

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 14th August 2014

Subject: Response to the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel - Review of Pathways into Work for Young People

Report by: Julian Wooster - Director of Children's & Adults Services
Kathy Wadsworth - Director - Regeneration

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Summary:

- 1.1 The objective of this review was to consider the pathways to work and associated support and training available to young people in Portsmouth and the surrounding area
- 1.2 A number of recommendations have been made by the Scrutiny Panel for the Council to consider and enact as required

2. Purpose of report:

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to respond to the recommendations within the review carried out by the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel into "Pathways to Work for Young People"

3. Recommendations:

- i. **That the Panel be thanked for its work in undertaking the review.**
- ii. **That the Cabinet approves the plan to support the findings and recommendations as outlined in the Scrutiny Panel Report as detailed in section 5 and Appendix 1 of this report.**

4. Background:

- 4.1 To achieve the aim of the Review, the Panel, chaired by Councillor Matthew Winnington, initially met on 12th September 2013 and agreed the scope of the review to be as follows:

- To understand the impact of recent changes to the funding and resources available to help tackle barriers to training for employment or employment for young people.
- To undertake a mapping exercise to understand the services, interventions and training opportunities available to young people locally as they seek work and to identify gaps/overlaps in provision.
- To understand issues and barriers experienced by employers in relation to employing young people.

4.2 The final report can be referred to at:

<http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s3558/Pathways%20into%20work%20for%20young%20people%20final%20version.pdf>

4.3 Cabinet recently approved the Employment and Skills Plan and the Apprenticeship Strategy and work will continue on their implementation as well as maximising opportunities through PCC procurement.

5. Findings and Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel:

5.1 Findings:

- PCC has responsibility for local authority controlled schools and there is a need to encourage these schools to create links with businesses as well as pursuing academic targets. Whilst some schools are actively attending events such as the Opportunities Fair and Apprenticeships events, others are noticeably absent.
- PCC has a responsibility to promote positive examples of employment opportunities and role models, particularly regarding apprenticeships.
- PCC should be promoting the good practice of apprenticeships and explore the possibility of including appropriate terms within contracts.
- Some young people struggle to find the initial money to fund their transport costs to attend work placements and apprenticeships and the loss of benefits to their parent/carer(s) can be a disincentive to taking up these opportunities.
- The value of educational attainment in securing future employment has been highlighted by the schools, further education representatives and local employers.
- The mapping of post 16 curriculum provision and the concerns raised on attainment levels for Looked After Children and care leavers both show that there is a surprising variation between the approaches taken by local colleges regarding retaking of important examinations. These core subjects of English and Maths are crucial to future employment opportunities as well as eligibility for apprenticeship schemes. The cause of this can be consideration of league tables to the detriment of the young peoples' future job prospects.
- The New Belongings Project is being successfully implemented by PCC's Social Care team as an exemplar pilot authority, giving greater support and encouragement to care leavers with associated training and employment opportunities.

5.2 Recommendations:

- That LA schools be challenged to appoint business mentors and that the Education Department sets up events to bring schools and local employers together. The governors are asked to appoint a responsible link person to act in this co-ordinating role and there should be a report back mechanism for this. Governors' Support at PCC should incorporate business awareness for the appointed link governor.
- That articles regularly appear in the council's own publications (Flagship, HouseTalk, Term Times and the website) to promote and signpost young people (and their parents/carers) to the range of employment and training opportunities.
- PCC's procurement of contracts should have regard to the provision of all appropriate learning and training programmes, such as apprenticeship schemes.
- That a letter be sent to The Secretary of State to raise concerns about these potential barriers that occur to families dependent on benefits and also to address the issues where the young person is struggling to find the initial funding to enable them to attend their placements.
- PCC and multi-agency Troubled Families/Positive Family Steps work should continue to promote good parenting skills and parents/carers' engagement with the educational system to improve chances of employment for young people.
- Encouragement should be given to all further educational colleges in the Portsmouth area to give young people opportunities to retake exams in core subjects (English and Maths) to help enhance their employment opportunities.
- All parts of the City Council should be aware of, and give support to, the New Belongings Project for care leavers to its conclusion and beyond, to build on its success. A report on this should be taken to the Cabinet Member for Children & Education to highlight the outcomes of the scheme.

5.3 The proposed responses to the above recommendations are set out in Appendix 1

6. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

6.1 A Preliminary Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed as part of the production of the Scrutiny Panel Report, setting out the equalities issues considered during the review, and a full EIA is not required at this stage.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Council is under a legal duty to “secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs” of persons over compulsory school age but under 19 and persons subject to learning difficulty assessment aged 19 or over but under 25, which include provision outside their area.

In fulfilling this duty the Council must act with a view to

- (i) encouraging diversity in the education and training that is available and
- (ii) increasing opportunities for people to exercise choice. The Council must co-operate with other Councils in performing the duty.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public sector bodies such as the Council, when commissioning a public service, to consider how the service they are procuring could bring added economic, environmental and social benefits. This would include requiring, for example, details from a supplier on how they engage with and promote local labour supply and apprenticeship schemes. Detailed guidance exists on how to implement such policies.

8. Finance Comments

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the recommended actions will be met from within existing resources. There may be further financial implications should there be the need for new staff to be recruited to act in the role of a business mentor, and it should be noted that part of Governor Support Services are offered through a traded services offer with schools and academies.
- 8.2 The future impact of the proposals for more social inclusion in contracts may need to be assessed and it is noted that a report is requested back to the Cabinet Member for Children and Education to review the New Belongings project.

.....
Signed by: Stephen Kitchman, on behalf of
Julian Wooster - Director of Children's and Adult's Services

.....
Kathy Wadsworth - Director - Regeneration

Appendix 1: Action Plan EDCL Scrutiny Panel - Pathways to work

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Nil	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by:
Councillor Donna Jones, Leader of the City Council