

**Not in Employment Education or Training  
Scrutiny Select Committee**

**6 pm, 12 January 2010**

**Present at the meeting:**

Councillor Ms P L Holland  
(Chairman)  
Councillor S Dawber  
Councillor B J Fagan  
Councillor W Rotherham

Councillor E Russon  
Councillor Mrs M J Whiteside  
Councillor W J Wilkes

**Officers in attendance**

Janet Lumley – Administrative Assistant Democratic Services

**.1 Apologies for absence:** Councillors Mrs A Turnock and R Winkworth

**.2 Minutes of the Last Meeting:** The minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2009 were approved as a correct record subject to the issues being raised regarding more detail, being considered for future meetings. It was noted that requests for actions from the previous meeting had been scheduled in for forthcoming meetings.

**.3 Whipping Declarations:** Government guidance expected Members of the Select Committee not to act in accordance with party whipping and that, if they did, they were to declare it.

There were no declarations made.

**.4 Work Plan:** The Committee considered a draft work plan indicating dates for future meetings and proposed items for discussion. Members felt that progress was very slow and requested the answer to the following questions as soon as possible and definitely before the next meeting on 27 January 2010:-

- could a Ward breakdown of the 976 youngsters NEET in the borough be provided immediately to allow members to identify if the problem was more prevalent in some Wards than others? The information should include a profile of the average NEET youngster and detail age, background and educational standards;
- had the total number of youngsters NEET altered at all since the last meeting;
- did some young people approach Connexions directly and how were the majority of NEET youngsters brought into the system;
- could the requested detailed case studies be provided;
- have Connexions staff looked into the home background and environment of those youngsters registered as it was felt that there was a correlation between families with parents who were long term unemployed and children who went on to follow a similar pattern. If this information was available were staff proactive in these areas?
- how many NEET youngsters had been placed in employment and what sort of jobs had they been placed in;

- when a NEET youngster secures a place in employment is their previous high school informed;
- how many of those registered have recognised qualifications; and
- what process was followed whilst the young people were still at school to identify those that were likely to become NEET;

There was a general feeling amongst Members that the lack of jobs in the economy as a whole was a major part of the problem. Many of the industries that provided apprenticeships for those young people who did not want to continue in education beyond high school had now closed and had been replaced by jobs in information technology, communications, finance and business. The type of jobs had changed, but the overall number remained roughly the same, resulting in those children who do well in education finding employment but those without qualifications losing confidence and needing a lot of encouragement. Many jobs were now part time and included shift hours which did not appeal to young people. Many employers were struggling to maintain their businesses at the current level and very few were expanding.

It was felt important to identify the precise profile of a NEET youngster as often people have a pre-determined idea which when investigated proved to be unfounded. Members identified a number of questions they wanted to put to the NEET youngsters who they were to meet at Connexions, including:-

- Why were they not in education at the moment?
- Why were they not in employment?
- Have you been given the opportunity to work
- Had they found that the type of jobs available were not suitable for them?

It was suggested that Members should consult the WISDOM system to help them understand the breakdown of those not in employment in their particular Wards and that information gained be brought to the next meeting. There was also a suggestion that the local Job Centre Manager be invited to the next meeting to explain the procedure his staff followed when trying to place youngsters in employment. Members felt that this was an issue which would be on going and in that respect felt that March would be too early for the Select Committee to be producing a final report

**.5 Purpose of next meeting.** Resolved: The Select Committee agrees the suggested work plan and the breakdown of items to be discussed at each meeting as a way forward and requests any information asked for at the previous meeting be provided as soon as possible and prior to the following Select Committee meeting.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.