

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People held on Tuesday, 29 May 2018 at 10.30 am at Cumbria House, Carlisle

PRESENT:

Mrs V Tarbitt (Chair)

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| Mrs C Bowditch | Mr P Dew |
| Mr B Eaton | Mr B Shirley (Vice-Chair) |
| Mrs EA Mallinson | Mr AW Wonnacott |
| Mr W McEwan | Mr GD Cook |
| Mr RK Bingham | Mrs A Burns |
| Ms C Driver | Mrs S Sanderson |

Also in Attendance:-

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| Mr J Macilwraith | - Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) |
| Miss H English | - Democratic Services Officer |
| Ms L Berryman | - Assistant Director - Children and Young People |
| Ms A Towers | - Senior Manager - Learning and Skills |

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr W Clark, Mrs S Evans, Mrs EL Williamson and Mr C Proctor.

2 MEMBERSHIP

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

4 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items of business on the agenda.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Under Minute Number 28 – Minutes, Cllr E Mallinson advised that she had attended the Local Government Association’s Community Wellbeing Board and discussed the Government’s Green Paper on Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services. An update would be provided at the next meeting of the Board.

Under the same item a Member asked for an update on the SEND self assessment. The Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) advised that the document was still a work in progress and Officers were awaiting some information from partners and therefore the document would be shared with the Board after going to CMT on 20 June 2018.

Under Minute Number 29 – Corporate Director Update on Ofsted Recommendations the Chair informed that the Notice of Direction from the Department of Education (DfE) had been removed and the Children’s Improvement Board had been disbanded. Nevertheless, members of the Board wanted to keep meeting and therefore would meet informally as and when required.

Under Minute Number 30 – Regional Adoption Agency, a Member asked for an update on progress. In response the Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) advised that he was due to meet with the governance board in the coming days and would be meeting with lead members from Councils over summer 2018. An update would be given at a future meeting.

Under Minute Number 31 – Child Sexual Exploitation Update, a request was made to consider a future item on the affect of home schooling and children missing from education.

6 DEEP DIVE ON APPRENTICESHIPS

The Group considered a report by the Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) which provided an overview of the policy and priorities for apprenticeships and the current Council apprenticeship programme. The report also detailed the outcomes achieved during the first year of the Government’s levy and public sector targets, along with an indication of the County Councils 2018 apprenticeship recruitment programme.

The Board scrutinised the Council’s role as an apprenticeship provider, employer and partner; and considered the role of the LEP in addressing the challenges of apprenticeships. The Board also considered whether the approach to apprenticeships was effectively addressing the needs of children looked, care leavers, children with a disability and children in poverty.

Members received a presentation from Mr C Ivison from the Local Enterprise Partnership and Ms A Towers – Senior Manager for Learning and Skills. The presentation provided an insight into the apprenticeships programme in Cumbria, with Ms Towers speaking about the Council position and Mr Ivison speaking about the County as a whole. The presentation provided detail under the following headings:-

Background

Cumbria had a strong positive track record of apprenticeships with 170 providers currently in place and 6,000 apprentices starting each year. There were three times as many young people in Cumbria choosing apprenticeships than nationally, second only to Derbyshire. It was advocated that Cumbria had excellent links between skills providers and employers.

Current position

The Board were provided with statistics illustrating the current position of apprenticeships in Cumbria, these included the apprenticeship starts by year, apprenticeship starts by district and apprenticeship starts by sector.

A question was raised regarding past apprenticeships, prior to the current year. It was explained that in the five years since records began over 250 apprentices were recruited, 93.5% of which, upon completion of their apprenticeship, moved directly into employment or higher education.

Skills Investment Plan

The LEP was working on innovative projects and developing new career strategies for Cumbria. As a result of the Skills Investment Plan; a Stem Lab, Husbandry and the Edge Project had been introduced.

Progress Against Public Sector Targets

The Board looked at Government targets and the Councils progress against these targets. Previous to April 2017 the Council would recruit on average 50 apprentices per year. In the year April 2017 to March 2018, the Council recruited 210 apprentices against a target of 250.

The Board also discussed the year 2 plan. It was advised that 70 vacancies had already been advertised for September and received 311 applications. A further 50 internal apprenticeships were to be recruited to for a September start.

An Inclusive Approach

The County Council had an inclusive approach which included a guaranteed interview scheme and offered pre-interview support for Care Leavers and those with an EHCP. In the current year, the Council had received 5 Care Leaver and 8 children with an EHCP applications.

The Council intended to target areas in Cumbria of the greatest need. A traineeship programme would be rolled out in Copeland and plans were in place to roll out in Barrow and the West Coast in 2018, with particular focus on Care Leavers, EHCP and NEET. The Council was learning from good practice through the national Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network.

Challenges

The following challenges and solutions were identified:-

- A lack of capacity and available work locations, this would be overcome by working with partners such as Health Trusts and other employers.
- A lack of confidence of staff in supporting young people with additional needs, this would be targeted by delivering training in mentoring, coaching and supporting people with additional needs.
- A lack of applications for apprenticeship vacancies in some areas, particularly Eden and South Lakeland. In order to address this, work was being carried out to raise awareness in schools and with parents and the LEP was also supporting career hubs.

Members thanked the presenters for the detailed presentation.

A question was raised with regard to the control of standards in apprenticeships if there was no qualifications to be received. Officers advised that the Institute of Apprenticeships was in the process of introducing guidance for end point assessments.

A Member asked for more detail regarding the low number of applications received in the Eden area. It was advised that a piece of work was being done to assess this matter in more detail and would be circulated to the Board once concluded. It was suggested that social media and promotion work be carried out to encourage applicants in the area.

A question was asked in relation to supporting applicants with disabilities, it was reassured that the application process is inclusive and support is given.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

Members received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised on a recent visit to the new edge of care home in Carlisle. It was explained that the home would be ready to take residents in the coming weeks.

An update was given on Foster Carer recruitment. The Cabinet Member advised that the drive was going well and the Council had received a number of queries from potential new carers. A number of tea party's had taken place across the County and had been a great opportunity for carers to meet others and celebrate their achievements.

It was advised that work was being undertaken with District Councils to reinforce the role of being a Corporate Parent. Further work would also be carried out to promote the role to Parish Councils through CALC (Cumbria Association of Local Councils).

The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning provided an update on the Alternative Provision, it was advised that the item would be discussed at an upcoming Cabinet meeting and the Schools Forum.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update from the Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) which discussed:-

- The upcoming SEND inspection
- The Extended Leadership Team restructure
- The Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Plan
- Pupil Premium

9 BOARD BRIEFING

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services which briefed the Board on activity since the previous Board meeting. The report also presented the proposed work programme and the forward plan of Cabinet decisions relevant to children and young people.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on 14 September 2018 at County Offices, Kendal.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm