

Preparing Young People for Employment seminar 5.09.2012 – Draft Outcomes

Summary

The Children's Scrutiny Committee presented a seminar on the 5th September to discuss preparing young people for employment. The seminar was well received by all that attended and provided an opportunity to be informed of the current picture in Oxfordshire and hear the views on this topic both employers and principles in education. The seminar provided a snapshot of experience and opinions and it was clear from the discussions and enthusiasm that all attendees felt strongly about this subject.

Speakers included:

Sandra Higgs (OCC Business skills manager)

- Overview and facts on the current situation in Oxfordshire

Adrian Lockwood (Chair of the Skills Board and Managing Director of Integration Technology)

- What have the Skills board identified as the skills gaps in Oxfordshire?

Miranda Markham (Community Relations Director at Value Retail Management (Bicester Village) Ltd)

- A retail perspective on employing young people

Tony Green (Section Leader of Manufacturing Services at Crown Packaging)

- A manufacturing perspective on employing young people

John Hussey (Executive Head, St Gregory the Great Catholic School)

- How St Gregory's school prepares young people for employment

Ian Francis (Vice Principal Oxford and Cherwell Valley College)

- How Oxford and Cherwell Valley College prepares young people for employment

County Councillors, district council members and members of the Children and Young People Board attended the seminar which concluded with a round table discussion to answer the following two questions:

- How do we develop good employability skills in all of our young people (to ensure they don't become NEET)?
- How do we help young people to make choices about learning that will help them get a job in Oxfordshire?

Proposed outcomes and recommendations

It was clear from the discussion that this topic stretches over a wide range of work and there are lots of areas that could be explored going forward. This seminar was focused on addressing the two current questions posed and the proposed outcomes and recommendations reflect this.

How do we develop good employability skills in all of our young people (to ensure they don't become NEET)?

1. The committee would like to stress the importance of encouraging employability skills (for example resilience and dexterity skills) in our young people. It was recognised that education can play a key role in developing employability skills and this should be encouraged from a young age. It is recommended the council continue to engage with schools and colleges to promote this agenda.
2. Apprenticeships are a key way of developing the right skills for people to gain employment in Oxfordshire. These should be developed taking into account the local business need. It is recommended the council continue to encourage and promote apprenticeships suitable for the local economy and work closely with the colleges and employers.
3. Facilitate support for primary schools, secondary schools and perhaps parents to have information, advice and guidance about the jobs available in Oxfordshire

How do we help young people to make choices about learning that will help them get a job in Oxfordshire?

4. It was recognised that it is important businesses and schools have a relationship as the link between education and employment needs to be strong. Business participation in schools should be encouraged so young people are aware of the opportunities available which could shape their choices and encourage realistic expectations. It is recommended the council facilitate this co-ordinated approach and champion the technical, engineering and manufacturing sectors.
5. It was recognised that the current skills need in Oxfordshire will change over time and plans need to be put in place to shape this agenda. It is recommended that the council continue to consider findings from the Oxfordshire Skills Board to plan for the future.

These recommendations will be presented at the next committee meeting and communicated to the directorate.

If you would like to receive copies of the presentations please email lisa.burgess@oxfordshire.gov.uk