

Overview and Scrutiny Committee AGENDA



THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING

Please note this meeting will be audio recorded.

Date: Wednesday, 12 March 2014

Time: 19:15

Venue: Council Chamber, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB

Membership:

Councillor P R Barlow
Councillor C A Cadman
Councillor Dr R L Evans (Chairman)
Councillor P Horner
Councillor S A Howell
Councillor R P Ramage

Councillor F Ricci
Councillor W J Rose
Councillor A F Shelton
Councillor J S Sutton
Councillor J R Swift

Members are requested to attend this meeting, to transact the following business:-

PUBLIC SESSION

1 Apologies for Absence.

2 Members Declarations

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.
2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.

3 Public Question Time

(See paragraph below).

4 Minutes of Last Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny held on 29th January 2014 (copy previously circulated).

5 Scrutiny Review - Enabling Young People in to Education, Employment or Training

5a Continuation of the Review - Discussions with Jobcentre Plus and Essex Employment Skills Board 5 - 10

5b Next Steps in the Review 11 - 18

6 Decision Planner

To consider the Decision Planner for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st July 2014 previously circulated).

7 Urgent Business - Public Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

8 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

At the time of compiling the agenda there were none.

PRIVATE SESSION

9 Urgent Business - Private Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in private by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

A PEACE
Member Services Manager

Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact Alastair Peace on 01376 552525 extension 2602 or e-mail alastair.peace@braintree.gov.uk

Public Question Time

Immediately after the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved there will be a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak.

Members of the public wishing to speak should contact the Council's Member Services Section on 01376 552525 or email chloe.glock@braintree.gov.uk at least 2 working days prior to the meeting.

Members of the public can remain to observe the whole of the public part of the meeting.

Health and Safety

Any persons attending meetings at Causeway House are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of a continuous alarm sounding during the meeting, you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by a Council officer who will identify him/herself should the alarm sound. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that your mobile phone is either switched to silent or switched off during the meeting.

Comments

Braintree District Council welcomes comments from members of the public in order to make its services as efficient and effective as possible. We would appreciate any suggestions regarding the usefulness of the paperwork for this meeting, or the conduct of the meeting you have attended.

Please let us have your comments setting out the following information

Meeting Attended..... Date of Meeting.....
Comment.....
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Contact Details:

Scrutiny Review of Enabling Young People Who Are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to Participate in Education, Employment or Training- Discussions with Jobcentre Plus and Essex Employment Skills Board		Agenda No: 5a						
Corporate Priorities:	Building a prosperous district Boost employment skills and support business People feel good Supporting vulnerable people in our community							
Report presented by:	Councillor Dr Evans, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee							
Report prepared by:	Alastair Peace, Member Services Manager							
Background Papers:	Public Report							
Options:	Key Decision: No							
Executive Summary:								
<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scrutinising enabling young people in the Braintree district who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to participate in education, employment or training as its main scrutiny topic for 2013-14.</p> <p>As part of the review, the Committee has discussed NEET issues with a wide range of stakeholders with the aim completing and agreeing its scrutiny report early in 2014-15.</p> <p>This agenda item continues the review with the following:</p>								
<table><tr><th>Invitee</th><th>Topic</th></tr><tr><td>Dave Cope, Manager, Jobcentre Plus, Braintree</td><td>Further discussion with Jobcentre Plus in relation to findings in the review to date.</td></tr><tr><td>Peter Cook Head of Employability and Skills Essex County Council</td><td>Discussion in relation to the Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB).</td></tr></table>			Invitee	Topic	Dave Cope, Manager, Jobcentre Plus, Braintree	Further discussion with Jobcentre Plus in relation to findings in the review to date.	Peter Cook Head of Employability and Skills Essex County Council	Discussion in relation to the Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB).
Invitee	Topic							
Dave Cope, Manager, Jobcentre Plus, Braintree	Further discussion with Jobcentre Plus in relation to findings in the review to date.							
Peter Cook Head of Employability and Skills Essex County Council	Discussion in relation to the Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB).							

A summary of the findings to date in relation to Jobcentre Plus and a brief outline of the role of the ESB are set out in this report.

