

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 17 October 2013 at 7.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Matthew Winnington (in the Chair)

Councillors Phil Smith
John Ferrett
Will Purvis
Steve Wemyss

28. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

These had been received from Steve Baily, Sharon George and Paddy May. Officers in attendance were Claire Upton-Brown, Nicola Waterman, Linda Taylor and Joanne Wildsmith.

29. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Steve Wemyss made a non-prejudicial declaration as a member of Unison which had submitted the written application. Councillor John Ferrett made a non-pecuniary interest in that he knows Leone Hill, one of the witnesses and has dealings with Dave Goodall, another witness as Negotiations Officer for Prospect Union in the Naval Base. Councillor Matthew Winnington made a declaration as an employee of the DWP. He felt it appropriate to withdraw from the room during the evidence given by Leone Hill from Job Centre Plus as this was also part of the DWP.

30. Minutes of previous meeting - 12 September 2013 (AI 3)

These were agreed as a correct record.

31. Review: Pathways Into Work for Young People (AI 4)

Councillor Phil Smith took the Chair for the evidence given by the first witness Leone Hill, in accordance with the earlier declaration of interest by Councillor Matthew Winnington.

- a) Leone Hill the Employer Account Manager at Jobcentre Plus, Portsmouth explained how they work with customers in the 18-24 year old age bracket. (Those on the Work Programme are dealt with via A4E (and their sub-contractors Learning Links and PCMI) and CDG/Maximus. She circulated hand-outs outlining her presentation. Her role is to work with employers with an emphasis on encouraging young people into employment and she had worked with the city

council's Linda Taylor (Employment Initiatives Manager) over many years on joint initiatives.

The statistics are that over 5,000 people in Portsmouth claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). 8,000 people receive health related benefits because they have a disability or health condition that affects or limits the work they can do. There are approximately 2,000 lone parents receiving Income support who have children under 5 and approximately 1,500 carers. The 18-24 year old age group make up about a quarter of JSA claimants, **995 young people**. This is approximately 400 down on the previous 6 months which was a promising trend. A third of these young people were on a Work Programme because they have had been unemployed for 9 months or more.

The main sectors with **vacancies** were currently:

- Adult Social Care
- Retail
- Call Centres
- Hospitality, catering and hotels
- Security

It is hoped that with planned developments in the City, construction work will increase.

Support by Jobcentre Plus (JCP)

JCP aim to give a tailored approach looking at the individuals' situations and any barriers they were experiencing. Their dual role was both to help and challenge in helping find work. There was encouragement of up-skilling so that applicants could search for jobs effectively on line. Jobcentre Plus was also in partnership work with other organisations including the city council and the provision given was a mix of voluntary activities and mandatory activities eg IT skills, increased literacy and numeracy skills, English as a second language. Leone reported there was access to a funding stream, Access to Work to help disabled people get into a job which could help with those on JSA, such as clients with dyslexia or needing special aids or equipment, adaptations to premises or other support at work. The Skills Funding Agency have specific funding to support unemployed adults which are arranged through Chichester College (but held in Portsmouth). Highbury and Portsmouth Colleges also offer free training to unemployed adults.

The Young Persons' Advisers work with the 18-24 year olds, there is also work with troubled families and lone parent advisers work with young parents; some of these workers are based in the Children's Centres. A specialist team of advisers deals with claimants with health conditions and disabilities to help them prepare for returning to work and to help people improve their skills, confidence and motivation.

Youth Contract -

Leone outlined the number of initiatives for the 16-24 year olds which included:

- Voluntary work experience
- Wage incentive (this effectively covers the national insurance bill for the employer for 12 months)
- Apprenticeships grants for employers taking on apprentices for the first time
- Traineeships - these were a very new initiative as are a 'pre-apprenticeship' programme linked to employers
- Programmes for NEET 16 and 17 year olds
- Mandatory work activity - these are placements for those not engaging and there have been some successful local community placements

Discussion took place regarding the recent publicity surrounding Portsmouth Football Club having placements and whether or not they were utilising young people for jobs that would otherwise be undertaken by paid employees. Leone explained that the mandatory work activity programme was for a small number and had been managed by a training provider. Placements were predominantly with charities or where there was a community interest. Some people had been offered employment as a result.

The Jobcentre Plus' main areas of skills support are in **functional skills**: building employability skills to build confidence and motivation, to help improve in the job search skills. They run sessions regarding options available to young people and these are often attended by employers. **Occupational skills** are also encouraged, with courses providing certificates and qualifications in areas such as first aid, health & safety, food hygiene and in construction. These were delivered by local providers, the colleges and employers.

Work with Employers

Leone gave an example of a recent successful **local recruitment** opportunity for The Range store on the Eastern Road for which 90 of the 50 employed there via Job Centre Plus had been unemployed, a lot of whom were young people. The next such project would be recruitment for Unbeatable Car on the Eastern Road which would be another example of large recruitment for a new employer filling multiple vacancies. Jobcentre Plus also organise or attend local job fairs and careers events such as the recent one in Cascades geared towards the Christmas employment market. She reported that the National Careers Service (NCS) have careers advisers based in all job centres. The NCS role is to:

- Help develop CVs
- Improve interview and presentation skills
- Understanding the local job market

- Finding the right learning and training
- Finding out about funding to support learning

Partnership work

This is taking place with the city council through 'Shaping the Future of Portsmouth'. JCP contributes to the Employment and Skills Plan and in implementing the Section 106 planning agreements for employers to offer local jobs and other opportunities during the construction of developments and with end users. There were also links with Highbury College regarding suitable training opportunities in the construction field.

Voluntary Work Experience

Leone Hill felt that this unpaid work experience is one of the most successful ways of helping young people into work and JCP try to source different sectors to give 2 to 8 weeks experience which replicates the real working environment. This then helps young people put something on their CV which in turn helps them have something to talk about in interviews, as well as increase their motivation, skills and confidence. JCP have many examples of this leading on to employment. This includes employers who offered placements but did not have current vacancies. Feedback from customers has been good and they realise the value and benefit of work experience placements.

Members voiced concern that there should be safeguards in place so that the work experience was not in place of using an employee. If JCP found cases where this was being flouted it would stop using these employers. They do monitor placements and undertake a visit during the process.

Pre-employment training - this is arranged with local providers and colleges for introductory courses to help provide more information about a sector. This has been successfully used in the Adult Social Care field with a BTeC Level 2 Introduction to Adult Social Care course being run regularly in Portsmouth. This set out information such as the terms and conditions that would be expected for a job in this field. There are other examples of sector based work training, such as introduction to coach and bus driving, an introduction to retail, contact centres, hospitality, construction and administration.

The city council's Integrated Targeted Youth Support Services (ITYSS) produce local bulletins each week regarding apprenticeship vacancies for 16-24 year olds (and Members asked to receive more information from ITYSS).

Feeding Britain's Future - This is a national event each September for local employers to promote opportunities in the food and grocery industry. Locally, Morrisons had 6 opportunity placements and 4 people were employed at the end of this, the Southern Co-op had made 2 job offers after 15 opportunities and the Co-operative Group had held 2 one-day workshops for 40 young people.

Specialist Disability Support

JCP look at early intervention to help build confidence and look to secure specialist training for those with specific issues such as learning difficulties. They also work with the Portsmouth Learning Disability Board. The Access to Work Fund helps support those with disabilities to help provide practical support eg interpretation, taxis or specialist software as appropriate and help support work experience. PCMI and CDG offer a programme called Work Choice for disabled people with more complex needs, to give support to return to work.

Finally Leone outlined other help available from Jobcentre Plus such as Work Trials, work with the Princes Trust and support for people wanting to start their own business, partnership work with Housing Associations such as First Wessex. She reported that the Citizens Advice Bureau would like to work with Jobcentre Plus to provide debt advice in Jobcentres.

It was asked how successful the Work Programme is in placing people into employment. Leone Hill believed that Portsmouth are already exceeding their targets and further statistics were needed for this **(Action: LH)**.

Councillor Phil Smith thanked Leone for her very thorough and interesting presentation and Councillor Winnington then re-joined the meeting to take the chair for the second presentation.

b) Dave Goodall, Head of HR, BAE Systems Maritime Services

BAE is a high tech modern employment company split into ship building and support business in Portsmouth with a workforce of approximately 4,000 in the Portsmouth area (with nearer 5,000 workers including contractors). David Goodall's role includes resourcing maritime services, early careers education and the training school which also includes work experience.

Recruitment

This year BAE are taking on 30 graduates (with a requirement entry of a 2:1 degree), approximately 30 higher apprenticeships (NVQ levels 3 and 4) and 30 craft apprenticeships (level of entry is NVQ3). This high level of qualification to meet any of these entries has resulted in the standard of applicants getting higher each year. Last year for 12 engineering technician applicants, they only found 2 suitable candidates. This year for 14 similar vacancies they had received 70 candidates. Their recruitment was for those at the high end of the learning scales and recruited worldwide for their graduates, many of whom were from overseas (not one currently from Portsmouth). Craftsmen Apprenticeships covered a wide travel to work area

spreading from Worthing to Southampton and focus was given on the STEM¹ subjects with all applicants needing good IT skills.

There is concern regarding future capability and the competition with other large industrial areas, including gas and oil companies so there would be a need to develop from within and a need to expand the apprenticeship scheme. There was therefore a big opportunity for growth and work with third parties such as the Royal Navy, looking to develop joint capability.

BAE had committed to 20 apprenticeships from SMEs² from 2015 and they had worked with the Princes Trust and had gained a small number but good quality recruits from this route. Consideration would be given to broadening the scope of the apprenticeships and whether the entry level could be lowered from Level 2 NVQ.

All training for apprenticeships and graduates was undertaken in-house by BAE. They had a supported educational agenda and worked with Shaping Portsmouth and would be present at the Opportunities Fair taking place later that week. BAE would also be looking at more **internships** for graduates for which there was stiff competition but mainly he felt there was a need to change the reputation and image of apprenticeships.

The following points arose from Dave Goodall's presentation:

- It was noted that more maritime courses were available at Southampton University rather than Portsmouth University. Further talks should be undertaken with Portsmouth University to look at the provision of Maritime Courses.
- BAE's graduates are a transient population, moving on quickly whereas apprentices were more likely to be retained within the company.
- BAE do not have a policy of prioritising recruitment from the local area, although they attended promotional events locally and some of the applicants would come through family connections with the company.
- Dave Goodall felt that the schools locally did not know enough about apprenticeships; BAE had previously held open days.
- With regard to expanding their apprenticeship scheme - this year there were 18 on the technician scheme (NVQ Level 3) and they were taking on 12 on the higher NVQ Level 4 project management scheme, plus graduates thereby taking on approximately 100 young people in total this year. The

¹ Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

² Small to medium size enterprises

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apprenticeship schemes last for 4-5 years. So in the future there will be between 300 to 400 people to manage which has a large management resource implication. The future requirements for the training centre would need to be taken into consideration and this would come down to funding. BAE have the expertise in this field and a high standard product at the end of the process.

- It was asked if there were other opportunities for those in less highly skilled jobs and it was confirmed that stores and logistics at BAE would provide more semi-skilled roles but there would be a need to look at balancing this with the cost of apprenticeships in these areas in which it was much easier to recruit in to.
- There is a need to counter the stereo-typed **image for apprenticeships** and promote it as having a wide range of opportunities needed to be addressed and the successes that come from it (Dave reported that some of the senior directors at BAE had come from apprenticeship origins). It should be seen as a respectable alternative to graduate schemes which would not have the associated debt.

The Chair thanked Dave Goodall for coming along and giving an enlightening talk regarding the employment of young people and the available schemes to them at BAE.

c) Written evidence

The Unison publication 'A better start for young people' had been circulated with the agenda and read by members of the Panel. The Chair would circulate some more reports from the Liberal Democrat Conference on the subject of youth employment.

32. Dates and timings of future meetings (AI 5)

Discussion took place regarding the timings of meetings and these would be moved to a 6 pm start for the next meetings which were confirmed as Thursday 7 November at 6 pm and Thursday 5 December at 6 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.

Councillor Matthew Winnington

Chair