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**SCRUTINY PANEL B**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2013**

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**Present:** Councillors Baillie, Kaur, Furnell, Dr Paffey, Shields and Turner

**Apologies:** Councillor Norris

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Dr Paffey be elected as Chair and Councillor Kaur as Vice-Chair for the purpose of this meeting.

2. **APPRENTICESHIPS INQUIRY: MEETING 1: SETTING THE SCENE**

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Communities, Change and Partnership, which provided details of the Inquiry examining apprenticeships in the City and outlining the national policy and also issues for apprenticeships locally.

Cllr Bogle, Cabinet Member for Children Services was in attendance and outlined the current position for Southampton.

- Need to increase the number of apprenticeships, as percentage currently below average for similar authorities, however need to ensure quality
- The use of the S106 agreements for new large developments
- The need to promote apprenticeships to young people as well as those business that could create them
- With the new change to the leaving age for participation in education or training, need to ensure that young people were more aware of the apprenticeship option
- Use the powers that the Council has in-house though procurement and commissioning to promote apprenticeships

Ian Smith, Employer Account Manager from the National Apprenticeship Service outlined their role and his involvement with City Deal, southern area.

- Focus on increasing numbers
- Need to drive up quality and standards
- Increase high level and advanced apprenticeships
- Providing a single service for businesses
- Access for employers and employees
- Involvements with schools
- Support for those not ready for an apprenticeship. Introduction programme.
- Access to all – SEN
- Each apprenticeship should be at least 30 hours a week. With a recognised qualification. If less hours then the overall length would be increased
- 16 – 18 year olds were fully funded by the Government.
- Wages vary from £2.65 per hour (increasing shortly to £2.68), however some were £18,000 per annum

- Increase targeting of small and medium sized business and the support that they were offered. Currently targeting was aimed at larger business that have in excess of 250 employees
- Many large companies have their own schemes, but were still managed by NAS
- Basic English and Maths was required by all
- Ensuring that the right programme was found for the right apprentice

Denise Edgehill, Head of Skills, Regeneration and Partnerships and Andy Tickner, Skills Manager, SCC jointly reported on the Council's strategies, plans and other national drivers. And also the current performance, trends and best practice. The presentation was circulated at the meeting.

Claire Wilkinson, Human Resources Business Partner, SCC, reported on apprenticeships within the Council's People Plan.

- Plan was for 30 apprenticeships, with the Council acting as a host agency rather than recruiting direct, due to the sensitive issue of redundancies within the organisation
- Concerns had been raised about ensuring that the apprentices would not be used to carry out work that had previously been undertaken by staff that had been made redundant
- There would have been 23 placements and 2 rainbow schemes, across a very varied and broad range of work
- Due to a legal challenge by Solent A4B it had not been possible to meet the initial target date and due to budget issue it had now been decided to put the project on hold
- There was also a need to look at who would mentor the apprentices
- Suggestion that IT apprentices could be used with Libraries to assist users to access equipment provided

Mary Higgins, Inspector for Vulnerable Children & Young People, SCC, reported on the effects of raising the age of participation.

- Started looking at the impact 12 to 15 months ago
- A lot of work has been carried out to reduce the number of NEETs in the City and this had been very successful. However most of these young people have been encouraged into education courses
- Meeting with schools and colleges to ensure the young people were aware of what their options were. This was more of a challenge now that careers advice was independent from local authorities
- Looking at a Directory of Opportunities

Other areas that were discussed following member questions were:

- The type of apprenticeships was driven by employment sectors within the City
- As Maritime was a key area within the City this could be explored further
- The new Eco Contract would open up significant skills areas
- Health and Social Care, and particularly Childcare was a growth area

- There was access to local, reliable market information however this tended to be old data and there was a need to be able to predict what was needed
- Support for small business. Idea that possible several small business, operating as a co-operative could share an apprentice
- Ideal if the apprentice is employed status from day 1, however it was possible for the apprentice training agencies to employ the individual, and use a host employer who would be responsible for the wages and management fee
- City deal and work with Portsmouth
- More incentive were needed to encourage employers who had an apprentice to take others in the future
- Work further with the schools to ensure that they promote apprenticeships to their students. Agreed this would be added to the agenda of the next Headteachers conference
- Apprenticeships also need to be promoted to parents as a positive options
- Communications between careers advisors and business advisors
- Improving the quality and image of the apprenticeships