

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 30 January 2014 at 6.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Matthew Winnington (in the Chair)

Councillors Phil Smith
John Ferrett
Darron Phillips
Will Purvis
Steve Wemyss

1. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

None, with all members present.

2. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Winnington declared a non-pecuniary interest in an employee of the Department for Work and Pensions, as there were some references to the DWP within the evidence given.

Councillor Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his sister-in-law works with the Troubled Families team.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 5 December 2013 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the EDCL panel meeting of 5 December 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

4. Community Ownership Unit Portsmouth (COUP) Update Report (AI 4)

James Sandy's update report on behalf of the COUP was considered. The Chair welcomed the update and praised the COUP networking event that he had attended where the speaker Phil Tulba had given a very interesting presentation on a successful community skatepark initiative. He hoped that the next event featuring the Lord Speaker on 14 February would be well attended.

The membership of the member overview group to work with COUP and Councillor Mason as Cabinet Member for Resources needed to be finalised: it was agreed that this would be Cllrs Matthew Winnington, Steve Wemyss, John Ferrett plus Will Purvis.

Councillor Winnington stressed the importance of promoting the work of COUP and he had recently discussed this with a member of Community Action Hampshire.

Councillor Ferrett referred to discussions at Safer Portsmouth Partnership earlier that day - Charlie Adie reported that Motiv8 had been asked to draw up a paper looking at how different models can deliver. There is a Glasgow model for SPP activities delivery - so he had been referred to the panel's report on Community Ownership. It was felt that this highlighted the need to ensure that all of PCC and partner organisations were aware of this work.

Paddy May also reported that the government had invited bids for 'Delivering Differently'¹ - bids were invited for the end of the following week for consultancy support to deliver schemes to start in April. The Portsmouth bid was looking to build on the work of Charlie Adie referred to above.

5. Review: Pathways into Work for Young People (AI 5)

The following written evidence was received by the panel:

a) Troubled Families

James Hill's report was considered by the panel and the addendum relating to parenting skills was seen as of great relevance to this review as was an important factor in preparing families for work. It was noted that there would be some restructuring of the team which may affect the report.

b) Ofsted report 'Going in the Right Direction'

The key findings were of particular interest in helping to inform the panel's report and putting into context the evidence on careers advice given by schools and colleges.

c) PCC Work Placements

The panel received the reports from Kate Brady, PCC Skills Officer and Jeanette Rowsell regarding Social Care work placements. These were welcomed by the panel and it was noted that in particular social care was an important area of vacancies where placements were valuable to the authority and participants.

Derek Christie, Operations Manager of PCMI also reported on his wider department's involvement with Troubled Families, Community Learning and work placements. PCMI and the wider Employment Learning and Skills Service will in the future be working even closer with Kate Brady and Learning & Development to identify suitable work placements. He estimated that over the last 3 years approximately 80 placements (for a mixture of young people and adults) had been made across the council to give this invaluable opportunity which could be a stepping stone to employment. This helps in providing recent and relevant experience to put on a CV.

¹ Delivering Differently is helping local authorities to transform their services through the use of new delivery models such as mutuals and voluntary organisations.

A potential barrier to the provision of placement opportunities could be the reticence by some service managers who were concerned at the resource/supervision implications, however PCMI offer on-going support. Placements can vary greatly, between 3 weeks and 3 months, and the best match is sought for the individual. There is no obligation to offer employment at the end of the placement.

PCMI also have a couple of contracts for **traineeships** - there is Skills Funding Agency funding for this provision for 6-9 trainees of 19-24 year olds in a pilot scheme running from now until July.

Paddy May reported that PCC are exploring a joint bid with Southampton CC to the Arts Council for **internship** posts.

d) NEET Ward Map

The panel were not surprised by most of the breakdown of ward numbers of NEETs but were interested in the results.

Councillor Phillips asked that there be more information provided about the number of Looked After Children (LAC) as NEETs.

Derek Christie of PCMI reported that for the last 3 years PCMI had been the subcontractor for Barnados for NEET provision and the previous week a continuation contract had been signed for the next 20 months for 14-21 year olds, so would be the main provider in Portsmouth.

e) Post-16 Curriculum Map

Lyn Exley's map would be submitted to the next meeting.

f) BAE - updated evidence

The panel welcomed the positive update from Dave Goodall that:

- i) Whilst there has been significant media coverage relating to the closure of BAE Systems shipbuilding operation at Portsmouth, this is only accounts for approximately one third of BAE Systems operations in Portsmouth Naval base and that a healthy and sustainable ship repair and naval base services business remains.
- ii) No apprentice or graduate will be made redundant as part of the recent BAE Systems announcement. All affected ship building graduates and apprentices will be transferred to the Maritime Services business.
- iii) In terms of the 2013 intake BAE have increased graduate numbers by one, introduced a higher apprenticeship for the first time (12 employees), increased its Technician scheme by 12 and maintained craft intake at the same level. The intention is to more or less maintain this position in 2014.
- iv) With the first of class Queen Elizabeth Carriers due in from 2017, coupled with demographic issues means that BAE will need to continue

to focus on maintaining and developing its capability. One of the key strands in delivering this will be to maintain and develop its early careers schemes.

g) BBC News Article - Skills Shortage

The article dated 30 January entitled "Warning of worsening in UK skills shortage" had been circulated to the panel, reporting on a survey of employers by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills contained useful contextual information for the panel's review.

