

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Watling (Chairman), Miles (Vice-Chairman), Aldis, C Callender, Richardson and Tracey

Also Present: Councillor Turner

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Executive Projects Officer (Keri Lawrence) and Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford)

Also In Attendance: Jo Adams (Senior Youth Worker: North East Non-Centre Based Youth Service – Essex County Council) and Diane Rideout (Mid & NE Essex Quality Improvement: Early Years Foundation Stage – Essex County Council)

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chapman and V E Guglielmi.

10. MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Committee, held on 9 June 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

12. ESSEX YOUTH SERVICES – TENDRING YOUTH STRATEGY GROUP

The Committee received and discussed the results of a recent Tendring Youth Strategy Group (YSG) Community Action Panel (CAP) survey, including a report prepared by Phoebe Elam and Dan Harrison, young persons and members of the YSG.

Jo Adams (Senior Youth Worker: North East Non-Centre Based Youth Service – Essex County Council) gave a verbal update to the Committee and informed Members that from 1 April 2015 the Essex Youth Service was moving from being a direct service provider to one of commissioning and of support and advice to volunteers and community organisations to set up youth provision in their own areas. Ms Adams admitted that it was currently proving easier to recruit volunteers in Colchester than in Tendring though some of that discrepancy could be down to the availability and willingness to volunteer of students at the University of Essex. Ms Adams also informed the Committee that five key points coming out of the YSG CAP Survey were:

- (a) Increasing the availability of affordable clubs and activities;
- (b) Increasing access to affordable transport;
- (c) Decreasing the levels of crime, especially crimes involving the use of knives;
- (d) Decreasing the levels of drug and alcohol abuse; and

(e) Supporting young people to care about their local communities.

Ms Adams then answered Members' and Officers' questions on a range of subjects including:

- (1) The reduction after April 2015 in the establishment of the NE Essex Youth Service from 7 to 4 professional youth workers and the level of service that could continue to be provided;
- (2) The uncertainties surrounding the size of the budget post April 2015 available for commissioning and how that would be allocated;
- (3) The difficulties surrounding linking the Youth Service into local Schools;
- (4) The potential role the Council and individual Councillors could play in putting forward various community organisations and individuals to the Youth Service;
- (5) The current and future use of the 'Youth Buses';
- (6) The availability of Essex County Council owned buildings for use by voluntary/community groups; and
- (7) The training available for volunteers.

The Chairman (Councillor Watling) thanked Ms Adams for her attendance and her informative presentation and it was **AGREED** that:

- (a) Ms Adams would keep the Committee informed as matters progressed including providing details of those groups who are commissioned by the Youth Service in due course;
- (b) That Members and Officers provide Ms Adams with details of those groups and individuals that could be potentially involved in youth service provision; and
- (c) That the Council publicises the work of the Essex Youth Service on its website.

13. **INFORMATIVE REPORT**

The Committee received papers, updating Members on the following matters:

- (i) School Readiness
- (ii) Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
- (iii) School Governor Recruitment; and
- (iv) School Level Data

In respect of item (i) above School Readiness, Diane Rideout (Mid & NE Essex Quality Improvement: Early Years Foundation Stage – Essex County Council) attended the meeting and submitted a written and verbal update on the progress of the Tendring School Readiness Project. The update covered:

- (a) The background to the Project; and
- (b) The delivery of key strands of work such as:
 - (i) Supporting parents to develop the home learning environment;
 - (ii) Communication and language;
 - (iii) Physical development;
 - (iv) The transition between early years settings and schools;
 - (v) Developing best practice for the under 3's;
 - (vi) Boys – addressing underachievement and
 - (vii) Partnership working with health visitors and Barnardo's who deliver the children's centres.

Ms Rideout then answered Members' and Officers' questions on a range of subjects including:

- (1) Involving parents who are reluctant to be engaged or to teach their children the basics;
- (2) The importance of involving social care in some cases;
- (3) Concerns that multi-agency working is being forgotten; and
- (4) The level of interest and engagement being shown by Schools.

The Chairman thanked Ms Rideout for her attendance and her informative presentation and requested that the Committee be kept informed of developments.

In respect of School Level Data, the Executive Projects Officer (Keri Lawrence) gave a verbal update on the work of the Tendring Education Improvement Group (TEIG) including details of an emerging Strategy to raise pupil attainment levels. Ms Lawrence informed the Committee that Graham Lancaster, a Standards and Excellence Commissioner and an OfSTED Inspector would be attending its next meeting to talk to Members about this emerging strategy.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Councillor Miles) stated that it was important that the Committee drilled down into the data and its implications and outcomes for Tendring and she also raised her concerns about the lack of careers information and advice in schools.

The Executive Projects Officer (Keri Lawrence) then informed the Committee that Benedick Ashmore-Short (Headmaster of Hamford Primary Academy and recipient of the Pearson Teaching Awards 2014 for Head Teacher of the Year in a Primary School) had been invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed its focus for future work and it was suggested that the Committee should concentrate on a few areas such as:

1. Careers Information and Advice in Secondary Schools;
2. Teacher Recruitment; and
3. School Readiness

The meeting was declared closed at 8.46 p.m.

Chairman