

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday 12 September 2013 at 7.00 pm in Conference Room A, Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting.)

Present

Councillors Matthew Winnington (Chair)
John Ferrett
Darron Phillips
Will Purvis
Phil Smith (Vice-Chair)
Luke Stubbs (Standing Deputy)

Councillor Winnington welcomed members, officers and witnesses to the meeting and introductions were made.

21 Apologies for Absence

These had been received from Councillor Steve Wemyss who was represented by his standing deputy, Councillor Luke Stubbs.

Councillors John Ferrett and Darron Phillips both apologised that they would need to leave the meeting before the end.

22 Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Matthew Winnington declared a pecuniary interest in that he worked for the Department for Work and Pensions and as a representative of the DWP was attending as a witness he would absent himself from the room during her presentation. Councillor Phil Smith as vice-chair would take over the chair at that point.

23 Minutes of Previous Meeting - 25 June 2013 (AI 3)

(TAKE IN MINUTES OF 25 JUNE 2013)

RESOLVED that the minutes of Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

24 New Topic for the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure (EDCL) Scrutiny Panel - Pathways into Work for Young People

(a) Scoping Document

Councillor Winnington had met with a small group of officers to discuss this following the comments made at the previous meeting and all of these points were reflected in the amended document. It had been decided that the Opportunities Fair due to the age range of pupils attending would not be an appropriate venue for the formal seeking of evidence by the panel.

RESOLVED that the scoping document be approved although this would be subject to amendment during the review period.

(b) Witnesses

(i) Judi Strange MBE, Relationships Manager, Department for Work and Pensions, Greater Wessex (DWP)

Councillor Phil Smith took the chair for this part of the meeting in accordance with the earlier declaration of interest by Councillor Winnington. Judi Strange acknowledged that the welfare reforms did present issues but also she felt it was an exciting time for the department with a lot of new things happening with the reforms to the welfare system and she felt that there was cross-party buy in to these but with definite caveats. There was obviously a need to ensure that help was given to the most vulnerable who were affected by the changes.

Judi worked mainly within the two unitary authority areas of Portsmouth and Southampton and stressed that the councils themselves have huge responsibilities and she felt that there was a vibrancy in Portsmouth despite some of the social and economic challenges within the city. She stressed that it was a joint responsibility with the DWP, health authorities, schools and employers in tackling youth employment and was pleased that the panel were identifying the need for mapping and addressing the silo culture. She felt there was a lot of good work being undertaken but there were still troubled families that needed assistance for whom patch up solutions would not work, and **partnership working** was crucial.

A key issue was **early intervention** especially where there were some schools where high proportion of parents were not in employment and would not necessarily encourage their children to work and she felt that work needed to be undertaken with parents as **parenting** is key in giving aspirations to young people.

City Deal was exciting for the maritime city and there was a need for employers to be socially aware. By encouraging the starting of work it would reduce benefits and there was the need to **mentor** employers too. Judi also felt that the local authorities should use their commissioning powers where possible in the way that section 106 agreements were used there should be consideration to **social inclusion clauses**. There was a need to take bold approaches (as encouraged by Louise Casey, Troubled Families 'Tsar'). The DWP themselves were already working in children's centres to ensure accessibility to the local communities.

In response to members' questions regarding some employers being unwilling to take on young people she stressed the need for PCC and its partners to work to reassure employers and take on a role such as being part of a "**mentoring team**" and encourage volunteers who could be trained by a third party to have a dual role of supporting the employee and employer.

It was recognised that some employers in the private sector would not be able to offer up social inclusion posts whilst others may only be interested if some form of inducement were offered to benefit them. It would be beneficial if employers could offer such posts for say 5 years, this would then enable several placements to the firm over that period of time. Judi also stressed that these placements could also be used for **work trials** and the volunteers could go in and give training to the young person which would increase their chances of being taken on. The DWP already gave **wage incentives** (of over £2,000) but employer take-up was insufficient. She felt it was important for employers to come together to discuss such employment issues and opportunities.

Costs to the local authority could be addressed by the right use of commissioning and where employment problems were solved there would be savings to education and health and the young people themselves would have greater self-esteem, encouraging more social responsibility. It was reported that PCC were working with Southampton on the City Deal to look at how to maximise local economic benefit through procurement and purchasing undertaken by the local authorities and government agencies (initially the Highways Agency).

With regard to the **local labour** issues this would be tackled through the LEP¹ and Judi felt there was a need to bring people into the city to live here to spend their money as well as working locally to take pride in the city. It was noted that the local naval base commander had made public his views that there were not enough skilled people locally which would need to be addressed and there were also environmental benefits of people working locally rather than travelling into the city. This was being encouraged through the redevelopment of the Tipner site with the provision of housing, 40% of which was 3 bedroom plus. It was noted that some local firms were outsourcing their HR and members questioned whether this was resulting in some local young people being filtered out of recruitment processes and part of the LEP remit could address this issue.

Judi felt that the government had not cut funding for youth as it was available but not everyone was aware of it. With regard to local companies acting as good role models this could be pursued by the panel and Liz Crate from the PCMI spoke of the work choice programme for disabled youth where intensive support had been given to the participants who were employed by a local hotel and it was agreed that a copy of this case study should be circulated to the panel.

LC/JW

Councillor Smith thanked Judi Strange for her interesting presentation to the panel. Councillor Matthew Winnington then rejoined the meeting.

(ii) Liz Crate, PCC Contract Manager (Employment & Training) and Sharon George, PCC Youth Commissioning Manager then addressed the panel on local initiatives such as the Youth Contract delivered by PCMI in the city.

The Youth Contract had been launched in April 2012 in response to the government announcement of £1bn to help young unemployed people get a job. Liz and Sharon outlined these key initiatives .

The **Youth Contract** for 16- and 17-year-olds is designed to support disengaged young people to move into education, training or employment with training. This programme of additional support is focused on young people who are 'NEET'.

The eligibility criteria for the programme is for 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET and fulfil 1 of the following:

- have 1 GCSE A*-C.
- are in care/have left care (care leavers)
- are young offenders released from custody or serving community sentences

¹ Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The panel were made aware that the funding was there but it was the strict criteria that presented the problem. It was reported that this year there were 65 starters whereas there should be over 100, with those being excluded who needed the programme and support but couldn't access it to get the necessary skills.

They then described the **wage incentives** for 18-24 year olds

The wage incentive is available for someone who is employed for 16 hours or more each week in a job lasting more than 26 weeks. There are two rates:

- for part-time work between 16 and 29 hours a week – £1,137.50
- for full-time work of 30 hours or more a week – £2,275.

This will be paid 26 weeks after the employee starts work. Small businesses with fewer than 50 employees can claim a part payment eight weeks after the employee starts work.

Portsmouth Craft and Manufacturing Industries (PCMI)

PCMI operates as an integral part of Portsmouth City Council, within the Corporate Assets, Business and Standards Service, the primary function of PCMI is to manage and deliver a range of employment and personal development focused programmes in partnership with Prime Contractors appointed by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the European Social Fund (ESF)

PCMI from its training premises in Cosham delivers 5 Employability Programmes

- The Work Programme – DWP funded, sub contract to A4e
- Work Choice – DWP funded, sub contract to CDG Wise-Ability
- Positive Directions (The Youth Contract) funded by EFA and DWP, subcontract to Skills Training UK
- Phase2 NEET (or at risk of NEET) provision for 14-18 year olds funded by SFA/ESF, sub contract to Barnardo's
- Progress for troubled families DWP/ESF funded, sub contract to Skills Training UK

The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds - Positive Directions

The aims of the programme are to re-engage the participants in sustainable employment with part time training, an Apprenticeship, full time education or training which leads to an accredited qualification. The participants are supported by a Key Worker for one year.

The main source of referrals are expected to come through Local Authorities and PCMI have in particular successfully worked with the Integrated Targeted Youth Support Service (ITYSS) and the Youth Offending Team

Activities that are carried out are:

- Support from a Key Worker
- Career Advice
- Confidence building and motivation
- Help writing a CV and job search
- Short vocational courses such as Health and Safety, First Aid and Food Hygiene
- CSCS training
- Functional skills
- Work experience
- Volunteering opportunities

PCMI partners with other local organisations to deliver some of the above and additional bespoke courses such as Sports Leadership and Pre Apprenticeship courses

The main barrier to the success of the Positive Directions is the strict eligibility criteria.

Phase2 NEET programme

Similar aims to the above but for 14-18 year old NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The 3 year contract ends in December it has supported 220 young people over the life of the project.

