

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON 17 MARCH 2015

Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Mrs Cully , Farr (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Mrs Forder(P), Foster-Reed , Geddes, Hazel , Mrs Hook , Hylands (P), Scard

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Cully, Scard and Geddes.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

36. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE BOROUGH

The Chairman introduced Cllr Peter Edgar, Executive Member for Education and Phillip Walker, Head of Service, Hampshire Futures to the Committee.

Councillor Edgar advised the Committee that he felt that education had changed over the past 5 years as a result of a number of reforms and that Hampshire County Council had been commended on their pragmatic and sensible approach to addressing reforms.

The Committee were advised that previously school attainment and success had been measured by the number of pupils attending Oxbridge Universities; this had not reflected the achievement of those that undertook vocational training.

The Committee were advised that Hampshire County Council employed 100 apprentices and had held an award night to celebrate their achievement; in addition, the County had set a target of employing 1000 apprentices by 2018.

Phillip Walker advised the Board that Hampshire Futures was established to bring together functions that support adults and young people into employment and to encourage participation in education and training.

He advised that the local authority had two specific functions in relation to post 16 education, the first being to ensure adequate provision, but not funding, for young people to access post 16 education and training. Post 16 education funding was independently managed by the central government.

The second being the provision of an independent careers service for 13-19 year olds, or for those up to 24 years with additional needs. This had previously been delivered by Connexions but was now delivered in house.

Members of the Committee were advised that the Local Authority was not responsible for apprenticeships.

The Committee was provided with statistics in relation to achievement and attainment in the borough with comparisons to other districts, county and national performance.

Members were advised that there were many factors in perception of available post 16 provision. The willingness and availability of transport facilities was key, as was the cost of such travel.

Members acknowledged that often, students would travel significant distances to attend their chosen courses.

Members discussed the statistics of GCSE results in Gosport, members also discussed that there were currently 1991 Education Funding Agency funded students in the Borough, but currently only 1400 places. The Committee were advised that this excluded the 900 places at CEMAST, as they were located in Fareham, close to the border with Gosport. Members acknowledged that potential students would not necessarily view Fareham as over the border. It was also acknowledge that nearly 800 of CEMAST'S 900 places were full.

Members were advised that GCSE results were awarded a points score and that Gosport was seen to be lower than others, but that there were variations across the three secondary schools.

Members were advised Gosport was a hotspot for NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) but that there were less than the national average. Schools were working hard to motivate young people and challenging people to achieve, this had resulted in a slight decrease in numbers. Members were advised that rural areas often had greater levels of NEETs due to transportation issues.

An Internship Plus Traineeship has been set up by Hampshire County Council and was a programme lasting for up to six months, offered to young people who want to work and are aiming to do an apprenticeship or job, but through lack of experience, or formal qualifications, are not quite ready to take that step. Internship Plus is a specially supported opportunity for vulnerable young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Members were advised that Gosport had the best performing 6th Form College in Hampshire and that CEMAST had extended the options for student's post 16 education.

Members recognised the importance of retaining and increasing the provision available to young people for post 16 education in the Borough and welcomed the progression of Gosport College evolving to CEMAST.

Members thanked Phillip Walker for his presentation.

Concluded 19.20

CHAIRMAN