

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 19 July 2021 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Babudu (Chair)
Councillor William Hougbo (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Radha Burgess
Councillor Karl Eastham
Councillor Michael Situ
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer (co-opted member)
Marcin Jagodzinski (co-opted member)

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eleanor Kerslake and Martin Brecknell (co-opted member)

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no items of business which the Chair deemed urgent.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor William Hougbo disclosed his role as Parent Governor at Tower Bridge and Snowsfields Primary Schools which is already on the register of interests. Councillor Karl Eastham disclosed his occupation as Teacher at the Globe

Academy, Harper road, Southwark also on the register of interests. Marcin Jagodzinski also mentioned that he is the Parent Governor Representative on the commission.

4. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting from the previous meeting on 20 April 2021 will be provided at the next meeting.

5. FUTURE OF WORK AND ENTERPRISE IN SOUTHWARK

The commission received a presentation from Richard Tyrie from GoodPeople containing insights and analysis at a local level amongst employers on how Covid has displaced various employment sectors with its new work patterns. The commission heard that work and health are mutually reinforcing and that the quality of work is a key determinant of health. Richard explained to the commission that unintentional and process driven systemic barriers exist through recruitment and HR, these can be mitigated by sharing best practices, bringing together local experts to shape practical and accessible guides for employers.

The commission noted that there is a need to work with local authorities and employers to shape a place-based inclusive employment platform. Richard also explained to the commission the need for internships, work-experience programmes, mentoring networks, flexible working and a diagnostic framework for anchor organisations to identify and overcome recruitment barriers, and map opportunities for hard to reach groups.

The commission also learned that although local employers favour local recruitment but encounter issues in doing so, one of the main reasons was a lack of digital infrastructure and this could be mitigated by having a more effective local jobs platform or talent pool which offers support to both employers and local job seekers post-Covid. Richard summarised the presentation by emphasising the skills complexities within the local job market and the need for funding, resources and support in addition to a collaborative approach needed for connecting local employers to local jobseekers.

The commission also noted that creating more digital platforms like the Southwark Works website for employers and job seekers to network would build a critical mass of candidates and employers would follow, this platform could also take into account issues raised by the commission, for example child care issues specifically affecting women in the employment sector and mitigate these issues by providing flexible working and zero hours contract.

The commission also received an address from the Genevieve Maitland Hudson, Deputy Chief Executive of Social Investment Business on how her organisation provides flexible loans to social economy organisations over a 14 year loan term

with flexible interest rates and terms, also further grants can be provided to businesses in need, in addition Social Investment Business also provide blended loans together with grants through organisations such as Access Foundation.

The commission heard that the trajectory of growth between a small scale start-up social business or incorporated charities and large scale fully established organisation is u-shaped due to restricted grants and investment at start-up levels, social businesses at different growth stages require different approach with regards to revenue streams and investments as they are unable to grow their business due to smaller profit margins at the early stages.

Following the presentation, Genevieve answered the commission's questions around the following:

- Scalability and sustainability of small scale businesses
- Examples of, and best practices of small scale businesses from other London boroughs that have grown into large scale businesses without a u-shaped growth trajectory
- Duplication of services already offered by large businesses which impede small scale start-ups and value in collaboration of such small-scale businesses with large scale business to create a synergy benefiting both organisations.

The commission noted that it takes a longer to grow a business delivering social services compared to businesses that operate on a business to business or a business to consumer model, for instance coffee shops such as Change Please when compared to social schemes such as Vulnerable Person Resettlement Schemes aimed at Syrian refugees. Genevieve also explained that such social schemes have benefited from injection of capital recently after a funding push from organisations nation-wide, social services delivery require a consistent source of funding. The commission also noted that there are pressures of lack of commercial spaces in Southwark and lack of skillsets to setup and deliver social services. Genevieve agreed there is value in collaboration between small and large businesses.

The commission heard from Genevieve on Local Access Partnership , a joint funding programme established by Access and Big Society Capital which has constrained capitals and is limited, it also faces some challenges due to its repayment structure which makes it unfit for investment in micro businesses, some other alternatives would be to bring in Pioneer funding to help invest in micro businesses along with established organisations such as Change Please providing repairable finances to such micro businesses.

