

Report title: Anchor Network Update	
Report to: Essex Health and Wellbeing Board	
Report author: Ian Davidson, Chief Executive, Tendring District Council	
Date: 16 th March 2022	For: Discussion
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To discuss an update on the progress of the Anchor Network across Essex, highlighting strengths and opportunities.

2 Background and Update

- 2.1 Anchor organisations are large, typically non-profit, organisations like hospitals, local councils, and universities. They are often referred to as having ‘Sticky capital’ (i.e. are unlikely to move given their connection to the local population)
- 2.2 Through their day to day practices, anchor institutions have the leverage to maximize social value through their role as workforce developers, employers and procurers, their core business (health and education for instance) and linkages to the place they operate. Anchors can have a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of a local community through their sizeable assets.
- 2.3 The Essex Anchors Network continues to grow with representation from organisations across Essex.
- 2.4 The Network provides a platform for members to work collaboratively on shared strategic priorities and support each other to unlock their full Anchor potential. It’s aims are to:
- 2.4.1 Connect anchors and local initiatives
 - 2.4.2 Directly deliver key anchor partnership initiatives and provide support to local anchor projects
 - 2.4.3 Develop communications and engagement material to support learning from anchor practice across Essex and the rest of the UK
- 2.5 Over the last year we have prioritised sharing learning and developing a consistent understanding of anchor organisations and the role they can play in supporting sharing prosperity and tackling inequalities across our communities.

- 2.6 The network has held a series of learning events to support this, covering issues such as the role of anchors in supporting employment, the voluntary sector and local businesses, and the growth of the green sector. These events have each attracted over 80 attendees as we have heard from speakers from across Essex and the rest of the UK. All presentations were recorded and can be viewed on the Essex Partners website at <https://www.essexfuture.org.uk/learning/learning-events/>
- 2.7 The network has also established a number of smaller working groups to take forward initiatives on key priorities identified by the anchor organisations. These include:
- 2.8 **Employability Programmes** – This group chaired by Ian Tompkins, Director of Corporate Services, NHS West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, will look at learning from and building on existing employability programmes, promoting the public sector as an employer and supporting people into our roles in anchor organisations, whilst developing a workforce that have the transferable skills that we require. This working group has two initiatives in development.
- 2.8.1 **You can** – The development of a public sector employability programme based on the youcan model which has previously been used to support people into roles in health and care sector.
- 2.8.2 **Recruitment campaign** – it has been identified through engagement with anchors that many are stereotyped for particular roles and the breadth of opportunities across the public sector is not always clear. The group are looking to take forward a piece of work on developing a cross public sector recruitment campaign that helps promote public sector in Essex. The aims are to
- Promote the public sector as an employer, showcasing the range of roles available
 - Build a workforce with transferable skills, confidence and resilience
 - Identify personas of the people we want to attract and target messaging accordingly
 - Provide clarity on career pathways for candidates and make it easy for them to see where they fit in
 - Show the reality of public sector careers and myth-bust some of the stereotypes that have been built over time
 - Demonstrate the benefits of working in the public sector
- 2.8.3 The first phase of this would be a research piece working with officers across the Essex public sector to help shape an overarching Employer Brand (narrative) that is authentic, compelling and differentiated, identify the priority audiences and key channels, communication and engagement opportunities.
- 2.8.4 **Essex Opportunities Live** – In addition to the above programmes the anchors network has been supporting the promotion of the public sector as an employer through the Essex Opportunities Live events. The Essex Opportunity Live Broadcasts are a brand-new

tool to help Essex residents connect to organisations and opportunities. They are short, high energy and interactive sessions which are run weekly through the Essex Opportunities Portal to showcase a broad range of training and employment opportunities. Viewers can ask questions through the live chat and get further support and advice afterwards. Previous events have included Apprenticeship's week, training for young people, and helping people to return to work.

2.8.5 Two Broadcasts were dedicated to the Essex Anchor Network. Ian Davidson, Chief Executive, Tendring District Council and Ed Garratt, SNEE ICB Chief Executive provided a short overview of the Public Sector including what their role is, the types of organisations involved, debunking myths, and giving their thought on why it's a great sector to train and work in. They also provided a brief introduction to the Public Sector Employability Programme that will be launched in the late Spring, focusing on what the course covered, who was able to take part, and how they could find out more information.

2.9 **Inclusive employment** – This group chaired by James Rolfe, Chief Operating Officer, Anglia Ruskin University, will be exploring the practices anchors can adopt to make them more inclusive employers. The two initial areas of work of this group are:

2.9.1 **Jobs coaches** – working with the targeted employment team we are developing a narrative to promote the role of job coaches across anchor organisations. We will then be using the working group to help promote Employment Practitioner Apprenticeships and the role of job coaches to their organisations so that they may support their own employees to address and overcome obstacles, therefore helping these individuals to secure and maintain employment. The aim is to get an initial cohort of job coaches from across the system to undertake the Employment Practitioner Apprenticeships. If partners would like more information on Job Coaches please contact essex.partners@essex.gov.uk

2.9.2 **Reverse jobs fairs** – we will be looking to hold some small pilot reverse job fairs before we look at more countywide events focussed on people with learning disabilities, people who have experience substance misuse problems, and ex-offenders.

2.10 **Social Value Learning Group** – Through the network we have identified that many organisations are only beginning to explore social value. To aid this and accelerate practice we have proposed a learning group to provide peer to peer learning on challenges and barriers, and successes of embedding SV across organisation. The group is Chaired by Kirsty O'Connell from Basildon Borough Council (Commercial Services Manager - Procurement). Around 40 people from across the public sector have shown interest in being part of the group and helping progress practice on social value across Essex.

- 2.11 **Environment and Green economy working group** - Finally we have the newest working group under the network to take forward work on the climate action and supporting the growth of the green sector in Essex. An initial meeting was held in January and the group will now be chaired by Andrew Urquhart, Sustainability Lead - Suffolk and North East Essex CCGs.
- 2.12 Next steps for the network are to increase the focus on areas for collective action setting clear priorities along the lines of those established by networks in other parts of the country such as Leeds, Preston and Manchester. For example, if Leeds saw a shift over £1bn of discretionary spend back into their local economy, what should we aim for across Greater Essex. With so many partners now brought into the concept we can look at how the energy and enthusiasm is focused onto some priorities.
- 2.13 We will also be developing tools to support anchors across Essex to implement anchor practice in their organisations and benchmark the performance of network members and monitor progress towards our collective goals. One action to support this is the adaption of the Leeds progressive framework for use across Essex as a self-assessment tool for anchors. The baseline and progression framework will be developed (subject to funding) with a selection of anchors and using this, we will set some clear targets and measures which we expect to support the ambition of other emerging strategies including those in the JHWS and against the levelling up work.
- 2.14 We will also be adding to the resources to support anchor such as the anchors ideas book available at <https://www.essexfuture.org.uk/media/1524/ideas-book-240521.pdf> with how to guides and further case studies.