

ANNEX 1 – Terms of Reference

Select Committee Task and Finish Group Scoping Document

The process for establishing a task and finish group is:

1. The Select Committee identifies a potential topic for a task and finish group
2. The Select Committee Chairman and the Scrutiny Officer complete the scoping template.
3. The Select Committee agrees the task and finish group scoping document, including membership of the task and finish group.

<p>Review Topic: Adult Learning and Skills</p>
<p>Select Committee(s)</p> <p>Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture with representation from Communities, Environment and Highways</p>
<p>Relevant background</p> <p>Adult learning is that delivered to people over the age of 18 and excludes official tertiary education such as degrees. It can provide significant social and economic benefits to communities and individuals.</p> <p>In north and south-west Surrey, adult learning is delivered out of seven dedicated centres by the Council's Surrey Adult Learning service (SAL). SAL is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and as of 2021, receives contributions from the Greater London Authority.¹</p> <p>In March 2021, it was reported to the Select Committee that approximately 25% of SAL's provision comprised adult skills programmes, which generally involve learners completing externally accredited qualifications at no cost, e.g. English and Maths GCSEs and English for Speakers of Other Languages units and awards.</p> <p>The majority (apx. 75%) of SAL's provision comprised charged (85%) and free of charge (15%) community learning programmes which do not lead to accredited qualifications but aim to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds. Charged-for courses are delivered in fields including arts and crafts, foreign languages and healthy living. Free programmes support groups including disadvantaged families, people with disabilities, people with low to moderate mental health issues, hard to engage adults, and people in need of workplace skills.</p> <p>SAL's aim is that, <i>through engaging with the adult learning offer, every adult will be safe and have their education, social and emotional aspirations met. They will be able to contribute</i></p>

¹ [Surrey Adult Learning, CFLC Select Committee \(March 2021\)](#)

positively to their families and communities and lead healthy, creative and active lives.

In March 2021, the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee recommended that SAL:

- i. Work with partners, within and external to SCC and with the Surrey Economy and Growth Team to develop a coordinated plan for the future, to ensure that the Adult Learning Service remains responsive to changing health, social and economic needs; and*
- ii. Continuously review the Service delivery model to ensure sustainability and that the Service meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.*

In the east of the county, adult learning is delivered by East Surrey College (ESC). ESC focuses on employability and skills development, career progression and retention, entry into work, and social engagement.

The Surrey Growth Board's multi-agency (skills providers and employers) Surrey Skills Leadership Forum sets the vision and supports the development of an inclusive demand-led Surrey skills system and is developing a skills improvement plan. In its current form, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill will put local skills improvement plans on a statutory footing if enacted.² Adult learning is a small element of Surrey's skills agenda and it is intended that the work of this Task Group will be complementary to the work of the Forum as well as develop insights applicable to the wider education and skills system.

² [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill \[HL\] publications - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

Why this is a scrutiny item

National data shows that prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the skills of the UK population were insufficient to meet the needs of the UK economy, with particularly acute skills shortages present in the construction and manufacturing sectors.³ The labour market also lacks the skills required for the country to meet its environmental and climate commitments.⁴

The pandemic had a significant impact on the economy and workers, particularly younger and older workers, low paid workers, workers from ethnic minority groups, and workers with disabilities.⁵

Surrey, whilst maintaining a relatively high level of employment, experienced an increase in unemployment of approximately 25% (or 2,800 individuals) between the 12-month periods ending March 2020 (2.4%) and September 2021 (3.0%), after peaking at 4% in 2020.⁶

Households have experienced significantly increased costs over the course of the pandemic, with costs (consumer price index + housing) rising by 5.6% between December 2019 and December 2021⁷ and a 1.25% increase in national insurance contributions planned from April 2022.⁸

Whilst during the pandemic both median and mean nominal pay have increased in Surrey,⁹ its economic impact as experienced by the worst-off residents is illuminated by a 235% increase in universal credit claims (up to 49,679) between March 2020 and August 2021 and the number of areas within the lowest quintile in the Index of Multiple Deprivation increasing from three to four. The Council's Community Impact Assessment found that 55% of households which were previously 'just getting by' reported that the pandemic had negatively impacted their household income.¹⁰ It is important to note that the impact of the pandemic on employment and earnings was mitigated by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which ended on 30 September 2021, when 1.2 million jobs were still on furlough nationally.

In September-November 2021, national job vacancies reached their highest level (1.2 million) since comparable records began in 2001; there were 1.2 unemployed people per job vacancy.¹¹ This increase in vacancies coincides with changes to the composition of the UK's economy as it experiences a lopsided recovery in both sectorial and geographic terms.¹² In the third quarter of 2021, 46% of employers with vacancies reported recruitment difficulties. Hard-to-fill vacancies were most prevalent in construction, healthcare and public administration and defence and such difficulties were expected to worsen into 2022. Anticipated rises in employment are expected to be particularly strong in construction, healthcare, administration and support services and hospitality.¹³

Labour market changes and automation are expected to significantly impact employment in the future, with an estimated 10 to 30% of jobs at high risk of displacement in the next 20 years. This coupled with the UK's aging population will increase the need for adults to reskill during their working lives.¹⁴

Further, the pandemic has impacted people's wellbeing both directly (e.g. health) and indirectly (e.g. effects of isolation or economic consequences).¹⁵

In light of the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic on wellbeing and household finances, the changing composition of the UK's economy and labour

market, employment and recruitment challenges, the imperative to provide workers with the skills needed to deliver our environmental commitments, the ongoing development of a local skills improvement plan and the prospect of legislative reform, it is timely for elected Members to review adult learning in Surrey and identify opportunities for it to better meet the needs of residents and employers.

