

		AGENDA ITEM
		PSEG/33/14
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	27 November 2014	
Jobs, Welfare and Skills Task and Finish Group – Progress Report (Minute 8/ October 2014)		
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In June 2014 (Minute 5) the Committee agreed that a task and finish group be established to conduct a scrutiny review around national programmes linked to jobs, welfare and skills.

As reported to the Committee in October 2014 (Minute 8) the Jobs, Welfare and Skills Task and Finish Group has been meeting since September and a scoping document is now attached at the Appendix for endorsement. The document sets out how the Group plans to take the review forward based on preliminary research, and is proving to be an important planning tool. Nevertheless the Group is tackling a complex subject so it is important to stress that the scoping document is not a static document as it will need to evolve as the keys lines of enquiry are investigated.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

To endorse the scoping document as now attached to this report.

<p style="text-align: center;">Essex County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Document</p>
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This form is a tool that should be compiled at the start of each inquiry to set out clearly the aims and objectives of the committee's involvement in a particular matter, and will be completed at the end of the inquiry to confirm what has been achieved. The form also provides an audit trail for a review.

Review Topic	Jobs, welfare and skills: scrutiny of national programmes in Essex	
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Terms of Reference	<p>To consider the extent, if any, of local involvement in shaping the design and assisting in the delivery of national programmes which are linked to improving employment, welfare and skills in Essex.</p> <p>To consider how the Council and its key partners can be more effectively engaged with the development and delivery of national programmes, with the aim of improving outcomes for the residents of Essex.</p> <p>To consider how increased local involvement in the design and delivery of the national programmes would improve outcomes in Essex.</p>	
Lead Member, and membership of Task and Finish Group	Cllr Ivan Henderson Cllr David Kendall Cllr Simon Walsh	
Key Officers / Departments	Peter Cook	Head of Commissioning, Education and Lifelong Learning, Employment and Skills
	Craig Elliott	Senior Policy Advisor, Strategy and Communications
	Tim Rignall	Place Commissioner
Lead Scrutiny Officer	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer Jessamy Hayes, Policy and Strategy Advisor	
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Infrastructure, Waste and Recycling	

<p>Relevant Corporate Links</p>	<p>Economic growth of Essex</p> <p>Jobs and skills are vital to the economic growth of Essex. Currently there are multiple national programmes operating locally, including the <i>Youth Contract</i>, the <i>Work Programme</i> and <i>Help to Work</i>, that should be contributing to the wider economic growth ambitions of Essex.</p> <p>Ensuring that skills and welfare to work services deliver in a coherent and effective way is a key ambition of ECC. This ambition is reflected in the development of the <i>Economic Plan for Essex</i> and the <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> and <i>EU Structural and Investment Fund Plan for the South East LEP</i>. These documents went to Cabinet in Spring 2014.</p> <p>Contributing to <i>Corporate Outcomes Framework</i></p> <p>National programmes commissioned by Government departments (BIS, DfE, DWP) contribute to the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of working age people in employment • Percentage of young people aged 16-19 not in education, employment and training • Percentage of Essex businesses who think they can recruit suitable people <p>It is also believed that by making education, skills and welfare to work support more responsive to the market by being more business-led, they can contribute to delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job growth in key locations and key sectors <p>These feature in three of the seven outcomes in the <i>Corporate Outcomes Framework</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing • People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong-learning • Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses <p>Other links: <i>Child Poverty Strategy</i></p> <p>ECC is also in the process of developing a <i>Child Poverty Strategy</i> for Essex. The provisional research for this strategy has highlighted that the majority of children in poverty are in households with at least one worker. Hence there may be a connection between low-paid, low-skilled work and child poverty. Whilst this review is not intending to look at any measures to address child poverty directly, any improvements to employment, skills and welfare to work provision in Essex are likely to have an impact on child poverty rates.</p>
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Type of Review	Task and Finish Group
Timescales	It is proposed that the Group should aim to conclude its review, and seek the Committee's endorsement of its final scrutiny report in early 2015.
Rationale for the Review	<p>The purpose of the review is to challenge the design and performance of national skills and welfare to work programmes operating in Essex with a view to improving outcomes for people and businesses. Additionally, the review would also enable a spotlight to be shone on areas of good practice and highlight where things are working well.</p> <p>Skills and employment are issues of strategic importance for Essex in its pursuit of economic growth.</p> <p>Having previously contributed a significant body of local evidence and lobbying on these issues through the All Party Parliamentary Group, Local Growth and Skills and the Whole Essex Community Budget. Currently, Essex County Council is working with the Local Government Association and the County Council Network to influence Central Government to decentralise decision making and delivery of employment, skills and welfare to work provision to enable it to be more responsive to the needs of local businesses and more accountable to local people.</p> <p>The review would give members sight of an area of policy that impacts directly on residents in Essex. Members would attempt to understand better the design, delivery, performance and barriers and, where necessary, hold to account, providers that seek to address issues on employment, skills and helping people back to work.</p> <p>The committee would provide a valuable public arena to scrutinise issues of significance for Essex residents and strengthen the way that council engages at a national level. Members have a significant role to play in achieving ECC's strategic goal of local determination of this policy area.</p> <p>The Work Programme, which is the Department of Work and Pension welfare to work provision for the long term unemployed (i.e.) is due to be re-let in 2016. This review is timely as it will contribute to ECC's strategic influence over this currently disjointed policy area.</p> <p>This direction of travel is consistent with the <i>Whole Essex Community Budget</i> programme, the <i>Economic Plan for Essex (EPfE)</i> and the <i>Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)</i>.</p>
Scope of the Topic	Brief descriptions of the programmes that this review is likely to focus on are below. Further details on the background and emerging issues are found in the briefing notes for the initial task and finish group

