
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Fairley (Chairman), Raby (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Bennison, Bucke and Cossens

Also Present: Councillor Massey

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Research and Projects Officer (Lizzie Ridout) and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice)

Also In Attendance: Jeff Brindle (Executive Principal - Clacton County High School)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Calver and Poonian.

12. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 22 June 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

14. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Jeff Brindle, Executive Principal of Clacton County High School to the meeting.

Mr Brindle said that he had been at Clacton High School for 21 years, of which, he had spent the last eight years as its' Executive Principal. He said he was delighted to be able to attend and speak with Members on this subject as it had been a matter, which had been close to his heart for quite some time.

Mr Brindle added that the Tendring Education and Improvement Group, established over recent years, had stated that teacher recruitment had been identified as the biggest barrier to school improvement in Tendring and, with this in mind, Mr Brindle went on to say that, geographically, Tendring, as a coastal area, meant that the recruitment of senior and middle leaders was both difficult and expensive and that very few universities within the region offered the opportunity to study for the Postgraduate Certificate of Education.

With regard to school-based training, Mr Brindle advised Members that initial teacher training (SCITT) had been set up by Tendring secondary schools in the early 1990s (North Essex Teacher Training (NETT)) and had successfully trained hundreds of teachers who lived in the area, the majority of whom, were employed in coastal schools. He said that Clacton County High School currently employed 18 ex-students as teachers and 30 since 2008, which was probably the highest proportion of this type in the country.

Mr Brindle said he believed that if schools could not get good teachers to come to Tendring, then Tendring people should be trained to become good teachers.

It was noted that a similar scheme existed within the primary sector, namely, Tendring Hundred Primary SCITT (THPSCITT), which, insofar as recruitment was concerned, had shown an increase in trainee numbers, over the five-year period from 2010-2011. A paper was tabled giving details of these figures, together with new recruitment and marketing strategies that had been introduced by THPSCITT, some of which had been introduced in conjunction with NETT as a local secondary SCITT provider.

Mr Brindle did stress, however, that the recruitment of high calibre trainees remained a key concern, particularly in shortage subjects.

Mr Brindle went on to speak about TeachFirst, which had been set up to develop leadership skills and was open to people who would like to “try it first” before pursuing a career in teaching. He said that TeachFirst’s remit was to recruit high calibre, passionate individuals to teach in schools serving pupils from low income communities. Whilst originally based in London as part of the London Challenge, it was, he said, being expanded to other parts of the country. Insofar as the East of England was concerned, it was noted that TeachFirst currently operated in Ipswich and Peterborough and it was hoped that local schools would buy-in to the scheme to enable it to be established and to flourish within Tendring.

With regard to key actions required, Mr Brindle said that existing school-based schemes should continue to be strengthened and that the primary scheme be encouraged to expand to have a second base in Clacton. He went on to say that there was the need to ensure buy-in from all schools, particularly in the primary sector and to enhance the advertising linked to both schemes. It was recognised that pressure was required to be placed upon TeachFirst to expand into Tendring and to look at ways of encouraging teachers to relocate into Tendring.

In conclusion, Mr Brindle asked if there was any way in which the Council could assist by putting pressure on TeachFirst and by continuing to look at ways to encourage teachers to locate to Tendring.

Mr Brindle then responded to questions by Members.

The Committee wished to record a vote of thanks to Mr Brindle for his interesting and informative presentation.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that TeachFirst be invited to attend a special meeting of the Committee, to be held early in the New Year, to address the Committee and to answer questions from Members before preparing a considered recommendation or comment to Cabinet.

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

15. REVISED WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 (Report A.1)

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with a revised Work Programme for 2015/16.

The report explained to Members why the Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee had been set up and that the appointment of new Members to serve on it following the May 2015 elections provided an opportunity to reconsider key areas of priority for the Committee’s Work Programme 2015/16.

The report also provided feedback from a facilitated workshop with Committee Members, Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Well-being and Partnerships, which was held on 29 July 2015 to explore the key areas of the Committee's focus.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. "Supporting Entrepreneurship and Self-employment in Tendring" be withdrawn from the scheduled business to be conducted at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 30 November 2015;
2. TeachFirst be invited to address the Committee at its meeting to be held on 30 November 2015; and
3. In consultation with the Chairman, the Democratic Services Manger identify a suitable date in early 2016 on which to hold an additional meeting of the Committee to consider the following business:
 - (a) The dearth of vocational training within Tendring; and
 - (b) Adult Education

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WELL-BEING AND PARTNERSHIPS

16. SCHOOL READINESS PROJECT: EVALUATION REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Portfolio Holder for Well-being and Partnerships, which outlined findings from an Officer-led evaluation of the school readiness work in Tendring, to date.

The report emphasised that every child deserved the best possible start in life and the support that enabled them to fulfil their potential. It was noted that the Council, in its community-leadership role, was committed to working in partnership in order to raise aspirations in families and improve educational attainment across the district.

The report also highlighted that, through the School Readiness Project, the Council, Essex County Council's Early Years' Team and Tendring Education Trust had worked together with colleagues from Health and children's centres since September 2014 in order to support children in being ready for school.

It was reported that the first phase of the work had focussed on two-year olds and engagement with early years' practitioners and that, to support the delivery of best practice working with two-year olds, best practice rooms, set up at the Tendring Skills Campus in October 2014, had been designed to offer a training centre for practitioners working with Early Years settings, schools and children's centres.

It was further reported that over 50 training sessions had been delivered to over 350 practitioners working in pre-schools, nurseries and children's centres from Tendring to Colchester and, included in that, 47 of the 50 settings in the Tendring area had attended the training with 98% of trainees commenting that the course had exceeded their objectives.

It was noted that impact of the sessions would be clearer once each setting had been visited by Ofsted but, in the case of the one setting which had been visited by Ofsted since its visit to the Best practice Room, the previous rating had been "good" and the current rating was now "outstanding."

In response to a Member's question as to what more the Council could do, it was reported that promoting reading at festivals in storytelling tents was being encouraged, with such an event being supported on 25 and 26 June 2016. In addition, Officers were aiming to acquire 4,000 "pre-loved" second-hand books from Members, Officers, local businesses and Essex Libraries for giving to each child who attended the annual pantomime in the Princes Theatre this year.

17. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS – TENDRING JOBS AND CAREERS FAIR

In thanking everyone for their contributions to the meeting, the Chairman highlighted the Tendring Jobs and Careers Fair, which was to be held between 10.30am and 4.30pm on Tuesday 13 October 2015 in the Princes Theatre and encouraged all Members of the Committee to attend.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.23pm

Chairman