The commission also received a briefing from Councillor Jason Ochere, Cabinet member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres on apprenticeships, internships and enterprise support on offer through the council. Councillor Ochere briefed the commission on the commitment on internships within the Council Plan 2018-22 to make sure that 500 young people from low income backgrounds get paid

internships with London's best employer delivered through the Council, schools and graduates.

The commission also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on the council's ability to support paid internships, however the council have now in place an embedded programme launched in early 2020 with three recruitment campaigns attracting 231 applications and has successfully on-boarded 33 interns at the council at London Living wage. Quality of internships is a challenge faced by businesses in the long term as a lot of internships at the moment are being offered virtually and schools were also less able to support their students to engage with the internship programme.

On apprenticeships Councillor Ochere explained that many were furloughed or made redundant, due to the pandemic and its effects on businesses, this mainly affected young people from disadvantaged backgrounds working in level 2 apprenticeships in the hospitality leisure and retail sectors.

Councillor Ochere also briefed the commission on Southwark Pioneers fund during Covid-19 where available funding was repurposed into a Business Hardship Fund in April 2020 as financial support to businesses during the pandemic. The commission also heard from Councillor Ochere on how young people applying for apprenticeships are being offered pre-apprenticeship support through the application process as part of the Southwark Works framework.

The commission also heard from Danny Edwards, Head of Economy, that all the apprenticeship and internships programs such as Career Ready are being reviewed as we emerge from the pandemic, this is a part of the Economic Renewal Plan looking into scalability and increasing access for young people to paid internships.

6. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) PROVISION - SCRUTINY REVIEW

Due to unavailability of external invited guests at this meeting the commission agreed to look into the possibility of inviting parents of children with special educational needs, Head teachers and SEND co-ordinators to address the commission at its 29 September 2021 meeting.

7. YOUTH NEW DEAL AND YOUTH SERVICES - UPDATE

The commission also received an update report from Head of Culture, Eva Gomez on the progress of youth related initiatives and services, the Youth New Deal was committed to £1m capital funding in February 2021 in response to the disproportionate economic impact of Covid-19 on young people under 25 who are twice as likely to be made redundant. The progress made on this deal is a result of

collaborative working across members and officers from different departments.

The commission noted the establishment of funds, Positive Future for Young People Fund with over £1m to commission activities for young people from 2022-2024 and Young People's Fund of £60,000 over the two years to enable young people access to certain activities where barriers of affordability and accessibility exist. The commission also heard from officers' on the progress made on the Digital Hub and the establishment of the first Youth Parliament with its first meeting in September 2021, and also youth focused audit of council owned spaces, progress on the development of youth programs such as Sure Start for Teenagers and The Nest in-reach.

Following the update, Eva answered questions of the commission, with the exception of questions 1, 2, 5 & 6 which required a more detailed level of input and specific information, answers to these questions to be circulated to the commission at a later date.

1. Youth Mental Health and working with organisations like CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) to promote better mental health amongst youth.
2. Approach of the Nest Program, outreach numbers of schools and students, accessibility for students who want to get involved.
3. Detailed Specification for Digital Information Hub and youth involvement in the process, possibility of youth consultation for going to digital marketplace for a supplier
4. Audit of youth focused council owned spaces, findings and possible changes that can be made.
5. Estimated number of students in Nest and current progress
6. Mental Health among young girls especially in case of sexual harassment, provisions or means of providing support when dealing with potential issues.

Eva confirmed to the commission that young people and parents will be consulted once the provider for digital hub has been appointed. The commission also noted that the audit of council owned spaces focused on the physical environment and the report will be shared with the commission at a later date.

APPENDIX 1. OFFICER RESPONSE - COMMISSION QUERIES YOUTH NEW DEAL (CIRCULATED POST MEETING)

8. THE SOUTHWARK EQUALITY FRAMEWORK [CABINET REPORT] 13 JULY 2021

Report noted by the commission.

**9. CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- FINAL VERSION**

Report noted by the commission.

**10. REVITALISING SOUTHWARK'S HIGH STREETS AND TOWN CENTRES -
FINAL VERSION**

Report noted by the commission.

11. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

Draft work programme noted by commission. The Chair asked for suggestions to the work programme which will be constantly reviewed over the next year.

Meeting ended at 9.37 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: