fund - anticipated to deliver 150,000 jobs. Though critics are concerned at how quickly some Local Authorities can deliver this, and indeed there was lobbying at the time for other to be given the role of making this particular ‘investment’. Indeed with an election less than a year away, the speed at which any of the major investments can be seen to be working – most notably commitments, such as the trebling of the budget for new affordable homes, may be central to deciding who forms the next Government.

Links

Building Britain’s Future website

<http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingbritainsfuture.aspx>

Building Britain's Future – Jobs and Skills

<http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingbritainsfuture/jobs-skills.aspx>

Guardian’s View

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jun/30/gordon-brown-health>

Telegraph's View

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/politics/gordon-brown/5700986/Gordon-Brown-is-not-building-Britains-future-hes-spending-it.html>

Times's View

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/leading_article/article6578923.ece



Funded by the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Regional Skills Partnership and the Competitiveness Programme. Written and compiled by the [Skills and Learning Intelligence Module](#). The views expressed within this Slim-Comment© are solely those of the Marchmont Observatory. Written and compiled by SLIM, part of the South West Observatory. © Marchmont Observatory, University of Exeter 2008.