

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

## 17 JULY 2012

*Present :-* Councillor Kevin Bentley (Chairman)  
Councillors Helen Chuah, Beverly Davies,  
Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins, Kim Naish, Nigel Offen,  
Gerard Oxford and Terry Sutton

*Substitute Member :-* Councillor Laura Sykes for Councillor Bill Frame

*Also in Attendance :-* Councillor Annie Feltham  
Councillor Paul Smith

### 8. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2012 was confirmed as a correct record.

### 9. Essex County Council's Proposals for a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

**The following Councillors declared the following non-pecuniary interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5);**

**Councillor Bentley in respect of being a Member of Essex County Council.**

**Councillor Chuah in respect of being a retired employee of the NHS.**

**Councillor P. Higgins in respect of his spouse being a Member of Essex County Council.**

**Councillor Naish in respect of being a Board Member of Colchester Borough Homes, a Member of Sport England and a Member of Market Field School.**

**Councillor L. Sykes in respect of being a Board Member of Colchester Borough Homes.**

**Councillor Offen in respect of being a Board Member of Colchester Borough Homes, a Member of the Essex County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a retired employee of the NHS.**

### **Presentation**

Ms. Clare Hardy, Senior Manager: Health and Wellbeing, Essex County Council, and Mr. Stephen Lee-Foster, Strategic Policy, Essex County Council, gave a presentation to Members on the "Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Consultation and Engagement".

Ms. Hardy explained that there is going to be changes to health commissioning. Based on national guidance, the changes will reflect the assessment of need outlined in the

Council's JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). This will be an overarching framework from which a more detailed and specific commissioning plan is developed.

A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWBS) will be produced, giving strategic direction, shared priorities and shared outcomes. The JHWBS will be a concise and high level strategy, not a large technical document.

There will be a need to consider whether flexibilities to pool budgets and joined-up commissioning can be used to deliver the strategy.

Local Government changes will require greater democratic accountability, greater involvement by elected members.

Mr. Lee-Foster explained the two stage approach to the consultation and engagement process leading to the drafting of the strategy, and the Production Timeline that would lead to the publication of the JHWBS from October 2012 and implementation from April 2013.

### **General discussions**

Members considered the governance arrangements and possible priorities for Essex's JHWBS.

Councillor Sykes said she wanted the strategy to ensure the new processes would provide an improvement to mental health care, with better social services support and medical monitoring.

Ms. Hardy said it was about driving the priorities into actions. There will be a need to explore how the different services can be joined-up (community budgets) to ensure people and their needs do not get missed, and with early intervention.

Councillor Higgins understood the point made by Councillor Sykes, saying nobody ever takes responsibility for the overall situation. Mr. Lee-Foster said one of the fundamental changes will be around stitching agencies and organisations together to ensure individual situations are addressed by bringing together all those involved. It was possible that Colchester could pilot cases as part of monitoring the effectiveness of the changes. Councillor Annie Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure referred Members to Colchester Borough Homes "Problem Family Project" set-up to deal with such cases. Councillor Sykes, whilst appreciating what is being said in regards to joined-up work, believed what people want to see is noticeable practical improvements. Ms. Hardy understood the concern, but said there is a commitment to make the strategy work. Mr. Lee-Foster said it was the Government's intention to put the NHS closer to the patient, which was a challenging but realistic aspiration. The proof will be to look at the difference and progress made in a year's time.

In response to Councillor Bentley, Ms. Hardy said with regards to priorities such as giving children the best start and improving housing and living environment, and the involvement by Colchester Borough Homes and Housing Associations, Ms. Hardy said there will be a need locally to consider the current panels and forums, what is the best arrangement(s) for Colchester in the future and filter these into Health and Wellbeing.

Working alongside that will be Housing, with the need to determine how this is fed into the strategy.

Ms. Hardy responded to Councillor Offen by explaining that the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board currently had 22 members and whilst under constant review, currently comprised of the following people.

- 6 Members from the Care Commissioning Groups (CCG) in Essex
- 1 Essex County Councillor
- 3 Directors from Public Health and Social Care bodies
- 1 representative from the local Healthwatch
- 3 Essex County Council Cabinet Members
- 1 Representative from social care
- 2 NHS Commissioning Board Members
- 1 Chief Executive Officer of Essex County Council
- 2 District Chief Executives from Essex
- 2 District Council Leaders

Councillor Offen said he did not think the current makeup of the Board would allow for expert views from e.g. hospitals and mental health services.

Councillor Bentley said that given the large scale of public funds spent by the NHS they remain the least accountable of the large public bodies, and he believed the HWB Board needed to be rebalanced to provide a larger proportion of elected members, and needed to utilise the practical medical and health experience of elected members. Councillor Davies said parish representation should also be considered and Councillor Bentley also said Chief Executive Officers needed to be replaced by elected members, and questioned whether elected members had to be Leaders.

