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**SCRUTINY PANEL B**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 May 2013**

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

**Apologies:** Councillor Jeffery

3. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

It was noted that Councillor L Harris has replaced Councillor Norris as a member of the Panel.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Kaur be elected as Vice-Chair of the Panel.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. **APPRENTICESHIPS INQUIRY: MEETING 2: EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE**

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Communities, Change and Partnership, reviewing employer experiences of apprenticeships; recruitment; training; and support.

Ian Smith, Employer Account Manager from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) outlined their experience with dealing with the employers:-

- Large employers (250+ staff) have access to a dedicated account manager – however these managers cover a wide area.
- Target those employers not currently engaged
- Small and medium size businesses have access to reactive telephone support based in Bristol for this area.
- Currently have a 1 year fixed posted dedicated to 16-18 year old recruitment. As numbers, nationally, are down in this age range.
- Work closely with many of the training providers, local authorities and other agencies.
- Live vacancies report for Southampton was circulated
- National apprenticeship week
- Explained different levels of apprenticeships, from traineeships, for those youngsters that need extra support, to higher level apprentices.
- Work closely with Council to target employers in the City, however more could probably be done.
- Support for disadvantaged youngsters.
- Pre-apprenticeship scheme, based on a level 2, which it was hoped would allow the youngsters to move onto a full apprenticeship.
- Work closely in partnership with the Wheatsheaf Trust, plus the Rainbow Project.
- Placements where the hope was always for permanent employment to be offered.

- Ensuring that the message was getting out to the employers of all sizes. Need to look at other avenues on how to reach the employers and the best time to hold events for them.
- Colleges need to be flexible with the course times that they offer to ensure they fit with the needs of the employer.

Anthony Dimmick, from Barratt Homes, outlined how they were working with the SCC Employment and Skills Plans:-

- Working with the Southampton City Council has been very successful and they were now trying as a company to roll out the same system with other authorities.
- Role of community liaison.
- Look at the number of youngsters that start schemes and actually successfully finish them.
- Issues surrounding 16-18 year olds and insurance, especially on building sites.
- Transport issues for youngsters as their placements move as the sites change.
- Helping youngsters maximise what they have. Many do not fit the dictated criteria but were still able to engage.
- Example of Employment Skills Plan for Hinkler Parade

Anita Esser, from University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, outlined apprenticeship recruitment issues faced by them as a large employer. A handout was circulated on the areas covered:-

- Training provider.
- They employ over 8000 staff in the areas that they offer apprenticeship schemes in.
- Cover many areas, not just Health. e.g. administration; call centres; engineering.
- Work hard on partnerships with High Education providers.
- Provide support to move staff on but need to support further.
- Try to recruit to substantive posts where possible, rather than just bringing in apprentices in addition to the staffing levels.
- Areas within Trust that have an aging workforce, such as estates management, that need new qualified staff.
- Many of their apprentices were in the 20-30 age range, with very few 16-18 year olds – felt that this was a cultural issue within the NHS about being too young to be in a clinical role. Currently investigating traineeship/ cadetship at BTEC level to run a pilot to be able to place more within this age group.
- Many levels of apprenticeship from basic up to the higher levels, with a bespoke foundation degree course to allow access/ progression onto the nursing degree.

Mark Burnett and Debbie van Coller, from SCC gave details of the apprenticeship recruitment with Housing Services within SCC:-

- Currently have 13 apprentices and were looking to take on more.
- Open day being held for invited young people who had expressed an interest in future apprenticeships.
- Work with the local colleges – need further work on ensuring they get the appropriate feedback.
- Involved with the schools however would like to extend this and promote apprenticeships further. And also target children at a younger age.

- Concerns that there was a perception by many children, parents and schools that apprenticeships are second class option in comparison to attending 6<sup>th</sup> form. Need to make them aware that qualifications would be gained on an apprenticeship.
- Had only be offering trade areas however were keen to move into other areas. e.g. Housing officers. Have worked with colleges to find appropriate courses close by. City College have organised a course to start in September.
- Rainbow project – pre-apprenticeship scheme for those that do not hold the necessary qualifications to start an apprenticeship and or maybe have other issues.
- Redbridge School currently have 13 pupils out of mainstream lessons involved in trade work. Positive benefits. Many other pupils want to join the scheme.
- Careers advise needs to be improved. Information provided needs to cover what was available and how it was delivered.

Russell Chisard, training manager from Wessex Regional Care outlined the experience they had with recruiting apprentices:-

- Business was to provide support living, and although in some units they have 4 to 5 staff, there were other areas where they only have 1 or 2 staff so there has been the issue of not being able to work alone until they were 18 years old.
- Although lots of interest was expressed, they only interviewed 2 candidates. Appointment was working out well. Started working in November with college course commencing in February. In house training was also taking place.

David Pollard, a member of the Central Southampton branch of the Federation of Small Businesses, and also had a regional role for Education, gave an overview of issues for small business:-

- Many business very small and often work from home offices, however over half of apprentices were employed by small businesses.
- Keen to encourage more small businesses to become involved.
- Importance of building links between employers and schools.
- Many events around the region within the next 12 months with NAS to get the message across. Found the best way was face to face.
- Need to promote the completion of apprenticeships in the same way people graduate from University.
- Need to ensure the schools were part of the process. Get the governors involved.
- Funding available was an “attention grabber” however felt that it was not the major factor in businesses making the decision to have an apprentice.
- Business find that there were many factors they needed to address when they have their first apprentice, such as insurance; and on the job training, however the second time around it was much easier for them.