Decision:

Members are invited to continue the Committee's scrutiny review with the invitees.

Purpose of Decision: To continue the Committee's scrutiny review.

Corporate Implications

Financial:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	None arising from this report.
Equalities/Diversity	To be considered in the review.
Customer Impact:	To be considered in the review.
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising from this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Young people who are or have experienced being NEET and various stakeholder organisations supporting people who are NEET are being consulted.
Risks:	None arising from this report.
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Review of Enabling Young People who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to Participate in Education, Employment or Training

Summary of the Findings in Relation to Jobcentre Plus and Brief Outline of the Role of the Essex Employment and Skills Board

1. Jobcentre Plus – Review Findings

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Jobcentre Plus has a key role in helping young people who are NEET into employment. Jobcentre Plus advised the Committee that the help it provides includes a tailored approach to supporting young people into employment, wage incentives for employers, work experience and guaranteed job interviews. Jobcentre Plus is also looking to work more closely with communities and in NEET prevention.
- 1.1.2. Jobcentre Plus advised that it has found one to one and targeted support for young people who require this support to be a particularly good investment in helping young people in to employment.
- 1.1.3. Jobcentre Plus has also been supportive in helping young people in to work by recently supporting a youth job fair in Braintree Town Hall.

1.2. Job Interview Skills

- 1.2.1. The work of Jobcentre Plus in helping young job seekers includes providing courses on completing job application forms. Several young job seekers advised the Committee that they had attended the same or similar courses on several occasions. However, it appears that there is no opportunity for completed job applications forms to be reviewed. As a result, these forms may contain weaknesses which job seekers are making repeatedly in their job applications.
- 1.2.2. Therefore, Members may wish to consider with Jobcentre Plus a recommendation that Jobcentre Plus reviews its support for young job seekers in completing job application forms and includes the opportunity for forms to be reviewed. Funding for this might come from avoiding job seekers attending repeat courses on completing the forms.

1.3. Communication with Young People

- 1.3.1. The Committee held 3 informal and 1 formal meeting with young people and youth support workers. In all meetings, young people expressed communication issues with Jobcentre Plus staff. Members may wish to

consider with Jobcentre Plus a recommendation that Jobcentre Plus reviews its communication with young job seekers.

1.4. Communication with Businesses

1.4.1. Jobcentre Plus recognises the importance of its employer relationships in encouraging employers to give some young people a chance of employment. From its discussions with young people, Members recognise that giving young people a chance is important and that Jobcentre might wish to further develop its relationships with employers.

1.4.2. However, the Committee also heard from directors of a large business employer in the district who were looking to recruit a significant number of people. Similarly to young people, the directors advised had experienced communication issues with Jobcentre Plus. Members may wish to consider a recommendation that Jobcentre Plus reviews its communication locally with businesses in the district.

1.5. Sanctions

1.5.1. In the review, Members have recognised the need for effective sanctions to ensure that job seekers are effectively seeking work. However, young people repeatedly expressed concerns to Committee Members at the fairness of some sanctions imposed by Jobcentre Plus and the independence of the review of Job Seekers Allowance sanction.

1.5.2. The Government has commissioned an Independent Review of Jobseekers Allowance Sanctions which is expected to be presented to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the spring. In the meantime, the Members may wish to consider a recommendation that Jobcentre Plus reviews the implementation of its sanctions policies locally.

2. Essex Employment Skills Board

2.1. Background

2.1.1. The Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB) brings together large employers, Small Medium-sized Enterprises, Business membership groups, colleges, universities and local government. The ESB was established in July 2013 in recognition of the need for employers to play a far more prominent role in the publically funded skills system to achieve the best (value) outcomes for individuals and the economy.

2.1.2. The rationale for membership of the ESB is to ensure that the County's growth sectors (i.e. growth for skills / employment) are represented as well as achieving geographical coverage. The ESB will move to full Board

status in April 2014 and is currently considering extending membership to growth sectors not currently represented (i.e. health and logistics).

- 2.1.3. An important remit for the Board is to engage with the wider business community. This is being achieved via events, a website (<http://esb.essexpartnership.org>) and through engagement with local forums. The work of the ESB is underpinned by a comprehensive Essex Skills Evidence Base which identifies growth sectors and will be updated regularly enabling sector reports to Board members (i.e. current vacancies in their sector). The Evidence Base has also helped the Board to identify the new sectors that need to be represented.
- 2.1.4. The overwhelming feedback from local businesses is that there are skills shortages and recruitment challenges at a time when youth unemployment is high with a need to ensure that young people are properly equipped for future careers. Whilst many colleges and providers are responding to industry needs, a mismatch between what employers need and the training on offer has been identified.
- 2.1.5. To help place equal importance on young people being appropriately skilled for the jobs market and to support UK economic growth, the Board's mission is to help create the most productive and responsive skills system in the country, ensuring businesses have a workforce with the skill sets they need to thrive and young people have the ambition and skills that will advantage them when competing in the labour market.

2.2. Objectives of the Board

2.2.1. The Board has the following objectives to help achieve its mission:

- To ensure the creation of a robust evidence base for skills and to use this to develop an executable five year business plan which incorporates an implementation plan and is reviewed annually;
- to support the deployment of the new enabling mechanisms which contribute to the closer alignment of skills provision and business need – including an online employer portal and the Essex Skills Investment Fund (ESIF);
- to champion involvement and participation in the skills system by engaging widely with businesses through disseminating information from the Board and by creating the conditions which allow the views of interested businesses to be taken into consideration;
- To take the case for requisite finance and flexibilities to Government on behalf of all Essex providers, businesses and public sector agencies.

2.3. Key Partners

2.3.1. Key partners on the ESB include:

- Essex Employers;
- Essex Chamber of Commerce;
- Federation of Small Businesses;
- Essex County Council;
- Essex Borough, City and District Councils, Southend Borough Council and Thurrock Council;
- Essex Further Education Colleges;
- Essex based Training Providers;
- Essex based Higher Education Institutions;
- Sector Skills Councils;
- Essex Community and Voluntary Services.

Scrutiny Review of Enabling Young People Who Are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) into Education, Employment or Training – Next Steps		Agenda No: 5b
<p>Corporate Priorities: Building a prosperous district Boost employment skills and support business People feel good Supporting vulnerable people in our community</p> <p>Report presented by: Councillor Dr Evans, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Report prepared by: Alastair Peace, Member Services Manager</p>		
Background Papers:		Public Report
Options: To agree, or amend the proposed next steps of the scrutiny review.		Key Decision: No
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scrutinising moving young people in the Braintree district who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to participate in education, employment or training as its main scrutiny topic for 2013-14.</p> <p>An overview of the work completed by the Committee is set out in this report.</p> <p>As part of its review, the Committee has discussed NEET issues with a wide range of stakeholders including young people, Jobcentre Plus, Essex County Council, National Apprenticeship Services, businesses, Colchester Institute (The College at Braintree), schools and employers plus Essex Employment and Skills Board at this meeting.</p> <p>A final report will be prepared for consideration by the Committee at its meeting in June identifying key issues and recommendations from all of the meetings held in the scrutiny review. This review has covered a lot of information and it would be helpful and it would help if Members could consider what recommendations they would like to be included in the final report for the June meeting.</p>		

Decision:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the progress of the Committee's scrutiny review of enabling young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to participate in education, employment or training be noted. 2. Members are invited to identify key issues and possible recommendations they wish to see covered in the report to be presented to the June meeting of this Committee. 	
Purpose of Decision: To agree actions in support the Committee's scrutiny review.	

