

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Wednesday, 28 March 2018
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors W. Johnson (Chair), P. Birkinshaw, G. Carr, Charlesworth, Clarke, Clements, Ennis, Frost, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hand-Davis, Hayward, Mitchell, Pourali, Tattersall and Unsworth together with co-opted member Ms P. Gould.

63 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Morrith in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

64 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

65 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th March, 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record.

66 Barnsley Adult Skills and Community Learning Service (ASCL)

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:-

Anne-Marie Holdsworth – Adult Skills, Employability & Community Learning Manager.

Vikki Annetts – Performance Improvement Manager, Adult Skills & Community Learning Service.

Councillor Chris Lamb – Cabinet Support Member, Communities.

The Chair noted that a Task and Finish Group of the Committee had considered the service approximately two years ago, which was led by Councillor Hand-Davis. The report was received by the Committee, and in the ensuing discussion Members asked a number of questions and the following points were raised:

- With regards to working towards a rating of 'Good' by Ofsted, all performance indicators were heading in the right direction with a particular focus on improving teaching and learning, and assessment to ensure a high quality learning experience. New teaching staff were in post and areas of underperformance being addressed with existing staff, consequently it was thought that performance was more consistently good. It was noted that a number of areas were thought to have improved previously, but more recently this improvement could be evidenced securely. Members heard of the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan which detailed actions down to curriculum areas.

Members also noted the sharing of good practice through regional and national networks to aid improvement.

- Councillors noted the recent interim support and challenge visit by Ofsted, which went well, with feedback provided being in line with the thoughts of officers.
- The Committee discussed how provision ensured the needs of each individual were met. This included a system in place to consider the needs of each learner on entry. Any issues or specific triggers were logged and once sufficient would necessitate an intervention to consider the reasons for this and the support required. In addition it was noted that teaching within the class was differentiated in order that the needs of all learners were met, and this included the needs of adults with learning difficulties.
- Members noted that a more sophisticated software package was being trialled, which would help staff to consider progress in more detail. It was expected that this would be rolled out by September, 2018.
- Members discussed the basis of employment of teaching staff and it was noted that these were permanent with term time hours. All bar 2 were fully qualified with both subject specific and teaching qualifications; those in question had one of these, but would become fully qualified with both aspects within 2 years.
- In relation to British Values, it was noted that their promotion was mandatory by all Further Education (FE) establishments, and much had been completed with staff to ensure they were properly equipped and had the confidence to ensure this was done effectively. Members heard how the service was working with other partners in adult education as part of the Prevent and British Values Group to share good practice.
- The meeting heard how the annual budget for the service was £2.1m from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which rose to £2.3m when fees were added. The service employed approximately 60 staff assisted by around 30 support staff. The average learner experience was 80 hours over 1 year part time. The Committee noted that witnesses were satisfied with the quality of teaching staff, but difficulties with recruiting the quantity required were noted. This was especially true for those with specialities in English and maths, however this mirrored issues nationally.
- The Committee discussed the take up of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, and it was noted that these were often oversubscribed in community settings as many community projects sought external funds to fully fund the courses for participants.
- Members heard of the overall gender mix, which was approximately 72% females and 28% males, though it was recognised that this balance was reversed for ESOL courses. Members noted that the high proportion reflected the national picture and acknowledged the efforts to encourage more men to take part.
- In relation to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, it was noted that approximately 46% of participants were in receipt of benefits, which is significantly above the national statistic of 14%. In addition it was noted that 23% of learners declared that they had a learning difficulty or disability, which was high compared to national rates.
- Members heard how those most disadvantaged were made aware of the service through networks working in the heart of communities; however it was noted that a prospectus was available for all to access. It was noted

that referrals were received from a number of places such as community safety, troubled families, and area council services; however referrals were not currently made from the criminal justice system.

- The Committee acknowledged that courses such as Health and Safety, First Aid, and Food Safety often provide a starting point for many learners and a gateway to improving English and maths.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the witnesses be thanked for their contribution and the report be noted;
- (ii) A link providing further information regarding British Values is provided to the Committee;
- (iii) A breakdown of the data in relation to ESOL learners including numbers and percentages is provided to the Committee;
- (iv) That the Committee receives further reports on progress, including feedback from future inspections

67 Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (TFG) Reports from 2017/18 (Reports for Information)

The Chair introduced the item, referring to the reports from the Task and Finish Groups which had been presented to Cabinet on 21st March, 2018.

Councillor Hand-Davis provided a brief introduction to the report produced as a result of the investigation of Asset Management within the Council. The investigation had looked into the impact of the Grenfell disaster on Barnsley, and it was reported that none of the estate in Barnsley was over 7 stories and no property was clad in the type used at Grenfell. It was noted that Berneslai Homes would consider the outcome of the national enquiry before making any further response.

The investigation also considered Community Asset Transfers (CATs) and the forms these took. Members were inspired by the visits to organisations that were now running assets successfully. However, also noted were the challenges faced by groups in running community assets, with volunteers now legally responsible for matters such as health and safety and employment.

It was noted that a review of the Council's arrangements for Employer Supported Volunteering would try to encourage the use of the professional skills of officers in assisting community groups.

Members commented on the very interesting presentation on affordable housing and it was noted that this would now be available for all members through an All Member Information Briefing.

Councillor G. Carr introduced the report produced as a result of the investigation into Public Health. The work focused on encouraging residents to take preventative action to ensure a better quality of life. The investigation considered the importance of oral health in children, and had recommended that a Member take part in the Oral Health Improvement Action Group. It was agreed that the details of this be circulated to Members with anyone interested to contact the Scrutiny Officer.

Members commented on the health disparities within the borough. Also noted was the impact of regeneration on improving the economy and the link between work and improving health.

The Committee discussed the work of the Area Councils and Ward Alliances in contributing to improving health, including improving oral health, but the challenges in changing behaviour were also noted.

Councillor Charlesworth provided an overview of the work of the Task and Finish Group considering community engagement, part of which had resulted in the changing of the name of the 'Barnsley Deal'. Thanks were given to all Councillors that had taken part, and the recognition given to Members in their role in the community. The recommendation, within the report, for Members to be made aware of all consultations taking place was endorsed by all, and the Committee noted the role of Ward Alliances in engaging the community.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That thanks be given to each of the Task and Finish Group lead Members in taking forward their respective investigation, and to all Members taking part in the groups;
- (ii) That the reports of the Task and Finish Groups on Assets, Public Health, and Community Engagement be received and their contents noted;
- (iii) That details of the Oral Health Improvement Action Group be circulated and Members interested in sitting on the group notify the Scrutiny Officer.