

## **LOCAL ECONOMY AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

MINUTES of the Local Economy and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Commission held on Thursday 6 December 2018 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Jon Hartley (Chair)  
Councillor Maggie Browning  
Councillor James Coldwell  
Councillor Bill Williams  
Councillor Humaira Ali

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER** Danny Edwards, strategy & partnerships manager  
**SUPPORT:** Liz Britton (lead officer for secondary and further education,  
employment & inclusion)  
Dolly Naeem, head of adult learning  
Kate Bagnall, family learning manager  
Shelley Burke, head of scrutiny

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Victor Chamberlain

**2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR  
DEEMS URGENT.**

There were none

**3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS.**

There were none

#### 4. LOCAL ECONOMY & LIFE LONG LEARNING OFFICER REPORT

Danny Edwards, strategy & partnerships manager, introduced the report and explained that the local economy team has responsibility for the council's economic wellbeing strategy. In addition, a number of partners have collective responsibility for delivery of the skills strategy

The skills strategy had been developed in recognition that the skills offer was not sufficiently plugged into employers' needs. It produced in a partnership - it could not be developed by the council and imposed on stakeholders. Employers were engaged - large and SME - plus business networks, schools, further and higher education providers, other training providers and learners. The strategy was adopted by the council in December 2017 and the team continue to work with partners on development of the delivery plan, building on existing good work such as the Southwark construction skills centre. The Passmore centre for higher level apprenticeships had recently been launched.

He explained the three key areas of immediate priority:

- how to replicate construction success in other key growth areas, eg digital, hospitality and health. There are many jobs and careers in those three sectors in the borough. How can the skills offer be geared up
- labour market information and forecasting - how to continue to engage with employers, plug them into the skills offer and capture their needs
- all age careers guidance

Liz Britton (lead officer for secondary and further education, employment & inclusion) explained to the committee that adult learning is primarily delivered through the Thomas Calton Centre. Southwark adult education is judged good by Ofsted. The service had 3000 enrolments last year and achieved 96% completion rate. She introduced her colleagues Dolly Naeem, head of adult learning, and Kate Bagnall, family learning manager.

Dolly Naeem stated that the service sustained average 3000 enrolments every year. Residents come for outcomes - qualifications/achievements. Many are residents who might not be ready to go to a larger institution. The service is successful in re-engaging the most disadvantaged and most distant from the labour market. They offer family learning sessions which attract families

who might not be reached by large colleges. She emphasised the role of literacy and numeracy in underpinning readiness for work. She explained that the service is funded by an allocation from the Education & Skills agency - success is measured by enrolment of learners, the length of their courses and their achievement. Poor outcomes from adult education can affect this funding.

Kate Bagnall said that because the service sits in the heart of the community, it is well placed to give good outcomes to people who might not otherwise access walk adult learning. They also support family learning in schools. They have found that parents who get started with learning may decide to continue to study. The service can offer English for speaker of other languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy. It is an entry point for adult learners.

In response to questions from the commission members, officers said that:

- family learning sessions take place in half term when the whole family can come. They also offer outreach sessions in schools
- while enrolment numbers are steady in Southwark, participation is dropping nationally. There is no way to capture evidence about people doing unstructured learning but all the research shows structured learning is dropping. All providers are struggling to recruit people who are furthest from learning. Funding is a significant issue
- the service believe they are the only providers offering pre-entry support for ESOL. Colleges start at entry level. It is resource intensive but a clear need in the borough. They offer 2 types of ESOL courses - those which do and do not lead to external qualification. 300-400 students a year. Need to maintain a balanced offering for all residents. They also offer combined courses eg sewing and ESOL - helping people with language they need for daily life eg how to support their children with homework or to talk to doctors
- there is a lack of destination data available – this is a challenge for the sector as a whole

The commission thanked the officers for the paper and discussion.

**5. REVIEW**

**6. WORKPLAN**

Members decided that at the next meeting they would be interested in hearing from employers and learners, to receive an update on the skills strategy task groups, and to discuss the council's plans for affordable workspace and how that might tie into the skills strategy delivery.