

PRESENT

Tom Hadkiss (Chair).

69 members and guests were present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Tom Hadkiss welcomed members to the 4th Quarterly Hull Business Forum. He indicated that the theme for the meeting was education and learning, which was clearly a top priority for Hull.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING: BUSINESS PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

Business Forum Manager Nick Pontone briefly reviewed the key findings of the perceptions survey which was carried out at the last meeting. The key messages were as follows:

- 91% of respondents said they looked for 'attitude' ahead of 'qualifications' when recruiting young people.
- Opinion was mixed about whether academic standards were improving locally, although more businesses than not felt attitudes were worsening.
- Respondents felt that parents had the biggest role to play in the development of young people, followed by employers. Schools, the Local Education Authority and the Learning and Skills Council came further down the list.
- Two-thirds of respondents either were currently or had recently worked proactively with a local school.

Nick Pontone emphasised that the survey was very much a snapshot of the views and perceptions of employers rather than a scientific analysis of the issues. He highlighted that the survey had generated significant local interest and was recently the lead story on the front page of the Hull Daily Mail. In terms of solutions, respondents had been given a blank space to suggest how education problems could be tackled and the Forum had categorised the responses into four keys areas:

- (1) *Discipline and respect* – a broader issue for society as a whole.
- (2) *Incentives and enthusiasm* – to encourage learning and enjoyment of learning.
- (3) *Academic and vocational balance* – GCSEs and A-levels were not as relevant to every school age young person, different skills need to be recognised.
- (4) *Management of schools* – the role of the Local Education Authority and quality of management and teaching in schools.

LESLEY GORNALL, DIRECTOR, HULL CITYLEARNING

Lesley Gornall, Director of Citylearning, Hull's statutory learning partnership gave members an overview of the education and learning agenda in the city. The key points covered included:

- Citylearning's remit was lifelong learning, a broader agenda than simply education.
- Adult basic skills was a major challenge for Hull with 49,000 out of the 149,000 working age population functionally innumerate.

- From September 2005, Information and Communication Technology would be added to numeracy and literacy as the third basic skill.
- Although GCSE attainment in Hull was relatively low, a relatively large proportion of young people were in vocational training.
- Employers had a major role to play in the learning agenda through workforce development.
- The Tomlinson Report on 14-19 education could have far reaching implications.

HELEN McMULLEN, CORPORATE DIRECTOR, HULL CITY COUNCIL

Helen McMullen, Corporate Director for Learning and Culture at Hull City Council gave a presentation on the Local Education Authority perspectives on these issues. The key points covered included:

- Significant progress was being made in Hull on early years development and primary school education.
- The city had excellent results for 11 year olds, particularly in English, although the 11-14 age group was more problematic.
- Hull had some excellent schools but needed more.
- Basic literacy and numeracy were very significant challenges in the city.
- The city, and wider society, needed to change the view that vocational training was second best.
- There was improvement in GCSE results, but not fast enough to meet local targets. However the rate of improvement was significantly higher than the national average.
- Short, medium and long term priorities were being developed and implemented to increase the rate of improvement towards national averages.
- The importance of enterprise skills and vocationally based learning were rising up the agenda.

Tom Hadkiss thanked Lesley Gornall and Helen McMullen for their presentations. Members then began discussions in their 'table workshops' each led by an expert in their particular specified theme:

- Strategic Area Review (Ursula Siegle, StAR Manager).
- Enterprise in Schools (Janet Brumby, Young Enterprise).
- Apprenticeships and vocational training (Peter Brown, Business Insight).
- Education and business links (Ken Markham & David Nelson, EBLO).
- Graduate retention (Carl Dawson, If graduates).

YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Members received three presentations from Young Enterprise companies including KH Smilers from Kelvin Hall School in Hull who had recently completed their programme and had successfully won through four local and regional rounds to reach the Young Enterprise national finals in London. Swish and Boxedin...fo were two newly formed Young Enterprise companies who would be developing their businesses over the coming months. Tom Hadkiss wished all the companies well and commented that they were shining examples of the talent and aspiration of young people in Hull.

HUMBER EDUCATION BUSINESS LINKS ORGANISATION

Ken Markham, Hull Area Manager for the Humber Education Business Links Organisation encouraged businesses to consider getting involved with local schools. There was a menu of ways to do this including the Childrens University, Young Enterprise, teacher placements, site visits etc. A list of these options and a registration

of interest form was provided to each member who was encouraged to complete and return.

In view of time, the panel question and answer session was cancelled and Tom Hadkiss thanked members for their attendance and participation.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The 5th Quarterly Hull Business Forum would be held on Monday 31 January 2005 at 4.30pm.