

From the Office of
Peter Davies
Mayor of Doncaster

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PD/JB

24th April 2013

Councillors Tony Revill and Hilary McNamee
Chairs of Regeneration & Environment and Schools, Children & Young People
Overview & Scrutiny Panels
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Dear Tony and Hilary

Regeneration and Environment/Schools, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Careers Advice and Guidance Review

Thank you for your letter dated 26th March 2013 regarding your Panels' review in relation to Careers Advice and Guidance. I note both Panels have made recommendations, and I have set out my response to each in more detail.

- 1. A report is presented to the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel in autumn 2013 detailing progress with apprenticeship programmes and progress of the Work and Skills Board, following consideration of the proposed Cabinet decision entitled Investing in Apprenticeships, Skills and Jobs.**

Reason: Panel members would like to be updated on the information that they have received in relation to the work that is taking place with by the Work and Skills Board looking at employer led approaches and what the framework will look like. Progress is also required on the potential delivery of an additional 640 apprenticeships and 320 people upskilled over the next 3 years through £640K grant funding provided to Doncaster Council to operate the Doncaster Hub (subject to Cabinet approval).

Doncaster's Apprenticeship Hub launched on 8th March 2013, and is being co-ordinated by the "Skills Made Easy" (SME) team within Doncaster Council. Funded through the City Deal, signed between the Government and the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, this team will effectively support and advise local businesses to take on apprentices. The aim is to create 640 new Apprenticeships in the Private Sector in the Borough, between now and July 2016.

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The range of support offered by the team to our small and medium-sized businesses includes scanning their skills requirements so they get the apprenticeship that is right for them, brokering appropriate training, advising on the range of financial incentives available through the Government, and supporting the apprentice and the business through the lifecycle of the Apprenticeship. Through this support, businesses will also have the training element of the apprenticeship paid for, regardless of the level.

The team has already taken forward some early referrals from businesses interested in taking on Apprentices, through, for example, existing business relationships with the Key Account Managers in the Council's Business Doncaster Team. To further increase business knowledge of our offer, a business engagement plan has been developed in order for other partner agencies to promote the offer to business on our behalf.

The SME Team is also maintaining a "talent pool" of people looking for an Apprenticeship in order to promote new opportunities to local people. As part of National Apprenticeship Week in March, the Skills Made Easy team organised an Apprenticeship event in partnership with Doncaster College and the Council's Children & Young People's Service. The event was designed to showcase Apprenticeships in a variety of sectors, resulting in over 300 people attending.

The team has also engaged with a number of local schools to promote Apprenticeships as a valid career choice, and has attended meetings with Careers Advisors. In addition, the team are planning to meet the Heads of Sixth Form on the 18th April, while plans are already in progress to organise joint Job/Apprenticeship Fairs with Jobcentre Plus. The first event will take place on the 23rd May.

2. **The action proposed for Careers Advice and Guidance School Governor Champions be supported and propose that co-ordinated support package/guidelines be developed to assist all appointed Governors, including local authority Councillors in their role.**

Reason: School Governing bodies currently appoint champions for specialist roles, for example, safeguarding. The establishment of Governing Body Champions was proposed for Careers Advice and Guidance, but this would be a voluntary decision made by schools. It would be approached and promoted through presentations to Secondary Head and Governors' forum. Member of the group was supportive of this approach although felt that they needed to be equipped with the relevant information, knowledge and support in order to undertake this role.

Actions to take this priority forward were discussed and agreed at the next Work and Skills Board meeting scheduled for Friday 19th April 2013. A number of secondary schools are represented on the Work and Skills Board, including the School Partnership Trust Group (Rossington, Don Valley, De Warrene and Ash Hill), and Campsmount Academy. In addition, Balby Carr has expressed an interest in being represented. This gives immediate access to a number of schools for us to pilot the Governor Champion model in.



3. **The programme, actions and priorities of the Work and Skills Board, be supported.**

Reason: The group showed support of the Work and Skills Partnership who had agreed the following priorities and delivery agreements:

- Priority 1 – Improve the employability competencies of those in Education;**

Providers, including Doncaster College, have produced a first draft scheme of work for the programme and this was considered at the April Work and Skills Board meeting 19th April 2013

- Priority 2 – Promote the value of apprenticeships and internships to businesses to make it easier to them to recruit;**

Progress against this priority was reported at the Work and Skills Board meeting on the 19th April.

