

Crawley Borough Council

**Minutes of Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel**

Monday, 23 July 2018 at 6.00 pm

**Councillors Present:**

K Sudan (Chair)

T G Belben, R S Fiveash, I T Irvine, K L Jaggard and L Vitler

**Officers Present:**

Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Chris Harris	Head of Community Services
Ana Maria Maddock	Employ Crawley Partnership Officer
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Victoria Wise	Community Services Manager

**Apologies for Absence:**

Absent:

Councillor M L Ayling

**1. Disclosures of Interest & Whipping Declarations**

No disclosures or whipping declarations were made.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel held on 13 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. Witness Sessions**

The Chair provided some background information on the Panel and then witnesses were asked to offer views education, skills and employment in West Sussex and assist the Panel to understand the challenges the services face – now and in the future, together with the provision of initiatives and support currently being provided.

The Panel received a presentation from Ana-Maria Maddock from Employ Crawley which explained the background to Employ Crawley as “a collaboration between CBC and WSCC that offered a range of services provided by the public, private and voluntary sector to help local people get the right jobs and local employers the right people”.

Members were informed that:

- Employ Crawley ensures customers can access one to one support from a single point of contact, advice about finding work and how to secure job, direct from employers.
- It provides access to unique workshops and courses delivered by specialists.
- It provides continuing support when in employment with access to advice on how to develop a career.
- Activities include Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) Employability Programme, job fairs, workshops and community outreach. Work is undertaken with partners and businesses.

Following the presentation, the following views were expressed:

- Acknowledgement that upskilling of individuals provides an opportunity to aspire and build confidence.
- Recognition that many large companies exist within the town (eg Thales, Elekta, B&CE as well as CBC). There is a need to promote organisations.
- Acknowledgement of the potential barriers to employment that had been observed since the introduction of Employ Crawley.
- The ongoing work with partners and businesses strengthens the aims of Employ Crawley whilst highlighting the value of individuals.
- It was noted that further resources would benefit the support offered and upward trend in footfall and access to jobs.

Clem Smith, Head of Economy and Planning (CBC) had also been invited in order to provide additional information and a detailed update on the status of the Crawley Employment and Skills Plan (2016-2021), together with any current data. Panel Members received a presentation updating them on current progress and were informed that:

- There was disparity in average wage levels between Crawley residents and Crawley employees (*as documented in report PES/194*).
- There were 4 aims of the Employment and Skills Plan:
  - Development & Infrastructure – strengthen collaboration between CBC, developers, education providers and construction industry to boost opportunities.
  - Employability & Social Inclusion – increase employability of disadvantaged and hard to reach groups by helping them overcome barriers to work.
  - Business & Employers – enable discussions between training providers and businesses to develop new training courses to address business skills gaps.
  - Education & Schools – increase number of local employers taking on apprentices and expand local career advice and access to higher education.
- Town Centre Skills Academy due to launch autumn 2018.
- Gatwick Skills Laboratory will reside as part of Crawley College offer. Analysis will be undertaken for the Crawley Business Skills Gap Needs analysis to provide a menu of business training needs to feed into the Gatwick Skills Lab Programme.
- Careers fairs take place annually and enterprise advisors provide regular advice to secondary school students.
- The long term aims of the Employment & Skills Plan was for local residents to access better jobs and for businesses to grow by being able to recruit to fill skills gaps.

Following the presentation, the following views were expressed:

- Acknowledgement that there had been challenges in partnership engagement with higher education provision, however the work being undertaken in the

Employment and Skills Plan and the work with Crawley College and partners sought stronger partnership working.

- Clarification regarding the regular careers fairs and the businesses attendance. It was felt it would be beneficial for students to view a wide variety of organisations.
- Recognition that key priorities involved marketing the town in order to aspire young people and promoting the opportunities that exist.
- Acknowledgement that there was a gap in provision for adult learning and re-training was challenging. There was an opportunity for bringing training providers together to embark upon a solution.
- It was noted that aspiring primary school children was important and it would be beneficial to deliver intervention and careers advice at junior levels.
- Future investment from businesses may assist in the volatility of the job market, resulting in sustainable living and working in the same place.

## **RESOLVED**

That Panel Members thanked all witnesses for their attendance and contribution.

### **4. General Updates & Actions for Next Meeting**

The Chair updated Panel Members on work that had been recently undertaken:

- Visit had been undertaken to Crawley Open House and Chair's report had been issued to Panel Members.
- Head Teachers had been consulted upon with regards to seeking views on the Draft School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-2022. To date only two responses had been received and the Chair requested that should Panel Members have contacts with schools that this be followed up.
- Councillor Burrett (WSCC Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) had accepted the invitation to attend the forthcoming meeting. Unfortunately Deborah Myers (Director of Education and Skills) had since left WSCC, but a substitute would be attending. Panel Members were reminded to identify relevant questions for this meeting.
- Communication had been undertaken with a community/voluntary group who was interested in being involved in the scrutiny review.

It was discussed that there had previously been language, literacy and numeracy courses within the Council, which had been undertaken by Crawley College. However it was felt that the demand for such courses had decreased. Further discussions took place relating to apprenticeships, particularly those at the Council.

Following the comprehensive witness sessions the following actions points were agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That where contacts already exist, Panel Members contact and seek views from Head Teachers on the new Draft School Effectiveness Strategy that WSCC had been consulting upon.
2. That the Chair invite a representative from Springboard to attend the forthcoming meeting.
3. That Panel Members identify a clear set of questions to ask representatives attending witness sessions.
4. That further information would be obtained from the Council's HR regarding apprenticeships.

## **5. Recommendations**

Following the witness sessions and the actions points above, it was agreed that the following be determined for possible inclusion in the draft report.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That as part of the Employment and Skills Plan, consideration be given for bringing training providers together to embark upon a solution for adult learning and re-training (adult education).
2. That as part of the Employment and Skills Plan, further work be undertaken with the 'Information and Advice Group' (IAG) to engage with junior children and careers advice, particularly on how to assess pathways.

### **Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.05pm

**K Sudan  
(Chair)**