The Work Programme

The Work Programme delivered by PCMI is currently supporting over 100 18-24 year olds

Future opportunities

The Successful bidder of the SFA/ESF NEET programme September 2013- July 2015 for Hampshire is due to be announced Friday 13th September. This is for 14-19 year olds and programmes will be similar to Positive Directions and Phase2 with an emphasis on delivering functional skills.

The EFA have identified NEET hotspots in the following wards: Paulsgrove, Charles Dickens, St Thomas and St Jude.

PCMI are confident of being awarded a sub contract to deliver the programme in Portsmouth. The announcement was due on 13 September 2013)

Members felt that once again **mapping** was important to know what was available and to ensure that there was not competition amongst providers. Judi Strange commented that Jobcentre Plus locally was reporting that young adults were finding it hard to find the right training opportunities. It was noted that James Hill, PCC's Troubled Families Co-ordinator had talked to members regarding the problems in fitting criteria to access the benefits and services needed by these key families. There was a marketing issue where employers should also know the benefits that were available for them.

In answering members' questions the following further information was given:

One of the barriers experienced was that apprentices were sourced and then the young people were not taken on, such as if they had a criminal record and it was advantageous to put them on placement to help secure this. The DWP and other organisations could act as brokers to get young people ready for employment thereby encouraging the employers to be more socially aware. The employers should be **incentivised** although it was reported that this could not be a planning consideration it was often undertaken by negotiation when developers discussed packages with firms coming into the city. They were given information regarding labour and employment.

Sharon George explained the **work with Year 11 pupils** with a carefully programmed contact with them during their last school year canvassing them in September regarding their intentions on leaving school to see who was going to college and targeting those who needed advice from Christmas to Easter. Data was then gathered by 30 September contacting the last few to ensure all students have a place of learning, the "September offer" which can be a college, training or apprenticeships. There were usually approximately 400 of these pupils in the city at the end of Year 11 so officers had been excited by the Youth Contract pathway before finding it had a strict criteria that excluded many.

Discussion took place regarding the quality of **careers advice** as this was no longer through Connexions but through the national careers advice service and schools and Sharon reported that five schools buy in the service from the city council.

It was noted that the situation worsens for post-18 year olds can feel abandoned, some of whom can't afford to go to college and work programmes were not necessarily offering them the right skills and for this group mapping would be very useful.

(iii) **Hampshire Education and Business Partnership**

The written presentation by Cath Longhurst, the Chief Executive of the Portsmouth & South East Hants EBP was considered by the panel members who felt that it made valid points regarding co-ordination and the value of **work experience**. Members of the panel were concerned that schools were not all giving a consistent level of provision of careers advice. Councillor Stubbs referred to his experience as a governor at Miltoncross where 15 of 200 pupils had failed to find a work placement. It was felt that where they were failing to find the placements some facilitation or inspiration should be offered rather than doing it for them. Members of the panel felt that the **schools** should be asked what they are doing or not and why? It was also suggested that a local talent bank of **volunteers** could help with the "soft skills" which would help increase employability of young people.

(c) Written Reports on Apprenticeships

The panel welcomed the two reports by the Department of Business, Innovations and Skills/University of Warwick and Fiona Wilmott's paper from the Skills Funding Agency relating to apprenticeship funding for providers.

(d) Further Evidence Gathering

- (i) The chair explained why the Opportunities Fair of 19 October had not been seen as appropriate for formal evidence gathering however panel members were able to attend to interact with the young people and the employers to go in their capacity as councillors and potentially mentors.
- (ii) There was an apprenticeship event during the day on 17 October to which members had been invited by Ian Smith of the National Apprenticeships Service and timings for this would be circulated as it was felt it would ideal to meet young people and employers at this event.
- (iii) The panel had also been invited to be represented at a meeting with Maureen Frost , the deputy chief executive of Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and it was suggested that Councillors Will Purvis and Steve Wemyss meet with her during the day sometime in October and feedback information to the main panel.

25 Forthcoming EDCL Scrutiny Panel Meetings

Members were asked to note the following dates. The next meeting would be on Tuesday 8 October with an update of the community ownership review at 7.00 pm following James Sandy's community ownership event 5-7pm that day. (This replaces the meeting scheduled for 7.00 pm on Thursday 10 October.)

The next scheduled meeting to continue the review of pathways into work for young people would be taking place on Thursday 17 October at 7.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.

JW/DMF
13 September 2013
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