

**Essex County Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**12 March 2014**  
**Review Scoping Document A**

*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.*

<b>Review Topic</b> (Name of review)	<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ESSEX</b>
<b>Committee</b>	People & Families Scrutiny Committee
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To identify the levels and trends in educational attainment in schools in Essex at each Key Stage.</li> <li>2. To evaluate how the levels of attainment compare nationally.</li> <li>3. Where underperformance exists, to identify the causes.</li> <li>4. To identify and evaluate all options to address the causes of underperformance.</li> <li>5. To understand the barriers to improving school performance.</li> <li>6. To understand the reduced funding regime.</li> <li>7. To identify how School Governors can influence improving performance.</li> <li>8. To make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to support improvement in educational attainment across the county</li> </ol>
<b>Lead Member, and membership of Task and Finish Group</b>	Cllr Graham Butland (Chairman, People & Families Scrutiny Committee)
<b>Key Officers / Departments</b>	Dr Tim Coulson, Director for Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning Clare Kershaw, Head of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning
<b>Lead Scrutiny Officer</b>	Robert Fox
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Cllr Ray Gooding
<b>Relevant Corporate Links</b>	To be discussed with key officers of the County Council.

<b>Type of Review</b>	In depth review
<b>Timescales</b>	An update on school performance will be brought to the People & Families Scrutiny Committee in March 2014 and this will be the precursor for the Committee to undertake an in-depth review of educational performance in the county throughout the civic year 2014/15.
<b>Rationale for the Review</b>	Priority 1 in the current ECC Corporate Plan is: <i>Enabling every individual to achieve their ambition by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county</i> . There are areas in Essex where school performance at both primary and secondary performance is significantly below standard. The Committee should scrutinise performance in Essex schools; but wider, in the new school world of Academies what is the role of the Local Authority and how can it plan strategically if it has little or no control.
<b>Scope of the Topic</b>	<p>Specify what is to be included/excluded from the review</p> <p><u>Include</u> The following is included in the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current and historic performance data for all schools in Essex (both primary and secondary)</li> <li>• Educational performance in neighbouring authorities and in statistical neighbour authorities</li> <li>• School estates</li> </ul> <p><u>Excluded</u> The following falls outside the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Educational Needs (this is subject to an ongoing review by Task and Finish Group)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Lines of Enquiry</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance data on all schools in Essex</li> <li>• An understanding of past and present arrangements for managing the whole school estate, and the influence of new buildings and facilities on educational attainment</li> <li>• An understanding of any influence the County Council can bring to bear on Academies. How does the Council fund the continuing services?</li> <li>• The information the County Council has on proposals for the establishment of Free Schools in the county</li> <li>• The role and influence of LA School Governors with regard to school improvement</li> <li>• An understanding of the reduced funding regime</li> <li>• An understanding of statutory requirements</li> <li>• An understanding of partnership working in local education with District/Borough/City Councils</li> <li>• An understanding of the Ofsted inspection regime</li> <li>• Understanding the influence of new buildings and facilities on educational performance</li> <li>• How do schools spend the Pupil Premium they receive?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Work Being Undertaken</b></p>	<p>ECC Policy Paper for Education Estates Strategy.</p>
<p><b>What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School attainment data to be received at the March 2014 meeting of the People &amp; Families Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Performance plans that seek to bridge the gap in educational attainment</li> <li>• Oral evidence from the Cabinet Member and senior officers</li> <li>• Support plans for schools in special measures</li> <li>• Details of staff vacancies across schools in the county</li> <li>• Information on the capital programme</li> <li>• Plans for schools to increase/reduce admission numbers</li> </ul>
<p><b>What secondary / existing information will be needed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School performance and attainment data</li> <li>• Ofsted reports</li> <li>• Information on the Pupil Premium</li> <li>• Existing legislation and Government reports</li> </ul>

<b>What briefings and site visits will be relevant to the review?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request specific briefings and reports from the Cabinet Member and senior officers of the County Council including current strategies, performance data, Ofsted reports etc.</li> <li>• Invite oral and written evidence from others identified in the section below</li> <li>• Commission specific research and consider the findings</li> <li>• Undertake site visits to relevant institutions</li> <li>• Committee meetings held in public session</li> </ul>
<b>Who are the witnesses who should be invited to provide evidence for the review?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• Senior officers from Essex County Council</li> <li>• Headteachers</li> <li>• School Governors</li> <li>• Faith and Denominational representatives</li> <li>• Young people through School Councils</li> <li>• Young Essex Assembly</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• District/Borough/City Councils</li> <li>• Experts on teaching and learning strategies</li> <li>• Youth Service</li> <li>• Designated experts on teaching and learning strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<p>In terms of topic, have the following matters been taken into consideration in the planning of this review:</p> <p>Legal implications ..... <b>Yes/ no</b>  Financial implications ..... <b>Yes/ no</b>  Equality and diversity issues..... <b>Yes/ no</b>  Other critical implications.....</p>
<b>What resources are required for this review?</b>	<p>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it is necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</p>
<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<p>The recommendation of service improvements to improve educational attainment in Essex to assist ECC in meeting Priority 1 of the ECC Corporate Plan .</p> <p>An ongoing role for Members in monitoring and reviewing educational attainment in the county.</p>
<b>Notes</b>	<p>Co-opt representative from the Young Essex Assembly onto the Committee for this review.</p> <p>Hold at least one of the Scrutiny sessions within an educational establishment.</p>

**Agenda Item 5**  
**PAF/13/14**

<b>Provisional Timetable</b>	<p>The Committee will undertake the in-depth review throughout the civic year 2014/15 with an aim to publish a final report with recommendations to the Cabinet Member at the May 2015 Committee.</p> <p>The Committee will receive a position statement at the March 2014 Committee meeting and establish the review shortly thereafter, following agreement of the scoping document.</p> <p>There will be six scheduled Committee meeting dates in 2014/15. There will also be other dates available for specific briefings, site visits or other activity.</p>
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**Audit Trail**

<b>Audit Trail</b>	
<b>Date review formally proposed</b>	Thursday, 16 January 2014 (Minute no. 7; pages 5 and 6)
<b>Date of Committee's approval of original scoping document</b>	Identify minute number and date of meeting
<b>Date of Committee's approval of Scrutiny Report</b>	Identify minute number and date of meeting
<b>What was the outcome of the review?</b>	Summarise outcome of review and identify if any recommendations have been agreed.
<b>Date proposals arising from review are formally forwarded to the Executive</b>	
<b>How will the outcomes of the review be monitored?</b>	
<b>Date outcomes of review monitored formally by the Committee</b>	Identify minute number and date of meeting