



Children & Education Select Committee
27 January 2014

**Information, Advice & Guidance Member Reference Group
Update**

Purpose of the report: To update the Committee on discussions that took place with the Head of Commissioning and Development for Young People in relation to the Skills for the Future strand of the Public Service Transformation Programme.

Introduction:

1. On 18 December 2013 the Member Reference Group (MRG) chaired by the Children & Education Select Committee Chairman met with the Head of Commissioning and Development for Young People to consider the Skills for the Future Strand of the Public Service Transformation Programme.
2. As outlined in a report to the last meeting of the Committee on 28 November, Skills for the Future is seeking to transform the education and training pathways for young people in Surrey aged 14 to 25 years. This includes proposals to reform Information, Advice & Guidance.
3. Officers are due to submit the final business case to Cabinet in February 2014.
4. This report provides an overview of the discussions that took place at the meeting, and the specific suggestions made by MRG.

Discussions:

5. It was explained to Members that the overarching intention of Skills for the Future was to ensure a better match between the skills required by local businesses and those of young people.
6. It was highlighted that the duty for provision of information, advice and guidance was on schools and colleges. However, schools and colleges had raised concerns in relation to the current arrangements and a recent report by OFSTED had been critical of provision. Young people had also flagged a lack of timely impartial information, advice and guidance linked to employers' needs.
7. Officers explained that the objective of the Public Service Transformation Programme was to improve services and make financial savings by shifting from expensive short-term responses towards preventative systems that intervene early to create better value for money and improve outcomes. In the case of the Skills for the Future proposal there was a case for investing money

in a more efficient skills development system for young people. By pursuing this, the County Council would ultimately reduce the number of young people claiming out of work benefits, thereby creating an overall saving for the public purse.

8. Central to the proposal was the concept of the Surrey Employability Curriculum, which set out the attitudes, behaviours and skills that Surrey employers required in young people. There would be mechanisms for employers to shape the Curriculum, and education providers would be responsible for embedding it into their teaching.
9. Beyond the Surrey Employability Curriculum, Members were informed that the new approach had three key components, as follows:

1. **‘Surrey Employability Mindset’**: This would ensure a comprehensive and impartial approach to Information, Advice and Guidance for those aged 13 to 18, and targeted 1:1 support for NEET young people aged 16 to 24. It was explained that the new approach would include 1:1 support, work experience, opportunity fairs, training and employment pathways, use of social media and local networks with employers.

2. **‘Surrey Skills Pathways for Employability’**: For Year 10 to 14 there would be blended pathways across schools, colleges, further education, higher education, training providers and employers. For Year 15 to 20 there would be integrated academic, professional and technical pathways for young people who were NEET. Pathways would lead to employability skills as defined in the Surrey Employability Curriculum, with local employment opportunities developed with employers.

3. **‘Surrey Young Adult Employment Support’**: There would be local targeted 1:1 support for young people aged 19 to 24 providing pathways to employment.

10. During the course of the discussions, Members made the following suggestions which officers agreed to explore:

- Students should have access to pathway tasters and work experience as early as possible.
- Schools should be encouraged to develop good relationships with local employers to assist in providing guaranteed work placements for students.
- Officers should strengthen the business case by highlighting the way in which it complemented existing policies / strategies around the Raising of the Participation Age and SEND Reform.
- There needed to be greater clarity as to how the new services would be provided, specifically the role of the Youth Support Service and how the work would link with existing schemes such as the Local Prevention Framework and Centre Based Youth Work.
- The value and importance of soft-skills should not be neglected. The current focus appeared to be on hard-skills, but employers require a balance of both.

Recommendation:

11. To note the work of the Member Reference Group.

Next steps:

12. If agreed by Cabinet, further development will need to take place before detailed proposals, including funding requests, are submitted to the Public Service Transformation Network. The Head of Commissioning and Development for Young People has agreed to keep the Member Reference Group briefed.

Report contact: Damian Markland, Scrutiny Officer

Contact details: 02082132703 / damian.markland@surreycc.gov.uk

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