

SKILLS SCRUTINY PANEL
MEETING 5TH NOVEMBER, 2010

Present – Councillors Critchley, Chadwick (substitute for Councillor A. Connell), Cottam, Cox, Harkin and Mrs. Ronson.

Also in attendance

Keith Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Andrew Donaldson	Assistant Director, Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Andy Walker	Head of Service (Enterprise, Employment and Skills)
Anna Hughes	Principal Neighbourhood Renewal Officer
John Addison	Principal Performance and Scrutiny Officer

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. Connell.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved – That Councillor Critchley be appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Critchley in the Chair

2. ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND SKILLS

Keith Davies, Director of Development and Regeneration, gave a presentation to the Panel detailing the components of the Council's long term economic strategy, what had been achieved and how the Council would respond to the changed financial context following the economic downturn.

The presentation contained details of the skills profile (from those with no qualifications to those with a level 4 qualification) of the working age population for Bolton, Greater Manchester and the country as a whole. The profile identified that Bolton was still experiencing a skills shortage across all levels which needed to be

addressed as the skills agenda would form a large part of the short and long term economic ambition of the town.

Members were appraised of the key policy areas around business skills and the skills required for both young people and adults if they were to form part of any economic participation.

The presentation concluded with details of the Council's short to medium term priorities and actions which needed to be taken if progress was to be made.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

3. APPRENTICESHIPS IN BOLTON

The Panel received a presentation from Andy Walker, Head of Service (Enterprise, Employment and Skills) which outlined the apprenticeship position in Bolton based on information provided by the National Apprenticeship Service.

The information was detailed under the following headings:-

- Bolton specific apprenticeship information;
- Employer engagement in Bolton;
- What the National apprenticeship Service were planning for 2010/11; and
- Performance and funding.

Following the presentation Members discussed the following areas/issues:-

- The phasing out of "Train to Gain" for apprenticeships;
- The impact of the loss of the Working Neighbourhood Fund which supported the Council's apprenticeship schemes;
- Over regulation by Government made it uneconomic for employers to sometimes take on apprentices;
- The need to identify those areas of the Bolton economy which were performing well;
- The reasons why companies were reluctant to employ more than 10 people; and
- Incentives to take people on.

Resolved – That the information discussed be used to inform the Panel's terms of reference.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Following a general discussion the Panel agreed that officers submit detailed terms of reference to its next meeting.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Panel agreed to meet on the following dates

10th December, 2010
14th January, 2011
11th February, 2011
11th March, 2011.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 27th November, 2009, and would comprise of

(The meeting started at 3.00pm and ended at 4.15pm)