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Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 3 October 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT THE NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTRE, LIBANUS, BRECON ON THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT

Station Manager N Evans (Mid and West Wales Fire Service) (Chair)

Ms T Buchan (Powys Teaching Health Board), Mrs A Davies (Powys County Council), O James (Powys Teaching Health Board), R Parry-Wright (PAVO), I Rowat (Brecon Beacons National Park) and County Councillor A Williams (Powys County Council)

In attendance:

J Bevan (Strategic Business and Programme Manager), B Ledger (Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance Manager) and L Patterson (Scrutiny Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor A Webb (Brecon Beacons National Park) who was represented by I Rowat and Dr C Turner from Powys County Council (Lead Member for Step 6).

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th July 2019 as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

'Opportunities exist here for co-ordination of ~~bus funding~~ transportation and infrastructure improvements.'

The extent to which the steps were set or could be amended was queried. The Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance Manager agreed to respond to this query.

3. STEP 6 UPDATE

The Strategic Business and Programme Manager gave a presentation on Step 6 on behalf of the Programme Lead Dr C Turner who had given her apologies. (Copy filed with signed minutes).

Step 6: Develop a holistic approach to skills and lifelong learning, which offers a range of formal and informal opportunities, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

To achieve this Step it was clear that this could not be done in isolation. Three years ago the Learning and Skills Partnership Board set up a multiagency group Positive Pathways Powys as, having spoken to young people, it was clear that other than work or university there was a lack of knowledge about alternatives such as apprenticeships or a gap year. Positive Pathways Powys includes the following partners:

- Cambrian Training Company
- Powys County Council
- NPTC Group (Neath Port Talbot College)
- Secondary Schools
- Careers Wales
- PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations)

Are the Powys Teaching Health Board on Positive Pathways Powys?

The Health Board were invited to attend but did not take up the offer. This offer remains open. However, the Health Board do attend the Careers Festival.

The Health Board are working on Workforce Futures which would contribute to Step 6.

It is understood that Workforce Futures is a project on apprenticeships which is relevant to both Positive Pathways Powys and Step 6.

Does Positive Pathways Powys work directly with public services?

Not directly, but it does through the Careers Festival.

The Careers Festival is an annual event held for pupils in Years 9,10 and 12. Students from Powys Schools are invited together with students from NPTC Colleges in Newtown and Brecon. Learners from Ceredigion and Bedstone College have requested to attend. It is linked with Apprentice Week Wales, has run for a number of years and is growing in strength. The Careers Festival is attended by universities, training providers, businesses and the public sector.

Are out of county pupils charged to attend? Will the inclusion of these pupils result in a diluted experience for Powys pupils?

Bedstone learners were offered a quieter slot (between 1 and 3pm) when many of the Powys learners have already left the event. It is noted that Bedstone College has a catchment that includes a large part of east Powys and therefore Powys pupils would be within the students attending from this school. In addition, Bedstone pupils would not receive free transport to the event which is provided to Powys schools.

The Strategic Business and Programme Manager advised that in the first year, the careers festival was open to the public from 3.00 pm – 5.00 pm. However, this did not work as a large number of the exhibitors had packed up and left when the learners had gone back to their respective schools

The Showground is a central location and whilst it is expensive to hire it does provide a safe environment for such an event.

The Fire Service have attended the event and have been impressed with the stands that other employees have put forward. In addition to firefighters the fire service have a large range of other employment opportunities such as administrators, ICT , mechanics etc. The Careers Festival would be a potential opportunity for the PSB to engage with young people. Would that be possible?

The Careers Festival is an ideal opportunity as it is rare to gather so many young people in one location from across the county with approximately 3,000 in attendance.

What age groups can attend the Careers Festival?

Years 9, 10 and 12 are invited as these years are not undertaking public examinations. Students from NPTC colleges in Brecon and Newtown are invited as are pupils from the special schools in Powys.

There has been an increase in students from Powys attending out of county providers for their post 16 education. Is the Powys Careers Festival open to student's resident in Powys but attending further education out of county?

No, only students attending Powys schools have been invited to attend.

Would it be possible to extend invitations to students' resident in Powys but studying out of county?

The County Council do not hold records of students who attend further education provision out of county. The event is not open due to safeguarding issues whilst pupils and students are on site. The first year it was held it was opened to the public after pupils had left but the exhibitors left once the young people had gone. A meeting of the Learning and Skills Board is taking place imminently when this matter could be raised.

Promoting links with business is a longer term aim and to encourage this the Careers Festival promotes a competition 'What Business would you set up and Why?'. A prize of £200 is offered and the top 3 entrants are invited to a Dragons Den style final. The competition relates to the enterprise section of the Welsh Baccalaureate and this year was won by students from NPTC Newtown. The winners had an opportunity to present their business case to the County Council's Cabinet and Executive Management Team. This competition will be repeated for the 2020 Careers Festival. In addition, a competition is offered for students under 14 to design a poster to promote the Royal Welsh Show 2020 which would be to attract people from the Royal Welsh Show non-traditional audience. For example, how can the RWAS attract people from urban communities to educate them around where their food comes from and the value of farmers.

Did the winning business go on to become live?

The winning business was already operating. It is an app which promotes independence amongst the elderly population enabling them to live at home for longer.

Positive Pathways Powys is present on both Facebook and Twitter and during the Career's Festival has over 3,000 followers. It is in partnership with Careers Wales, Cambrian Training and PAVO and shows the apprenticeships/volunteering opportunities which are available for Powys learners.