- Priority 3 – Attract and retain graduates in the borough**

Progress against this priority was reported at the Work and Skills Board meeting on the 19th April.

The full set of priorities and actions to be delivered in 2013 can be viewed in Appendix 2.

4. **The proposed Cabinet decision; Investing in Apprenticeships, Skills and Jobs, be supported.**

Reason: Sheffield City Region had funding allocations of between £24 to £25m. It was agreed with Sheffield City Council (as accountable body for the deal with Government) that Doncaster Council receives £640K grant funding to operate the Doncaster Hub and stimulate demand. Access to the remaining funding is dependent on the level of demand generated through by Doncaster businesses. This will help deliver the additional 640 apprenticeships and 320 people upskilled over the next 3 years. The Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel recently supported these proposals which the group fully endorsed.

Please see detailed update against recommendation 1.



5. **Further investigation is carried out into how the parental role can be further utilised and access can be increased to career advice and information through the Work and Skills Board programme and actions.**

Reason: The potential role of parents was referred to and it was commented that they were an untapped resource that would be of no cost. It was felt that there is potential as parents have such strong supporting and influential roles in their child's life, however, concern was expressed with regard to how and what information was available to them. One suggestion was that perhaps the issue could be addressed through Parent and Teacher Associations, but ultimately this was the responsibility of the school. It was felt that the potential role of parents was something that should be looked into further.

The recent termination of the outsourced Connexions contract, and the bringing 'in house' of a small but focused service team, The Participation and Transition Service, will allow us to further investigate how we can reach parents. This will be a priority as the service delivery model is developed over the next six months.

6. **The work of the Children and Young People's Management Team in holding the remaining Local Education Authority (LEA) and Academy schools to account with regard to the quality of careers advice and guidance being provided be supported.**

Reason: The statutory guidance to provide of face to face Careers Guidance was transferred to Schools from September 2012 and replaced with the requirement to provide access to impartial and independent careers guidance. Meetings are taking place with all secondary schools to identify and evaluate the careers advice and guidance currently being provided. The group was pleased to hear that those schools not meeting the statutory requirement and that they would be challenged by the Schools, Children and Young People's management team.

CYPS management have already visited 16 of 17 secondary schools to assess their existing or planned CIEAG offer to their pupils against the statutory requirements. Where schools are not currently meeting the requirements, or shortcomings have been highlighted via Ofsted inspections, we are working directly with those institutions to advise how they can meet requirements in the future.

In addition, the recent termination of the outsourced connexions contract, and the creation of the Participation and Transition Service (PATS), a small but dedicated in house resource, has given DMBC the flexibility to offer potential services to those schools wishing to purchase from us.



7. **The development of a Doncaster Council quality mark to be awarded to trainers/employers be considered.**

Reason: It was felt that by offering a quality mark to trainers/employers in providing employment/training for apprenticeships would improve the quality and range of pre-employment programmes and training. A higher standard of service could also be established as well as achieving a certain level of information, provision and consistency amongst providers and recognition.

As above, this recommendation will be further investigated as one of the priorities for the developing Participation and Transition service (PATs).

8. **Consideration is given to what could be applied from the Barnsley IAG network to support Doncaster's programme, bearing in mind the differing landscapes.**

Reason: Further to discussion at the meeting in December, information was provided on the Network IAG in Barnsley, formed in response to the Borough's high NEETs statistics. This collaborative was formed to help schools meet their statutory duties and provide and impartial and independent careers guidance for pupils.

It was recognised that the system works well for Barnsley but it was noted that Doncaster's landscape was completely different to that in Barnsley, recognising that the Borough only had one college and one sixth form. The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the collaborative and questioned whether it was something that could be delivered through the Doncaster Association for Training Manager (DATM). It was felt that this was something that could be considered further to see whether there is anything Doncaster could apply from it which would bring benefits.

Consideration will be given to this recommendation as one of the priorities for the new PATs team. The development of an Information Advice and Guidance network in Doncaster will focus specifically on the quality of the IAG providers, operating and offering services within the borough.

We will undertake more specific research into how it operates in Barnsley, and adapt the model to suit Doncaster's specific needs.

I can also confirm that, as requested, your Panels will be provided with future updates as part of next year's workplan.

I trust the above is helpful, and would like to take this opportunity to thank you, and members of the Panels, for your recommendations and comments.

Yours sincerely



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