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## SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - FUTURE OF WORK IN SOUTHAMPTON

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2019

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Present: Councillors McEwing (Chair), Fitzhenry (Vice-Chair), Bogle, Coombs, Furnell, Guthrie and Laurent

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

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

13. **THE FUTURE OF WORK IN SOUTHAMPTON - INNOVATION AND BEST PRACTICE**

The Panel considered the report of the Director, Legal and Governance, which in accordance with the inquiry plan, requested that the Panel considered innovation and best practice and what Southampton can learn from other cities.

Following discussions with invited representatives the following information was received:

**Dr Deborah Smart – Service Lead, Digital and IT, Southampton City Council**

**Jeff Walters – Economic Development Manager, Southampton City Council**

- A Digital Strategy for Southampton for 2018-2022 has been produced. There was a general consensus that the objectives and actions within the strategy reflected good practice, with support for the external focus as it related to growing the digital economy in Southampton and improving digital skills.
- Since the strategy was approved the focus had been on addressing internal digital and IT issues within the Council. Little progress had been made improving connectivity in the city or advancing digital skills.
- A bid to Government for funding for 5G / Full Fibre was unsuccessful.
- The digital infrastructure of the city needed improving to support economic growth. We are not seeing businesses being put off from investing in Southampton because of poor connectivity but, as other cities begin to offer full fibre and 5G, there is concern that they may have a competitive advantage over Southampton.
- Improving digital infrastructure and connectivity needed to be a priority for the city. External funding will be required to deliver this.

#### **Good practice – Bristol Learning City**

Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager, spoke with Tommy Jarvis – Education Partnership and Programme Manager at Bristol Learning City, about the progress being made in Bristol to create a learning culture.

- Bristol became a UNESCO Learning City in 2016. As a learning city, Bristol is championing learning as a way to transform lives, communities, organizations and the city, with an ambitious vision of a future where:
  - All individuals and communities are proud to learn throughout their lives
  - Every organization has a committed, skilled and diverse workforce; and

- The city's success is shared by all.
- The presentation from the Chief Executive of the Centre for Cities identified that Bristol had bucked the UK trend with regards to in work training (20% increase in in-work training from 2004 to 2017).
- The focus in Bristol used to be on encouraging entrepreneurialism but now the focus is on raising standards in schools and improvement of education outcomes - Bristol has seen one of the strongest improvements in school exam results in England and has a high proportion of qualified residents.
- A learning festival is being planned to celebrate lifelong learning.
- Work experience - Bristol Works was a collaboration between employers, learning providers and local communities to develop a skilled local workforce. Their aim was to offer bespoke experience of work programs created with schools, based on the needs of young people - [www.bristol.works/](http://www.bristol.works/)
- The Future Bright initiative, funded through the West of England Combined Authority seeks to help people who are in work and in-receipt of in-work benefits improve their skills - [www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/future-bright/](http://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/future-bright/)
- However, Bristol remains a city where there are many citizens who do not share in the city's success. There are significant challenges for the city in terms of health, education and employment. The north and centre of Bristol remain more affluent than the south.
- Bristol Learning City offered to provide support to Southampton, to share ideas and to connect Southampton to other learning cities.

#### **Sajid Butt – Strategic Skills Manager, Southampton City Council**

- A presentation drawing together good practice from conversations with experts in city development and industry was delivered by Sajid Butt.
- In addition to the points raised in the presentation, the following key points were made:
  - Southampton was ahead of a lot of cities in a number of key aspects. Most of the key components for success existed in the City.
  - The future of work was not necessarily about technology it was about the workforce
  - There is a need to shout about the qualities of the city and make more of what we have – believe in Southampton as the city of opportunity where everyone thrives
  - Connectivity must be a priority
  - There are some interesting learning points from the Cities of Learning initiative and the UNESCO Learning Cities programme. There is an opportunity to incorporate the best points of the programmes and tailor them to reflect the resources and needs of Southampton when developing the Southampton Education Quarter.

**RESOLVED** that the comments made by Southampton City Council Officers Dr Deborah Smart - Service Lead for Digital and Strategic Information Technology, Jeff Walters – Economic Development Manager, Mark Pirnie – Scrutiny Manager, Sajid Butt – Strategic Skills Manager, be noted and used as evidence in the review.