The panel also received oral updates on evidence gathered by panel members

h) Meeting with Maureen Frost, Executive Director, the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

Councillors Will Purvis and Steve Wemyss had met with Maureen Frost earlier in the week and reported back on their useful meeting with her.

In considering the suitability and ability of young applications the feedback from the Chamber members is that it is **attitude** of young people often rather than their skills that is of concern. An example is an unwillingness to work unsocial hours, so that shift work can be difficult to fill.

At the Opportunities Fair some of the young people wished not to have follow up contact about apprenticeships as it was in fact their **parents** who could be inhibitors as they did not want them to go down this route.

There is a lack of awareness of the range of apprenticeships on offer - it is seen as traditional trades and not office based jobs which can therefore be hard to recruit to.

There is a lack of preparation for interviews and a concern with the quality of CVs, including those coming via the Job Centres. Interview skills need to be improved and greater awareness of opportunities and resources such as Linked In.

Engagement with local businesses by the **schools** is poor, although there are better examples of interaction with local colleges. It was noted that many of the schools had withdrawn from the Young Chamber scheme and Chamber membership (membership cost £250 pa). There are many SMEs willing to engage with schools. Few schools are involved in the Headteacher mentoring scheme run by Shaping Portsmouth, which the Chamber of Commerce is represented on. Schools should be more realistic in their expectations of business - they often only want the Chief Executive of a company to attend, whereas other representatives would be well placed to attend events. Some businesses have complained of being "messed around" when trying to engage with schools putting in a lot of preparation to find their slot is cancelled at short notice.

Careers advice needs to be improved on the whole - teachers themselves do not always have an adequate understanding of the business world.

There is an academic target culture which can be an inhibitor to guiding suitable pupils to apprenticeships, with concentration on GCSE and A level success.

Back to work schemes are not promoted to businesses in an appropriate way.

There can be financial barriers for small companies - such as insurance costs for placements being proportionately high particularly for those under 18 years of age in some sectors.

What can PCC do? The council should be promoting positive stories of apprenticeships and employment opportunities, using its own publications (Housetalk and Flagship). Links can be made with Roger Salvetti of Biscoes who Chairs the Education workstream of Shaping Portsmouth. PCC should also challenge schools as to why they are not attending events such as the Opportunities and Apprenticeships Fairs.

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce itself is an advocate of apprenticeships - currently there are 2 in post but for the last post advertised for a Business Administration apprenticeship, there were only 3 applicants.

Derek Christie reported on PCMI's experience that also reflected that it was hard to get schools to attend open day events although young people attended with their parents.

i) Apprenticeships Event at Fratton Park 23 February

This had been attended by Councillors Phil Smith, Will Purvis and John Ferrett on behalf of the panel who reported back their findings from speaking to the organiser Ian Smith (Employer Account Manager, National Apprenticeship Service) and the participants.

Whilst all schools had been invited to the event at Fratton Park (and some attended from outside of Portsmouth) few local schools had attended and there had been no response from some. Priory and Miltoncross were on the doorstep of the venue but had not been present.

There was a lack of structure between schools, apprenticeships and businesses. Even the dedicated apprenticeship websites were an under-used resource. The members had spoken to young people at the event who had found out information for themselves and many of these came from outside Portsmouth.

Schools were again seen to be neglecting the opportunities of apprenticeships in favour of steering students towards university places. There needs to be the right balance struck so that apprenticeships are not viewed as a poor relation, especially as there is an assessments process that applicants need to be able to pass.

Teachers were not always aware of the wide range of opportunities available to their pupils.

A barrier to take-up of apprentice opportunities can be the benefits trap for families. Some young people may struggle to pay the initial travel costs.

There remains a large number of unfilled apprenticeship opportunities locally.

Some firms are reporting ageing skilled workforces where large numbers will be retiring together.

The Chair thanked members for their report back.

6. Future Meetings (AI 6)

As the report would not be finalised in time for the last Cabinet meeting this municipal year (3 March) it would need to be submitted to 9 June Cabinet meeting, but would be completed within the municipal year. The Chair therefore suggested setting a couple of informal meetings and another formal meeting for this review:

Monday 10 February 6pm - informal

Thursday 20 February 6pm - informal

Monday 24 February 6pm - formal

The meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.

Councillor Matthew Winnington
Chair