
SCRUTINY PANEL B
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 August 2013

Present: Councillors Dr Paffey (Chair), Baillie, Furnell, Hammond, L Harris, Turner and Whitbread (part)

11. **APPRENTICESHIPS INQUIRY MEETING 5: THE WAY FORWARD FOR APPRENTICESHIPS**

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Communities, Change and Partnerships examining apprenticeships in the City and changes to national and local policy including views of Unions.

Ian Smith, National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) gave an update on National Policy changes relating to:

- Training costs, what the Government covers.
- Minimum wage and employee rights for apprentices
- The Education Act 2011
- Minimum standards for apprenticeships
- Further Education loans for apprentices
- Grants for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds
- Higher Apprenticeships offering an alternative to higher education aimed at level 6
- Training agencies
- Access to apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Launch of apprenticeship funding consultation

Mike Watts, Head of Strategic HR outlined current and future employment arrangements at the Council:

- Where apprenticeships had worked well and where future gaps could be sourced with specialist career paths.
- Future funding within current financial pressures.
- Targeting managers by providing resources to fill vacancies.
- Reviewing the demographic of Council staff to fill future gaps.
- Providing regular funding source rather than for one off schemes.
- Finding the right people to oversee the process
- Ensuring functional skills are developed maths, English, language barriers

Union representatives were unable to attend the meeting. Their views to be sought and made available to the Panel to consider.

The Panel discussed and proposed the following draft recommendations:

- (i) To support Southampton Apprenticeship Action Plan
- (ii) To carry out an audit of careers advisors in schools and colleges
 - Recent analysis and evidence heard from the Panel meetings that improving careers guidance at schools is a necessary starting point for improving awareness of apprenticeships across the city.
- (iii) To provide Career Advisors and students with impartial and consistent career guidance across the City
 - Building on recent success of Social Media techniques across the Council especially the My-Mo application to promote recycling in the city, developing a website and corresponding application to promote impartial careers guidance for advisors and students.
- (iv) To provide a database of apprentices for promotional purposes – the Ambassador Scheme
- (v) To Host an event for career advisors, providers and businesses to talk about options and what is required.
 - Investigate how Southampton uses the “Inspiring the Future” campaign to create a joined up approach across businesses and providers to visit schools to promote apprenticeships.
- (vi) The Council to write to National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to invite a suitable representative to attend/visit the following meetings/people to promote apprenticeships.
 - Southampton Heads Forum
 - School councils
 - Individual schools
 - Governors Forum
 - Southampton City Council’s Leadership Group
- (vii) To Research in house best practice across other authorities and public sector agencies.
- (viii) To share best practice with other public agencies to promote apprenticeship recruitment through procurement for the people of the city.
 - Skills Team to present work done through Employment and Skills Plans to Southampton Connect then contact other agencies
 - Promote the good work achieved across the Council to promote, recruit and support Apprenticeships i.e. employment and skills plans and Housing Apprenticeships, look for suitable publications nationally and locally.
- (ix) To investigate community benefit clauses in SCC procurement with the possibility of the Community Benefit clause becoming a scoring question.
- (x) To engage with other large employers in the City, CCG, universities, ABP etc – find out what they do to promote apprenticeships then disseminate this information through appropriate channels, i.e. NAS
- (xi) To arrange an annual Apprenticeship Graduation Day to promote/recognise achievements – possibly funded by business or providers.
- (xii) To consult with ALPHI to investigate possibility of arranging helpline and to further promote apprentices across the City by providing a direct sales function to SME’s.

- (xiii) To attend existing business events across the City to provide apprenticeship information, use existing events hosted by Chamber of Commerce or Federation for Small Business.
- (xiv) Head of Strategic HR to investigate and propose a model for apprenticeships across the Council as part of a wider strategic recruitment policy.
 - Build on initial work into best practice from other local authorities and public agencies.
 - Maximise any potential apprenticeship opportunities through vacancy recruitment.
 - Create a resourced Apprenticeship Policy to be explicit what job areas can be filled by an apprentice.
- (xv) To audit what the Council is doing regarding apprenticeships – where are they, where are they going at the end of their apprenticeship.
 - Update the HR system to ensure that future apprentices are correctly recorded.
- (xvi) Council to provide parking spaces at Guildhall Square, housing estates near schools at scheduled times for joint event to promote apprenticeships and SCC support for apprentices.
- (xvii) Head of Skills, Regeneration and Partnership to liaise with Solent LEP on providing current labour market information.