There appears to be a lack of joint working between Positive Pathways Powys and the Health Board which needs to be addressed.

As well as providing opportunities for young people to explore career options the Learning and Skills Partnership is involved with the Adult Community Learning Partnership which includes providers of lifelong learning such as libraries, NPTC and Aberystwyth University. In the summer an Awards Day was held to celebrate achievement such as soft skills (for people looking to return to work), English, Maths, Welsh Language including to postgraduate level. It is acknowledged that further work is needed in this area.

How do people who seek a change of career access relevant information?

It appeared most organisations had an online presence for job opportunities or advertised on sites such as 'Indeed' but there appeared to be a lack of joint working between partners. This included a lack of knowledge from the work being undertaken under the arrangements for Step 10 (PSB) and the work on workforce planning being undertaken by the RPB.

The Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance Officer advised that the next meeting of the PSB/RPB Planning Group had an agenda item to explore the links and overlaps between the RPB and PSB.

The Strategic Business and Programme Manager advised that links were being made with the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) and the Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal. This partnership reports a skills gap is commonplace in Mid Wales and that it is proposed that a Skills Board is set up. The RLSP is a multi-agency partnership.

Does the RLSP include private sector members?

At the moment it only includes providers and the local authority. The Skills Board which is necessary for the Growth Deal to succeed will need private sector involvement. This representation is on the agenda for the October 2019 meeting of the Learning and Skills Partnership Board meeting.

Members noted the challenges of getting young people to locations to study or work with either a lack of transport opportunities to get young people to college or work at the right time or an expectation that a young person will have access to a car and parents or a family business which will pay to tax, insure and fuel a vehicle whilst they are studying or working in a low paid apprenticeship.

Have businesses been asked what skills are needed?

A Skills and Employability Strategy has been drafted. It is recognised that the future skills shortages are ever changing but currently there are shortages in social care, tourism and ICT.

Can PSB Scrutiny have sight of the draft Skills and Employability Strategy to undertake some pre-approval scrutiny of this document?

This request will be put to the Step 6 Lead.

What is the timeline and governance arrangements for the Skills and Employability Strategy?

The Head of Education leads on this Strategy and the timeline falls within this work. It was prepared on behalf of the County Council but fits into Step 6 of the work of the PSB. It has been done in partnership with NPTC and Careers Wales.

Members noted there are also historical reasons for local positions. For example 30 years ago there was a move to attract GPs to this area which was done over a period of around 7 years. These GPs will all reach retirement age at a similar time and a more regular turnover should be encouraged. It is important that the county has a mixed economy. Concern was also expressed about a lack of respect for some professions for example teaching which led to a difficulty in recruiting particularly to senior positions.

What skills do companies identify that they need from staff?

Both the Adult Community Learning Board and the Learning and Skills Partnership have spoken to businesses regarding the skills that are needed but it is acknowledged that more work is needed in this area.

Are the structures and relationships regarding skills and learning currently in place fit for purpose?

The identified links between the RLSP, the Growth Deal the PSB and the RPB will become clearer after the meeting of the Learning & Skills Partnership.

The Strategic Business and Programme Manager showed a video clip of a young person from a mid Powys school who had undertaken work experience with the County Council and had recently gained an apprenticeship with the BBC.

Recommendation:	Reason for recommendation
The Scrutiny observations in respect of Step 6 are prepared and shared with the Step 6 Lead and Chair of PSB	To provide the Lead and Chair with the view of scrutiny in respect of the current position for Step6.
That a chart is provided detailing the work undertaken on learning and skills between the partners across Powys including but not exclusively: Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board, NPTC, PAVO, the Public Services, the Public Service Board, the Regional Partnership Board, the Growth Deal, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership, the Skills Board, the Learning and Skills Board	to seek assurance that all the necessary links between organisations across Powys are in place and that duplication of effort is avoided.

4.	SCRUTINY VIEWS ON PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
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The comments from PSB Scrutiny Members already submitted were noted. The following additional comments were made:

- The written narrative provided for some clips was useful and it would be welcomed for all steps
- The extent to which the work of the PSB was in the public arena was queried. It had not been prominent in libraries and council buildings and thus the promotion of this work to the public may need further consideration

Recommended that

- The observations on the PSB Annual Report be submitted to the Public Service Board for comment.

5.	PSB SCRUTINY TRACKER
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The inclusion of the Scrutiny Tracker was welcomed.

6.	MINUTES FROM PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD
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The minutes of the Public Service Board held on 6th June 2019 were received. The meeting of the Public Service Board held on the 19th September 2019 had been observed by the Vice-Chair and Scrutiny Officer. The Vice-Chair observed that the PSB were also struggling with the relationships and responsibilities between the PSB and RPB. A presentation on Step 2 had been received but this appeared to be largely aspirational and lacking in detail and may be an appropriate item to consider at the next meeting of PSB Scrutiny. It appeared that attempts were being made to move the implementation of Step 5 to the Mid Wales Growth Deal and this was further evidence that the PSB are using existing partnerships to fulfil the Steps they have identified rather than fulfilling the original purpose of the PSB which was to encourage new joint working across all partners working within Powys.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The next meeting of the Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee was agreed for the 14th January 2020 with an offer for the meeting to be hosted by the Powys Teaching Health Board. This meeting would request an update on Step 2 and be followed by a scrutiny training session.

Provisional dates of future meetings are:

- 9th April 2020
- 16th July 2020
- 15th October 2020

N Evans (Chair) (Mid and West Wales Fire Service)