

Public Document Pack

PLACE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 8 November 2016

Commenced: 6.00 pm

Terminated: 7.15 pm

Present: Councillors K Welsh (Chair), Piddington (Deputy Chair), Affleck, Beeley, Bowden, Bowerman, Drennan, Feeley, Fowler, Glover, A Holland, Homer, Newton, Patrick, Pearce, Reid, Sharif and F Travis

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Whitehead

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair opened the meeting and received apologies.

22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 13 September 2016 were approved as a correct record.

23 ADULT LEARNING IN TAMESIDE

The Panel welcomed Jean Quinn, Head of Service for Adult and Community Education; Janet Symons, Learning Manager; and Joanne Hatton; Learning Manager, to receive an update on the adult learning services provided in Tameside, partnership work between the Council and learning partners, as well as future plans and aims for adult learning in the borough.

The Panel heard that the Adult and Community Education (ACE) service has been part of Tameside for over 15 years and is wholly funded by the Skills Funding Agency. In 2016/17, the total funding equated to £822,988. In 2015/16, the number of enrolments to the service reached 1,558 and achieved a success rate of 87%.

Over the last five years, the service has been moved from the Education sector of the Council, to Economic Development within the Employment and Skills service. This has proved to be a better fit for the service, helping to increase partnership working and raise the profile of the service in the Council.

In addition, following a relatively recent review of staffing structures the service was moved into Stamford Chambers in Ashton, as its single point of operation. Ms Quinn informed members that this improved governance has helped to ensure that the best service is able to be provided in spite of growing pressure on resources.

In addition, effective monitoring of the service is carried out to make sure that it is providing the best possible service for those enrolled. Users are surveyed to determine what the overall opinion is of the service, with latest figures showing that an average of 82% of users rated it as 'excellent' and 17% rated it as 'good'.

The service offers a range of courses from Entry Level to Level 2 with some providing formal qualifications and others not. They are targeted at learners who have barriers to learning such as mental health problems and mild to moderate learning difficulties/disabilities, as well

as adults who are furthest away from the employment market. Some of the courses on offer include:

- English
- Maths
- ICT Skills
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Work Skills

Ms Quinn advised the Panel that the ACE service also offers progression opportunities for learners, which helps to further the development of skills, qualifications and employability. The service also provides support in the form of advice and information, as well as more specific health, social and financial support when required.

The Panel heard that the service offers a specific Family Learning prospectus to ensure that courses and their availabilities can meet the needs of single parents or adults with similar family and time commitments. Other services can refer adults on to the Family Learning prospectus.

The service has developed good working partnerships and a streamlined support pathway between Tameside College and Sixth Form provision. The service is also linked to the Job Centre Plus, Action Together and Routes to Work to ensure that users enrolled onto courses have links to a range of other services to help in their learning journey.

On top of this, the ACE service has undertaken partnership work with Ingeus, a company that specialises in delivering services aimed at improving employment rates, access to services for young people, training and skills support and more.

Going forward, the service has plans to create closer working partnerships with other providers in the borough to further improve progression pathways for residents of Tameside. On top of this, work will continue to be carried out to raise the profile of the service, meet the specific needs of Tameside's groups and communities and prepare learners for employment.

The Panel asked what links the ACE service has to other important services such as adult safeguarding.

Ms Quinn informed members that the service puts a strong emphasis on adult safeguarding, using courses provided by Prevent to educate and train users on staying vigilant and safeguarding themselves.

The Panel asked for more information on the adult safeguarding work carried out through Prevent, as well as on the costs for different courses based on residents' circumstances.

Ms Quinn informed the Panel that these information requests would be dealt with and shared with the Panel outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

(1) That Ms Quinn, Ms Symons and Ms Hatton be thanked for attending the meeting.

(2) That Ms Quinn shares the additional information requested by the Panel outside of the meeting.

24 UPDATE ON CURRENT REVIEW

The Chair updated Panel members on the progress of the review of Bin Swap and Delivering

Future Improvements to Recycling, advising that the working group has concluded its meetings for the review. The third and final working group meeting was with Garry Parker, Head of Waste Services, who discussed the service's plans going forward to ensure that savings can continue to be made by improving recycling rates.

RESOLVED: That the report be circulated with the Panel once it has been finalised.

25 NEW REVIEW TOPIC

The Panel agreed to select Approach to Community Safety Partnership Working in Tameside as the next review topic.

26 ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP

The Chair invited the Panel members to express an interest in joining the new working group for the review of Approach to Community Safety Partnership Working in Tameside.

RESOLVED:

(1) That Councillors K Welsh (Chair), Piddington (Deputy Chair), Feeley, Glover, Pearce, Sharif and Travis will be joining the new working group.

(2) That the details of future working group meetings, with the information, dates and times will be circulated by email to the members.

27 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair informed Panel members that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations

28 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank