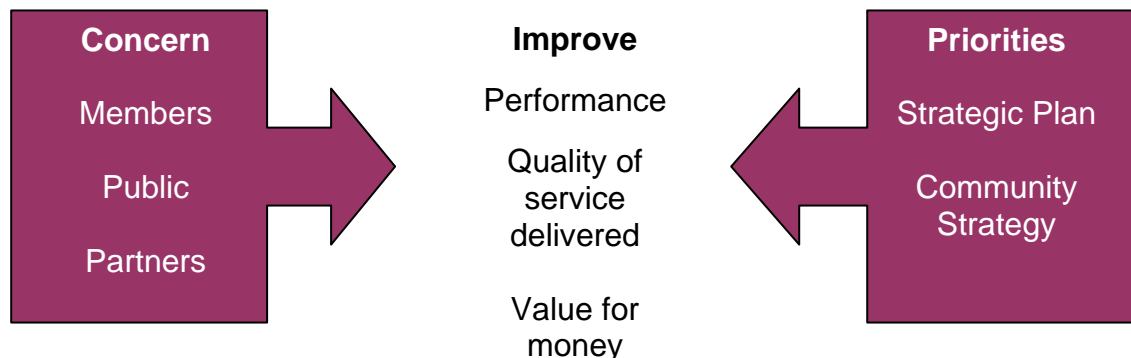


Scoping Questions – Skills: Now and the Future

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the following questions when scoping a Scrutiny review:

Issues for Scrutiny should reflect:

- i. Concern of Members, the Public or Partners
- ii. Strategic Priorities for the delivery of services and
- iii. Clear Outcomes to improve performance, value for money or to change the priorities of the Council.



A. Aims

What are the aims of the review (key question?)

Does the workforce in Nottinghamshire have the requisite skills to satisfy current and future needs of local employers?

How does the review link to priorities?

All Together Better – The Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 lists Learning and Earning – helping everyone to achieve their potential - as one of its key objectives.

How does the review link to community concern?

Former coalfield communities, in particular, are likely to have concerns about skills gaps and access to training and employment.

What outcomes are sought?

A closer match between the skills present within the community and the requirements of employers.

Better access to training and thereby employment.

The Review will seek to identify problems and make recommendations for improvement.

Which specific areas will the review examine?

The strengths and weaknesses of the current skills base in the adult job market with a focus on artisan, craft, electrical, plumbing or comparable skills.

How do we create the future? How can new employers be attracted to the county? What can attract/keep hi-tech employers here and get them to expand?

Can Further Education college courses be tailored to meet the needs of new employers?

The work, campaigns/initiatives of the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands.

Requirement for vocational training and apprenticeships

The effectiveness of training delivery bodies and at a strategic level of the Greater Nottingham Skills Board (whose aim is to 'maximise local talent and create a skilled workforce').

The extent to which skills should be demand and employer led.

Examples of workplace delivered educational training (e.g. in hospitals)

Where do recent central government vocational qualification initiatives fit into this picture?

Nature of collective agreement on Local Area Agreement skills targets

Key Lines of Enquiry

- Is the service achieving what it set out to achieve?
- What can we improve?
- What are the community's priorities?
- What are the regional/national/international priorities?
- Are we doing what users / non users / local residents want?
- Are users' needs central to the service?
- What are the strategic and operational risks?
- What intelligence is available to predict future change?
- Is there effective partnership working?

B. Timetable

When will the review commence

March 2008

When will the review conclude?

July 2008

C. Information and consultees

What information do Members require to enable them to start work on the review?

Broad overview of the current level of skills versus employer expectations

An understanding of the evidence base of statistics/trend issues and the internal dynamic of the County (e.g. marked contrast between Ashfield and Rushcliffe).

An analysis of GCSE/A level results by subject with a view to ascertaining vocational relevance

The current position in relation to training opportunities/barriers to accessing training

Consultees could include; people on benefit, people who have recently accessed training, small businesses, employers associations, Connexions, Chambers of Commerce, Institute of Careers Guidance, large/blue chip employers e.g. Rolls Royce, local colleges

Likely key witnesses/documents

*Senior Officers of the Learning Skills Council
Employers' Skills Needs Analysis (Nottinghamshire) Agriculture, Mining and Quarrying Industries – Strategic Area Review 2004 or more recent data if available. Leitch Review of Skills 2005.*

Members of the Greater Nottingham Learning Skills Board

Blue Chip Companies based in Nottingham/shire (e.g. Boots)

Job Centre Plus

Others to be identified pending further discussion

How will the review involve the public?

The review will feature on the website allowing the public to contact Chair/Vice Chair relevant Scrutiny Officers

A press release announcing the review will allow public contact with Chair/Vice Chair relevant Scrutiny Officer and stimulate press/media interest thereby raising the profile of the review.

D. Resources

Are there any specific resource implications for the review?

Support for the review will be coordinated and led by the Scrutiny Team as part of their normal duties.

Councillors selected to sit on the Committee will be expected to allocate time within their diaries to facilitate scheduled meetings and possible site visits.

Representatives from the Communities Department will be invited to participate in supporting the review

Experts from various organisations will be invited to contribute to the review and may in some cases wish to claim expenses /fees

E. Departmental View

What does the department responsible say about the review?

Communities Departmental View on Overview and Scrutiny Committee **“Skills Review in Nottinghamshire” January 2008**

Nationally, the Government has identified key themes and reforms including :

- *Putting employers' needs centre stage in the design and delivery of training – primarily through Train to Gain and employer-led sector based National Skills Academies supported by Sector Skills Agreements;*
- *Improving information, advice and guidance; and new national entitlements with extra financial support at low skills levels;*
- *Reforming the FE sector, allowing Further Education colleges to drive up the quality of teaching, to reward colleges for success and to make the sector more responsive to the skills needs of individuals and employers;*
- *Developing an improved vocational qualification structure which has the flexibility to meet individual and employment needs, to support both 14-19 and adult reforms.*

The particular targets for adults include:

- *Increase the number of adults with the skills required for employability and progression through improving the basic skills of adults and reducing the number of adults in the workforce who lack level 2 qualification*
- *Increase participation in HE*

Government legislation has additionally been driven by the publication of the Treasury sponsored Leitch Review of Skills (Dec 2006). Essentially Leitch argues that skills are imperative for individual economic inclusion – and if not addressed will result in significant numbers being marginalised from the labour market. This will ultimately impact on local and national economic performance and as such suggests a key role to be played by employers, bringing about a more demand led approach. At a local level, the development of a joined-up and coherent strategy has been hindered due to the fragmentation of funding streams; the number of different agencies, strategies and plans; and the assortment and hierarchy of organisational and geographical boundaries.

Recent government policy has moved towards partnership working to help overcome these complexities and tackle the issues with certain partnerships, notably Employment & Skills Boards emerging over the past year or so.

The legacy of structural change within the economy is still being felt and the key challenges today for Nottinghamshire may be summarised as follows :

- **Lack of growth in employment in ‘knowledge sectors’.** Overall, there has not been significant diversification into sectors offering higher-value employment, and the economy thus remains vulnerable to structural change and the challenges of globalisation.
- **Low growth in productivity** - the growth in productivity (measured by Gross Value Added per head) has been slower in Nottinghamshire than regionally or nationally and the gap between the north and south of the county is growing.

- *Unemployment levels are relatively low but there is **considerable variation in economic activity and employment rates** throughout the county with areas of the county having very low economic activity*