What question is the task group aiming to answer?

What reasonable and achievable changes to adult learning and skills policy and provision are desirable in Surrey in order to meet the economic and social needs of the community and deliver relevant environmental commitments?

³ [Employer Skills Survey 2019: Summary report](#)

⁴ [A green skills shortage could thwart climate commitments - Maddy Ness UK; CITB, Building Skills for Net Zero; Retrofit skills shortages holding back home decarbonisation, finds Energy Systems Catapult](#)

⁵ [Labour Market Outlook: Autumn 2021 \(cipd.co.uk\)](#)

⁶ [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Inflation and price indices - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ [National Insurance: How much you pay - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹ [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ [Cabinet child poverty report - 25 Jan 2022.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹ [CBP-8898.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹² [IFS Green Budget 2021 Chapter 2 - UK economic outlook: the future isn't what it used to be](#)

¹³ [Labour Market Outlook: Autumn 2021 \(cipd.co.uk\)](#)

¹⁴ [Barriers to learning for disadvantaged groups \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁵ [Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on adults](#)

Aim

To support the improvement of economic and social outcomes and the delivery of environmental commitments by better aligning adult learning and skills policy and provision with the needs of residents and businesses and relevant environmental commitments and by increasing participation by the residents who stand to benefit the most from adult learning and skills.

Objectives

1. Understand the benefits of adult learning and skills.
2. Understand current policy and provision and anticipated changes.
3. Review employment data and participation in adult learning and skills at population and local levels.
4. Identify the groups who stand to benefit the most from participation in adult learning and skills and barriers to their participation.
5. Ascertain the current and anticipated economic and social needs of Surrey's communities (in the context of adult learning and skills), including the skills required to deliver our environmental commitments.
6. Identify good practice regarding adult learning and skills within and outside of the county.
7. Make recommendations regarding how the council could improve its adult learning and skills offer in order to,
 - i. increase participation by disengaged groups and groups who stand to benefit the most from adult learning and skills; and
 - ii. contribute to meeting the current and future economic and social needs of Surrey and deliver relevant environmental commitments.

Scope (within / out of)

In scope:

- The social and economic needs of Surrey residents
- The skills needs of Surrey's employers, including those needed to deliver relevant environmental commitments
- The adult learning and skills offers of the council, third sector and employers
- Relevant national and local policy

Out of scope:

- Higher/tertiary education
- Pre-16 education
- Labour (people) shortages, as opposed to skills shortages

Outcomes for Surrey / Benefits

The work of the task group relates to and supports the following strategies and priorities:

- [Surrey County Council's Organisation Strategy to 2021 to 2026's priority objectives and Community Vision for Surrey in 2030](#);
- [Surrey Economic Strategy Statement](#);
- [No One Left Behind: Child Poverty in Surrey](#); and
- [Priority 3 of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board's Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

Proposed work plan

It is important to clearly allocate who is responsible for the work, to ensure that Members and officers can plan the resources needed to support the task group.

Timescale	Task	Responsible
Week commencing 7 March 2022	Send targeted requests for written evidence to named witnesses/organisations	Democratic Services Assistant (DSA)
Week commencing 14 March 2022	Public call for evidence To run for four weeks	Scrutiny Officer (SO) and DSA
3 May 2022	Oral evidence sessions Phase 1: internal witnesses	All
18 May to 1 June	Pause due to Member and SO availability	
June-July 2022	Oral evidence sessions Phase 2: external witnesses listed below as desired by Task Group Phase 3: internal witnesses (if needed)	All
July 2022	Development of report skeleton	Chairman and SO
July/August 2022	Report drafting	Chairman and SO
4 October 2022	Report to Select Committee	Chairman
25 October 2022	Report to Cabinet	Chairman

Internal witnesses

- Leader of the Council/Chair of the Surrey Growth Board
- Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
- Senior officers from Education Service and Economy and Growth Service

External witnesses

- Surrey Skills Leadership Forum
- East Surrey College
- Surrey Chambers of Commerce
- Enterprise M3 and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships
- School of Economics, University of Surrey
- Local Government Association
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Learning and Work Institute
- Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
- Family Voice Surrey
- Residents and service users
- Employers

Useful Documents

[Surrey Adult Learning, CFLC Select Committee \(March 2021\)](#)

[Surrey Economic Strategy Statement \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

[Barriers to learning for disadvantaged groups \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Potential barriers to success (Risks / Dependencies)

- Member and officer availability
- Witness and stakeholder engagement
- Anticipated legislative changes relevant to adult learning and skills

Equalities implications

None identified. The Task Group will enquire as to the equalities implications of current policy and evaluate the equalities implications of any recommendations it makes.

Task Group Members	Jonathan Essex Fiona White Jeremy Webster
Co-opted Members	Catherine Baart
Task Group Chairman	Chris Townsend
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