

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

TUESDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors D Cohen, M Lyons,
P Wadsworth, R Harington, M Ingham,
J McKenna, J Chapman, A Castle,
D Coupar, A Khan and J Marjoram

67 Late Items

There were no late items.

68 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

69 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence.

70 Minutes - 17 December 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

71 Scrutiny Inquiry - Apprenticeships

The Board conducted the second session of its inquiry on apprenticeships in Leeds. In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' questions were:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member, Leisure and Skills
- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member for Children's Services
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services
- Sue Wynne, Chief Officer, Employment and Skills
- Gary Milner, Lead Officer, Skills for Learning and Life
- Nick Hart, Apprenticeship Hub
- Lynne McLaughlin, igen

The Board was shown a short video promoting apprenticeships in Leeds. The following issues were raised in introducing the report and discussion:

- The wide range of provision that could be termed as 'pre-apprenticeship' and the varied routes of funding even for those programmes that are publicly funded
- Further analysis of apprenticeship numbers based on participation rates, which gave a more encouraging picture than previous figures. It was thought that this may be related to the longer minimum length of apprenticeship programmes
- Analysis of the factors that may influence the number of applications different apprenticeship adverts attract

- Information on the qualifications requirements for local vacancies
- The respective roles of the various partners in providing careers advice to young people
- Background information on the role and caseload of igen as part of the targeted support provision

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Members who had attended an evening session at the Connexions Centre in Eastgate the previous week reported on how useful the session had been to enable them to hear first hand from young people about their experiences in relation to apprenticeships.
- The key issues of accessibility and information
- Better engagement with young people from an early age as they make choices and decisions about their futures
- The feedback and support that is or could be provided to unsuccessful applicants and those who drop out during their apprenticeship
- The need to keep working with employers and exploring ways to get young people 'job ready' while they are still at school
- The need to change parental perceptions about apprenticeships
- The changing attitudes of schools towards pupils' destinations, and the role of destinations teams
- The need to ensure school staff are aware of the full range of options that are available
- Work being undertaken to look at opportunities for Looked After Children
- Examples of good practice from employers
- Concern about reductions in funding for Level 1 provision
- The future role of the Leeds City College Apprenticeship Academy and university technical colleges
- Support available to those who are NEET but for whom an apprenticeship is not the right answer
- The importance of finding the right channels of communication to get the message about apprenticeships more widely understood by young people
- Travel as a potential barrier and the support recently offered by Metro
- The 'careers advice - tips from young people' document prepared by Leeds Youth Council for schools
- The Apprenticeship Hub's school engagement programme and local apprenticeship events
- An offer from councillors to support the service where schools may be reluctant to engage
- Support provided by Children's Services for schools to self-assess their careers advice provision, and a proposal to ask schools to buy into additional resources
- The importance of working together better

The Board agreed to hold a further session of the inquiry on 1 April 2014, to include input from representatives of the National Apprenticeship Service, Apprenticeship Training Agency, learning providers and employers.

RESOLVED – That the issues raised by this session of the inquiry be noted.

72 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Board considered the Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, prior to its submission to the Executive Board and full Council for adoption. In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' questions were:

- Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Member for Development and the Economy
- Peter Davis, Flood Risk Manager
- Roy Coello, Head of Engineering Services

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Members of the Board broadly welcomed the document. They stressed the importance of maximising the combined resources available to address flood risk, in order to progress action on the priority measures listed in the strategy.
- Members welcomed the support that had been received from other local authorities for the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme bid.
- The Board was concerned about the ongoing issue of insurance costs for homeowners at risk of flooding.
- Members stressed the importance of considering flood risk issues in relation to planning and development. Whilst it was acknowledged that developer contributions for new building could sometimes be key to funding improvements that would also benefit the existing local community, Members were also concerned about the potential impact of the number of planning applications in areas at risk of flooding.
- The Board discussed the work of the gully cleansing team and the prioritisation of hotspots for more regular maintenance.

In accordance with scrutiny's specific statutory role in relation to flood risk management, the Scrutiny Board decided it would undertake an annual review of progress against the strategy, based on the Schemes and policies included in the List of Measures at Appendix C to the report and the eight key monitoring indicators listed in Section 7 of the strategy.

RESOLVED – That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser produce a summary of the Board's comments, to be presented alongside the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy when it is considered by the Executive Board.

(Councillors Marjoram, Coupar and Chapman left the meeting during the discussion of this item at 11.50, 11.55 and 12.05 respectively.)

73 Scrutiny of Strategic Partnerships - Formal response

The Board considered a formal response to the recommendations contained in its report on the Strategic Partnership Board. Members agreed to sign off the response to recommendation 1, and requested a further progress report on the second recommendation when the Board undertakes its next annual review of the strategic partnership.

RESOLVED – That the responses to the recommendations be noted, that recommendation 1 be signed off as achieved and that a further progress report on recommendation 2 be provided when the Board carries out its annual review of the Strategic Partnership.

(Councillor Wadsworth left the meeting at 12.10pm at the conclusion of this item.)

74 Work Schedule

The Board received a report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which set out the latest version of the Board's work schedule.

The Board confirmed the inclusion of an extra meeting on 1 April 2014 to accommodate a third session of the apprenticeship inquiry. It was also agreed to reschedule the annual review of the strategic partnership board to this additional meeting.

It was further agreed to defer the recommendation tracking report on maximising powers to promote, influence and create local employment and skills opportunities, from February to March and to add the quarter 3 performance monitoring report to the March schedule.

The Board also considered a request for scrutiny from the Leader of Council, and agreed in principle to carry out an inquiry next year into asset management.

RESOLVED – That the changes to the work schedule set out above be agreed.

75 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Joint meeting with Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) Tuesday 4 February 2014 at 10am (pre-meeting for Board members at 9.30am)

Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) Tuesday 18 February 2014 at 10am (pre-meeting for Board members at 9.30am)

(The meeting finished at 12.15pm)