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SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

TUESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors P Wadsworth, R Harington,
M Ingham, J McKenna, A Castle, A Khan,
B Anderson, C Macniven and C Towler

99 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

100 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

101 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cohen, Coupar and Lyons, with Councillors Anderson, Towler and Macniven in attendance as substitutes.

102 Minutes - 18 March 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

103 Scrutiny Inquiry - Apprenticeships

The Board conducted the third and final session of its inquiry on apprenticeships.

In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' queries were:

- Anthony Knowles, Head of Apprenticeships Employer Accounts (Yorkshire), National Apprenticeship Service
- Matt Thomas, Chief Executive, Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency
- Kenny Stoddart, Operations Director, Appris Training
- Jo Leggett, Head of UK Delivery Centre, BAE Systems Applied Intelligence
- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member, Leisure and Skills
- 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

The four external witnesses began by briefly outlining their organisation's role in relation to apprenticeships.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Encouraging all employers to consider the potential benefits of taking on apprentices
- All young people should have the opportunity to consider an apprenticeship as an option
- The role of employer ambassadors
- Changes in the apprenticeship programme to give employers more ownership
- Encouragement for Leeds employers to engage in the current funding consultation
- The availability of an app for apprenticeship vacancies
- The role of schools and the quality of information, advice and guidance services
- The role of Children's Services in encouraging schools to provide good quality information about apprenticeships
- Members as school governors finding out what their schools are doing about apprenticeships
- The possibility of developing the notion of headteacher ambassadors for apprenticeship
- That young people's qualifications in school are not always relevant in the work and apprenticeship environment
- The need for pre-apprenticeship pathways to help some young people to be ready for an apprenticeship, and a desire to explore further the potential to develop a more coherent offer locally
- Changes in the funding at 19+ and the impact on numbers of apprenticeship starts
- Health and safety issues as a barrier to taking on younger apprentices in some work environments
- Encouraging employers to pay more than the minimum hourly rate
- Ensuring employers fully understand the time input required to support apprentices
- The success of events to promote apprenticeships in local areas arranged with the Hub
- Information on the high proportions of young people completing their apprenticeships and retaining employment
- The need to raise parents' awareness and acceptance of the value of apprenticeships.

It was agreed that the Board should write to the City Region and relevant government departments with its findings and any relevant recommendations, once its inquiry report is finalised.

The Chair thanked all witnesses for their participation and contributions to the inquiry.

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

(Councillor Wadsworth left the meeting at 11.30am at the conclusion of this item.)

104 Scrutiny Inquiry - Strategic Partnership Boards

The Board conducted its annual review of the progress made by the strategic partnership over the past year.

In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' queries were:

- Nigel Foster, Chair of the Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership
- Martin Farrington, Director of City Development
- Tom Knowland, Head of Sustainable Development
- Paul Maney, Head of Planning, Policy and Performance

Nigel and Martin gave a presentation outlining the partnership's major areas of work over the past year and the challenges for the future, which was welcomed by Board Members. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The range of opportunities and projects coming forward
- The importance of placemaking in relation to the South Bank area
- The links between maximising job growth and being a low carbon city
- Further details of actions being taken to support the low carbon objective
- A suggestion that the Partnership should consider whether it has a role in ensuring the legacy of the Tour de France is realised
- The North-South divide and ensuring that Leeds promotes itself and its offer whenever and wherever possible
- The need to ensure that job opportunities are available to people from all disadvantaged communities in Leeds, not just those that are located close to new developments
- The work of the Ahead Partnership and the Leeds Community Foundation
- The conference city concept
- The development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- Changes in membership of the Partnership and a proposed refresh of councillor membership
- The Partnership's desire to explore ways of publicising its achievements and engaging with the community more.

RESOLVED

- a) That the Board notes the progress made by the Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership over the previous year
- b) That the Scrutiny Board considers that the main challenge to the Partnership should be getting local people into local jobs.

(Councillors Anderson and Castle left the meeting during the discussion of this item at 12.00 and 12.45 respectively.)

105 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.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be agreed.

106 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15 April 2014 at 10.00am (a pre-meeting will start at 9.30am for Board members.)

(The meeting finished at 12.50pm)