

Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10th July 2013



Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
P R Barlow	Yes	F Ricci	Yes
C A Cadman	Yes	W J Rose	Yes
Dr R L Evans (Chairman)	Yes	A F Shelton	Yes
P Horner	Yes	J S Sutton	Yes
S A Howell	Yes	J R Swift	Apologies
R P Ramage	Yes		

9. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared:

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, all councillors remained in the meeting for all items and took part in the debate and decision thereon.

10. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

11. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29th May 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

At the Committee's meeting on 29th May, it was agreed that the Chairman would seek a meeting with Chief Executive to consider the Committee having sufficient time to discharge its scrutiny function (Minute 8). The Chairman reported that he would be meeting the Chief Executive on 16th July. It was agreed that Committee members would be notified of the outcome of the meeting.

12. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MOVING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) INTO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING**

INFORMATION: The Chairman welcomed the following invited speakers:

Andy Wright

Corporate Director, Braintree District Council

Peter Smith	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration
Nathan Rowland	Community Projects Officer
Dave Cope	Customer Services Operations Manager, Braintree and Witham Job Centres
Paula Hornett	Senior Strategic Commissioning Manager Essex County Council

Paula Hornett outlined the strategy of Essex County Council (ECC) on NEET prevention and reduction in Essex. The strategy has three strands of raising participation, NEET reduction, and jobs without training.

The participation strand will involve young people staying at school until they are aged 18 years from 2015. A document providing more details on the strategy was circulated to members at the meeting.

ECC figures indicate around 5.1% (242 young people between the ages of 16 and 19) as being NEET in Braintree district. 7.9% (409) people are also recorded as unknown in their position which concerns ECC as they are unsupported in their learning or progression into employment. ECC is aiming at a 4.0% NEET population across Essex.

Dave Cope outlined the role of the Jobcentres in helping young people who are NEET. The help includes a tailored approach to supporting young people into employment, wage incentives for employers, work experience and guaranteed job interviews. Jobcentres are looking to work more closely with communities and in NEET prevention.

Jobcentres believe the total number of young people aged 16 – 24 in the district who are NEET is around 1,000.

Braintree District Council officers advised that the issues for the Council include establishing where the Council can add most value in addressing NEET issues. Likely areas included encouraging growth and employment in the district.

Invitees provided the following responses to questions from members:

- There is evidence of growing skills gaps in the level of attainment of young people and the level required to move into education, employment or training. ECC believes this is demonstrated by a 14% reduction in apprenticeship take up across Essex this year compared to previous years;
- In an attempt to combat pre-16 year old disengagement in learning, ECC has introduced an achieve model. The model monitors risk factors likely to lead to a young person becoming disengaged in learning;
- A pupil premium is available in schools providing funding for those who have additional educational needs;

- The statutory duty for schools to provide work experience for pupils has been removed nationally. Schools are only required to provide work experience for those they believe would find the experience beneficial;
- Jobcentre NEET preventative work involves visiting school to discuss with pupils factors that are important in job interviews and social media related to employers;
- Jobcentres have also found one to one and targeted support for young people who require this support to be a good investment. Jobcentres also offer special disabilities services including signposting to more specialist services;
- ECC supports targeted youth workers who work closely with young people who have multiple barriers to participation. As regards, young people with special needs there are two groups. One has specific learning needs (having a statement within school) who work with a transition pathway and a learning plan. The other does not have a statement in school but is in need of action;
- The ECC and Jobcentre representatives shared a concern regard the group who have not had a statement in school as those in the group may be missing out on support that would be beneficial to them in moving into education, employment or training;
- Employer relationships are important to Jobcentres to encourage them to give some young people a chance of employment;
- As national funding for the Connexions service which provided a careers advisory service was removed in 2008, ECC disbanded the service in Essex. ECC has retained a small fund to provide a very reduced resource which provides a NEET intervention advisory service;
- ECC supports apprenticeships where there is an economic need (eg Engineering and Construction);
- ECC is working with other County Councils to develop a strategic approach across the region;
- People are able to register at any Jobcentre which is suitable to them in terms of where they live or wish to work. People do not need to register at a centre in the district in where they live;
- Through the National Apprenticeship Service, an employer grant is available thought to be to the end of the financial year. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to investigate the level of awareness of the support amongst employers;
- The ECC representative though she would be able to categorise young people who are NEET according to the factors listed by LGA as most likely to cause disengagement. The information would be made available to Committee members;
- Braintree District Council is providing apprenticeships. In 2012-13, the Council supported 14 apprenticeships across a range of services. The Council, working

with Greenfields Community Housing, has taken on 5 young people who are NEET to work in landscaping. The Council is currently exploring the possibility of local employers taking on some of those young people who have learnt new landscaping skills;

- Churn (young people taking on a short term apprentice only to return to being NEET at the end of the apprenticeship) is an issue for all. The aim for all is sustainable outcomes;
- Braintree District Council is establishing a scheme to subsidise 5 apprenticeships in Braintree town centre under the Portas Pilot scheme;
- The provision of information on labour markets is important before young people make choices on possible careers to help them avoid becoming NEET;
- Holding a Jobs Fair in the district was suggested as a possible way to help young people gain employment. Both the ECC and Jobcentre representatives said they would be interested in supporting such an event;
- It was suggested that the Council explores encouraging local suppliers to take on young people who are NEET. It was also suggested that the Council explores the possibility of using Section 106 Agreements in Planning Applications and Community Infrastructure Levies as routes to encourage employment in the district.

One member commented that some graduates are taking up employment positions for which they are over qualified for which will make the Committee's work difficult. Another commented that imparting realism in the career and salary expectations in some young people to help them avoid becoming NEET is also an issue.

Members agreed in addition to those possible invitees identified in the report, the following might be invited to a future meeting of the Committee:

- Probation Service;
- Braintree Foyer;
- Ignite;
- National Apprenticeship Service.

Members also agreed with the Terms of Reference and next steps as set out in the report.

DECISION: That the Terms of Reference and next steps as set out in the report be agreed and representatives of organisations listed above be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

REASON FOR DECISION: To agree actions in support the Committee's scrutiny review.

13. **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS – COMPOSITION OF GROUPS.**

DECISION:

- 1 That the Task and Finish Group reviewing Provision of Public Services in Rural Areas comprises:

Councillors Bowers-Flint, Banthorpe, Cadman, Finbow, Fincken, Galione, Horner, Johnson, Parker, Pell, Shelton, Swift (12 Members).

Chairman of the Group: Cllr Bowers-Flint.

- 2 That the Task and Finish Group reviewing the Operation of the Council's Tax Support Scheme comprises:

Councillors Allen, Barlow, Bishop, Canning, Cunningham, Gibson, Santomauro, Ramage, L Walters, Wilson (10 Members).

Chairman of the Group: Cllr Cunningham.

REASON FOR DECISION: To agree the composition and Chairman of the Task and Finish Groups.

14. **DECISION PLANNER FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2013 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2013**

DECISION: That the Decision Planner for the period 1st July 2013 to 31st October 2013 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.57pm.

Dr R L Evans
Chairman