meeting.

Welfare to work

- **The Work Programme** (commissioned by DWP)
- **Help to Work** (also commissioned by DWP)

The Work Programme is commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Help to Work began in April 2014 as a new set of intensive measures to help the long-term employed back into work.

Mainstream skills

- **Skills Funding**
 - Youth Skills (commissioned by DfE; administered by EFA)
 - Adult Skills (commissioned by BIS; administered by SFA)

Post 16 education and skills funding comes through the Department for Education (DfE) for young people aged 16-18, and through Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for those aged 19 and above. Whilst BIS is responsible for skills policy, the SFA is an administrative agency of BIS. The National Apprenticeship Service is a division of the SFA.

Current initiatives for skills

- **Youth Contract** (has three components, commissioned by three different departments – BIS, DWP, DfE)
- **Skills Support for Workforce** (commissioned by BIS; administered by SFA)
- **Higher Apprenticeships** (commissioned by BIS; administered by SFA)

The Youth Contract pledged by Government is national programme contained three main elements. Since July 2014, only the third is still underway. This is a programme of additional support aimed at 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (delivered by DfE).

National Careers Service (commissioned by DfE)

- Youth Careers: administered by the EFA
- Adult Careers: administered by the SFA

Included

The following is included in the scope of the review:

- How the programmes are currently performing in Essex
- How do the programmes work together and can this be done

