

Scrutiny Board

Minutes - 8 November 2016

Attendance

Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Philip Bateman
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Daniel Warren
Cllr Wendy Thompson

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Roger Lawrence was also in attendance

Employees

Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kate Howard	Post 16 Lead
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Bill Hague	Head of School Planning and Resources
Julia Cleary	Scrutiny and Systems Manager

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Simkins, Cllr Patten, Cllr Angus, Cllr Potter and Cllr Jaspal.

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair Cllr Peter O'Neill was nominated to Chair the meeting, this was seconded and all were in agreement.

Resolved: That Cllr O'Neill take the Chair.

- 2 **Declarations of interest**
Cllr Brackenridge declared that he had a personal interest in relation to the item due to be discussed regarding the Post 16 Update as his wife was a teacher. The Chair

confirmed that this interest would not prohibit Cllr Brackenridge from participating in the discussion.

There were no other declarations of interest.

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting (13 September 2016)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

5 **The Development of Scrutiny**

The Council Leader introduced a report in relation to the future developments of Scrutiny. The Leader stated that there was a weakness in how scrutiny was working and that he had requested the Managing Director to address this.

The highlighted concerns included the resources allocated to the scrutiny function, the format of the Scrutiny Board, how petitions were dealt with and the engagement of the Executive in the scrutiny process.

Members considered the report and the areas put forward to help move the scrutiny function forward. The recommendations included having a pre-agreed thematic issue at each meeting of the Scrutiny Board presented by a Cabinet Member, three Council wide presentation sessions a year in the Council Chamber covering high level cross cutting issues and a dedicated intranet resource.

Cllr Brookfield stated that it was also vital that scrutiny be engaged at the outset of any consultation processes rather than at the end when it was too late to have an input and monitor the consultation.

The Managing Director confirmed that SEB would be looking into the consultation processes carried out across the Council to ensure that there was consistency in approach.

Cllr Miles stated that she welcomed the recommendations and acknowledged that work was needed to bring the scrutiny function up to date.

Cllr Sweetman requested that the Members be provided with some feedback in relation to the Managing Director and Leader's visit to China and it was agreed that this would form the basis of the first council wide briefing session.

Resolved:

1. That the existing Scrutiny Board work programme be revised so that each meeting going forward will consider a pre-agreed thematic issue presented by a Cabinet Member.
2. That Scrutiny Officers co-ordinate three Council wide presentation sessions a year in the Council Chamber covering high level cross cutting issues.
3. That a dedicated intranet resource is established for all scrutiny members.

4. That review panels consist of no more than 5-7 members and that the maximum number of reviews per year be increased to 6.
5. That the first council wide briefing session provides feedback to members on the visit to China.

6 **Scrutiny Reviews**

The Scrutiny and Systems Manager provided an update on the current scrutiny reviews. A meeting had been held on the previous evening with the Chairs of the three review groups and briefs had been received from Officers in relation to the City's Apprenticeship Officer and Succession Planning. Information was still outstanding in relation to the third review regarding adult mental health commissioning but a briefing note was expected in the next few days.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

7 **Work Programme**

Members considered a report updating the Scrutiny Board work programme for 2016-17.

Resolved: That the updated work programmed be noted and agreed.

8 **Post 16 Update**

Kate Howard, Post 16 Lead for the Council presented a report the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the Post-16 education and skills landscape and the strategic plan to deliver Post-16 priorities which had been endorsed by SEB in March and June 2016 and the Education Board in June 2016.

Members were informed that there were 5 Priority areas to support the Post-16 City strategy which were supported by an implementation plan, endorsed by The Young People Skills and Employment Group, SEB and Wolverhampton Education Board. The areas were:

- Priority 1: Improving Partnership and Collaboration
- Priority 2: Supporting Aspirational Attainment
- Priority 3: Ensuring Demand Led and Inclusive Post-16 Provision
- Priority 4: Developing a Skills Pipeline to Sustainable Employment
- Priority 5: Planning Capital Investment

Members agreed that Priority 1 in relation to forming connections was vital for young people as it would provide them with the essential guidance needed for them to consider how best to approach a future career.

Officers confirmed that in every strategic document the Council had produced regarding this area, there was guidance in relation to careers and that training was being rolled out in all schools by independent guidance leads. Officers stated that to date 12 schools had signed up for the first phase and that they were looking at working back down the school to include pupils in year 8.

Members reiterated the fact that collaboration would be key and queried what the role of the Council would be in the process. Officers stated that the Council would act

a broker and facilitator and that this role had been enhanced due to the fantastic evidence base that the council now had through the skills team.

Members did express some concern that the Council was not aspirational enough in approaching big businesses such as Jaguar Landrover. Officers stated that work was being done to get the learning routes in place to enable young people to progress into big companies at an affordable cost as at the moment many schools could not afford it.

Members stated that scrutiny had recently carried out a review into skills which had been led by Cllr Angus. Officers confirmed that the recommendations from this review were still relevant and being implemented.

Members considered page 4 of the report which referred to the establishment of business champions and a careers enterprise company initiative focusing on improving business engagement with all secondary schools across the City. Members queried whether this would focus on entrepreneurial skills. Officers stated that yes this was the main focus and that there would be 4 business champions in Wolverhampton committed to one school each.

Members highlighted a recent example where a course at the university had been specifically written in partnership with a demolition company to allow a student to achieve a relevant qualification thus showing that collaboration did work and that companies were willing to get involved. Officers agreed and stated that the introduction of the Work Box would help with this and allow officers to monitor and provide more case studies.

Members stated that vocational courses were very important and often led to good employability but that the money paid to apprentices was often poor. Officers agreed that funding could be poor and that officers were looking at ways to access funding and that the LEP was involved in this.

Members requested that information be provided before the end of the year regarding how many apprenticeships had been taken up.

The Chair queried whether there was still collaboration between educational sites. Officers stated that this was dependant on circumstances such as geography but that there was a focus on partnership working as highlighted in the report with an aim to maintaining the sustainability of the schools. Officers also stated that the Education Department had worked well in improving governance arrangements in schools and that GCSE results were rising and were now above the national average.

Members also stated the importance of ensuring that good teachers were able to remain to teach post 16 students in schools as it was often the support of a good teacher that encouraged young people to remain in education and pursue their career choice.

Members thanked officers for a detailed and impressive paper.

Resolved:

1. That the comments of the Committee be noted.

2. That information be provided in relation to the number of apprenticeships taken up,