Corporate Implications	
Financial:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	None arising from this report.
Equalities/Diversity	To be considered in the review.
Customer Impact:	To be considered in the review.
Environment and Climate Change:	None arising from this report.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Young people who are or have experienced being NEET and various stakeholder organisations supporting people who are NEET are being consulted.
Risks:	None arising from this report.
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Review of Enabling Young People who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to Participate in Education, Employment or Training

Progress - Work completed

To date, the following work items have been completed:

- Terms of Reference for the review agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 29th May 2013;
- Scrutiny review scoped by the Committee at its meeting on 10th July;
- NEET issues discussed with a wide range of stakeholders including young people, Jobcentre Plus, Essex County Council, National Apprenticeship Services, businesses, Colchester Institute (The College at Braintree), schools and employers. Details of all the meetings are listed in Appendix A;
- Facebook page and Twitter account established with the aim of engaging with stakeholders, in particular, young people;
- Posters and leaflets promoting the Committee's review including its Facebook page and Twitter account produced and distributed across the district (e.g. in Jobcentres, shops, libraries and hostels);

Next Steps

- Further discussions with Jobcentre Plus to consider the Committee's findings related to Jobcentre Plus.
- Discussions with Essex County Council in relation to the Essex Employment Skills Board.
- Member discussions on key issues and possible recommendations they would wish to covered in the report.

Final Report

- Committee agrees its final report at its meeting on 4th June 2014.

Meetings Held as Part of the Scrutiny Review

The Committee carried out 3 formal scrutiny meetings and 6 informal meetings with a wide range of stakeholders as follows:

Committee Meeting on 10th July 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Andy Wright	Corporate Director, Braintree District Council
Peter Smith	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, Braintree District Council
Nathan Rowland	Community Projects Officer
Dave Cope	Customer Services Operations Manager, Braintree and Witham Jobcentres
Paula Hornett	Senior Strategic Commissioning Manager Essex County Council

Informal Meeting on 3rd September 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Thomas Pitts	Housing Support Worker, Leahurst Hostel, Braintree
Katie	Resident at Leahurst Hostel, Braintree
Craig	Young person, (not resident at Leahurst Hostel)

Informal Meeting on 4th September 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Jasmine	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Jo	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Sam	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Charmaine	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Shannon	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Larissa	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Kristian	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Lucas	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Anthony	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Pauline	Housing Support Worker, Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Angie	Housing Support Worker, Braintree Foyer, Braintree

Informal Meeting on 5th September 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Daisy	Resident at Bramble Court, Witham
Shauna	Resident at Bramble Court, Witham

Committee Meeting on 25th September 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Andy Wright	Corporate Director, Braintree District Council
Peter Smith	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration
Cathryn Henry	National Apprenticeship Service
Samantha Hampshire	Housing Support Worker, Bramble Court Witham
Melanie Nash	Housing Support Worker, Bramble Court Witham
Daisy	Resident at Bramble Court, Witham
Shauna	Resident at Bramble Court, Witham
Anthony	Resident at Braintree Foyer, Braintree
Wesley	Green Team Graduate
Bradley	Braintree District Council Apprentice

Committee Meeting on 7th November 2013

Invited Speaker	Position
Brian Cairns	Director of Community Engagement and Marketing Colchester Institute (The College at Braintree)
Claire Pike	Work Related Learning Coordinator Alec Hunter Academy, Braintree
Damien Lee	Vice Principal, Maltings Academy, Witham
Douglas Mongan	Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Participation Consultant ~ Braintree, Employability and Skills Unit, Essex County Council

Informal Meeting on 10th January 2104

Invited Speaker	Position
Marcella M'Rabety	Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Stansted Airport
Anita Garrard	Urban Futures London Ltd, Training and Quality Senior Manager

Informal Meeting on 13th January 2104

Invited Speaker	Position
Tim Holland	Senior Business Manager, Barclays Bank

Informal Meeting on 23rd January 2104

Invited Speaker	Position
Neil Jesse	Managing Director, Village Glass
Steve Mayhew	Operations Director, Village Glass

Officer Meetings

Officer also held 4 informal meetings in support of the review as follows:

Informal Meeting on 24th July 2013

Contact	Position
James Martin	Positive Engagement Coordinator – Greenfields Community Housing

Informal Meeting on 25th July 2013

Contact	Position
Shaun	Resident at Bramble Court
Samantha Hampshire	Housing Support Worker, Bramble Court Witham

Informal Meeting on 25th July 2013

Contact	Position
Mark Watson	Then Manager of Braintree Foyer

Informal Meeting on 7th August 2013

Contact	Position
Liz Richardson	Housing Support Worker, Leahurst Hostel