	<p>more effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the local providers of these programmes doing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meet the needs of the hardest to reach groups ○ meet the needs of local businesses ○ meet the needs of locally targeted economic growth sectors • An examination of the providers' detailed targets and performance against them, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the number of referrals to the Work Programme that have subsequently gone back to Jobcentre Plus / are still unemployed; ○ the number of young people that remain NEET despite receiving employment, skills and welfare to work services • What strategies are in place to improve performance <p>There is potential for the scope of this topic to be broadened to consider wider employment and skills issues in Essex.</p> <p><u>Excluded</u></p> <p>The following falls outside the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision that is delivered outside of Essex • The mainstream education and training funding for 16-18 year olds that comes through the Department for Education.
<p>Key Lines of Enquiry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do national programmes, aimed at getting people into employment and equipping them with the right skills to progress into gainful employment, deliver effective results for the people and employers of Essex? • To what extent could local outcomes have been improved with greater local input into the design and delivery into these programmes? • How could ECC and local partners play a greater role in design and development of similar programmes in the future? • Is performance data and information about each programme, available, reliable and accessible to enable us to monitor performance? • What mechanisms do the programmes have in place to respond to local needs, including the need of businesses? • What is the Council's relationship with the local providers? • What examples of good practice can be seen locally and nationally? • What recommendations would we make to Government Departments to improve the programmes nationally and locally?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can the Council do to improve local performance?
Other Work Being Undertaken	The review would need to engage with the Employment and Skills Board, Employability and Skills Unit, work on welfare reform and responsible officers (as stated in scoping document), as part of planning for scrutiny.
What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?	Research papers produced by Strategy and Communications/ Insight and Analysis
What secondary / existing information will be needed?	Performance data (where available) for providers in Essex (and national comparators).
What briefings and site visits will be relevant to the review?	<p>To be confirmed based on the agreed scope of the review, and added to, as the task and finish group develops its understanding of the topics. This can be added to as part of the initial research to be undertaken by Strategy and Communications as well as by the initial planning meeting.</p> <p>Briefings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background briefing on key issues Background briefing on key programmes <p>Suggested site visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobcentre Plus (area to be confirmed) Work Programme providers (Seetec and Ingeus) <p>Conference attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conference visits will be continually scoped by support throughout the process.
Who are the witnesses who should be invited to provide evidence for the review?	<p>A suggested list of witnesses below. A comprehensive list is included as part of the briefing pack.</p> <p><u>National</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for Work and Pensions Department for Business and Innovation Department for Education Skills Funding Agency Education Funding Agency <p><u>Local</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Kevin Bentley

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECC officers • Employment and Skills Board • Job Centre Plus • Partners in the public and voluntary and community sectors • Local college/s • Private training provider/s • Work Programme provider: Ingeus • Work Programme/ Help to Work provider: Seetec • Service users • Essex Youth Assembly (as service users)
Implications	<p>In terms of topic, have the following matters been taken into consideration in the planning of this review:</p> <p>Legal implicationsYes/ no Financial implicationsYes/ no Equality and diversity issues..... Yes/ no Other critical implications.....</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p>From June 2014, the strategy function can offer support, including research, to assist in the scrutiny of these important issues.</p>
Indicators of Success	<p>Of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of how all parties can work together to improve outcomes • An action plan that all parties can agree to adopt to deliver outcomes • An understanding of the impact on outcomes for Essex residents <p>Of the expected overall outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in length of time people are unemployed • More people into gainful work and reduced benefit churn • Reduction in skills deficits in Essex businesses that impinges of growth • Reduction in child poverty/ in work poverty
Notes	

Provisional Timetable	<p>Suggested timetable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be able to conclude the review in early 2015 it will be necessary for the Group to hold a regular series of meetings throughout the remainder of 2014 to collate and review evidence. - Visits as part of the evidence gathering process. - Additional meetings arranged as needed <p>Any work and subsequent recommendations that relate to The Work Programme will be accelerated where possible to fit in with work to influence the Work Programme contract renewals.</p>	
	<p>September 2014</p>	<p>First meeting to plan review and timetable Consider initial research and background. Identify contributors (Send invitations to agencies and partners).</p>
	<p>October – December 2014</p>	<p>Collate evidence and take forward review Provide progress reports to full Committee</p>
	<p>January – February 2015</p>	<p>Reach conclusions and recommendations, and seek the endorsement of the Committee of the final scrutiny report</p>
	<p>NB: It is suggested that the focus of the first Group meeting(s) be upon developing an understanding of the local context as that will assist in identifying lines of enquiry as the review begins to channel its attention upon the delivery of national programmes. Contributors could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Kevin Bentley - Local ECC officers - Representative of Employment and Skills Board - Local business representative 	

Audit Trail

Date review formally proposed	Minute 5 / June 2014 (inclusion in work programme and abbreviated draft scoping document)
Date of Committee's approval of original scoping document	Identify minute number and date of meeting (Minute 5/June 2015 and xx/ November 2014)
Date of Committee's approval of Scrutiny Report	Identify minute number and date of meeting
What was the outcome of the review?	Summarise outcome of review and identify if any recommendations have been agreed.
Date proposals arising from review are formally forwarded to the Executive	
How will the outcomes of the review be monitored?	
Date outcomes of review monitored formally by the Committee	Identify minute number and date of meeting