

On the 27th February, 2017, the RSA and RBH hosted a workshop to start gathering ideas that could help residents of all ages to make progress in their career. This is a short summary of what we learned at this session.

Barriers

We discussed the challenges of getting into employment and in particular accessing ‘quality’ jobs. A major theme that came out was a lack of confidence in young people, and the harsh nature of poverty that affects many households on College Bank and Lower Falinge. There was also concern that many residents feel that they have few options locally that provide a long-term goal they feel positive about. A job on a temporary contract might be attainable but typically won’t provide the security or potential for progression that is desired. The major barriers were:

- Financial; many job opportunities don’t feel worth the low wages on offer.
- Trust (in local services and with employers)
- Traditional jobs are much less common (especially those traditionally done by men).
- Transport and commuting – good options, but cost makes difficult.
- The welfare system creates the wrong incentives to take jobs that won’t last.
- Lack of money in the local community to support new local businesses.

Opportunities

There were positive opportunities coming from this discussion. New types of work which people felt would emerge, and suggestions of ongoing support that people can access. These opportunities included:

- New types of jobs coming in tech and digital, including remote working – support to fill these jobs will look very different.
- Volunteering is a great first step for many, but this can be daunting and some people need support in this.
- Many of those who are now middle-aged were failed by the education system. They should be offered support while ensuring that young people that leave education are ready for work and confident in their potential.
- The most important thing is to build trust between people and their local services.

Aspirations

- A confident place.
- A transformed local economy.
- Closer relationships with nearby areas that residents could commute to – prosperity across northern Greater Manchester.
- Economic incentives for working.
- An education system that creates people that are ready for work.

Solutions

We will be working with residents, employers and community organisations to set priorities for new investment, and help design the most effective projects and activities for the local area.

Many ideas were put forward during this session and they included:

- Training opportunities that are built around residents’ needs and brought to Lower Falinge and College Bank.
- Mentoring opportunities to share skills and experience among residents.
- Free or discounted driving lessons, or car sharing.
- A shared work hub on the estate – for remote working and the self-employed.
- Free or discounted travel pass.

If you missed the opportunity to feed in, have your say by completing the short survey below or coming to our next workshop:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/lowerfalingeandcollegebank>

On March 14th and 15th, the RSA will take the information gathered so far and work with partners from across Rochdale and Greater Manchester to design the kind of help and support that would be most worth funding in the future to boost employment prospects. If you would like to attend please call 020 7451 6832 or email jack.robson@rsa.org.uk