Ms. Hardy said it would be very hard to have representation from all public bodies and agencies on the board. There are currently in excess of 280 Parish Councils in the County. It was felt the representatives from the District Councils also represented the Parish Councils. The County was split into four regions; north, south, east and west, and each of the four district chief officers and leaders on the Board represent one of the regions.

Mr. Lee-Foster explained that the list of possible priorities was drawn from the database of information already provided. Using statistics on things such as accidents, homelessness, smoking in pregnancy allowed for the database to grow, enabled benchmarking against national data, and helped build a picture for Essex and the districts.

Councillor Chuah said from her experience as a NHS nurse, trying to solve mental health issues is very important. There are a lot of different resources go into trying to deal with mental health issues and the future can only improve through joined-up thinking by the different agencies and organisations. Councillor Chuah asked that mental health was prioritised upwards in the list of priorities. Mr. Lee-Foster said the list encapsulates a theme of priorities though not ranked in order.

In response to Councillor Sutton, Ms. Hardy said the solution(s) to improving the needs for areas of deprivation is held at a county level, and the solutions will vary according to individual communities. CCG will be an important factor in determining these solutions, and these (and their boundaries) are developing, usually taking in 2 – 3 districts e.g. West Essex includes the districts of Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford. The relationship between these and County may have to be developed.

In response to Councillor Hazell and whether the first listed priority “Raising attainment in schools” was appropriate for the Health and Wellbeing remit, Mr. Lee-Foster said it was a good point that officers are trying to reconcile. The strategy did not want to address the educational needs, but there needed to be a link with pre-school experiences. Councillor Davies said there was also a need to improve a currently poor careers advice service, with students being provided a career path.

Responding to Councillor Naish, Mr. Lee-Foster said it is understood that vulnerable people are less likely to engage and participate in consultation, but this will not diminish their needs and priorities. Small organisations and groups who currently work for, or represent these people are being spoken to.

Ms. Hardy said the priorities are aspirational. Integration (joined-up) of services would create savings that would enable funds to be released and used for addressing the priorities.

Ms. Hardy explained that providing quality palliative care was about end of life care, work of the hospices and ‘Hospital at Home’ services. This work remains a mixed model of public, private and voluntary services. Councillor Bentley said the Government should be lobbied to provide increased funding. With regard to the priority for keeping communities safe, Ms. Hardy said this was essentially about safeguarding and the work of many agencies including the Police, around work towards tackling alcohol and drug addiction, crime and community safety.

Councillor Offen and Councillor Chuah agreed that the strategy needed to embrace the development of the key worker / advocate culture.

Councillor Feltham said that following what was an interesting conversation she still remained concerned because the priorities are so wide, incorporating education, housing, health and community safety. She believed the strategy needed to have greater focus towards the improvement of the health of local people. Councillor Feltham said the Council did not have a direct responsibility for health and was not in a position to take on additional responsibilities, though the relationship between organisations with a statutory or non-statutory role was crucial if the strategy was to succeed, and Colchester Borough Council needed clarity around its statutory responsibility. Councillor Feltham said more thought was needed to ensure there is an improvement in the process to help individuals “have a voice”.

Councillor Feltham did not think the strategy was helpful to CCGs

Ms. Hardy said the comments from Members would be fed into the Consultation and Engagement process.

Mr. Lee-Foster summarised by saying the Members comments is noted, and he understood their concerns primarily around children, and the need to focus on their start in life and career development, rather than raising educational attainment. A need for better lifestyle chances. Older people should have the opportunity to remain independent for as long as possible. Finally, people needed to have a voice.

Councillor Bentley said it felt appropriate that a letter would be sent to The Leader of Essex County Council and the Chairman of Essex County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board encapsulating the points made by Panel Members.

Councillor Bentley thanked Ms. Hardy and Mr. Lee-Foster for attending the meeting and their contribution to the discussions.

*RESOLVED* that the Panel;

- i) Noted the presentation from officers on the outlined Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- ii) Agreed that the comments by Panel Members should be fed into the Consultation and Engagement process.
- iii) Agreed that a formal letter should be sent to the Leader of Essex County Council and the Chairman of Essex County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board setting out the points and concerns raised by the Panel.

#### **10. 2013/14 Budget Strategy, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable**

**The following Councillors declared the following non-pecuniary interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5);**

**Councillor Bentley in respect of being a Member of Essex County Council.**

**Councillor P. Higgins in respect of his spouse being a Member of Essex County Council.**

**Councillor Naish, L. Sykes and Offen in respect of being Board Members of Colchester Borough Homes.**

Mr. Sean Plummer, Finance Manager, presented the 2013/14 Budget Strategy report, including the Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable.

Mr. Plummer provided some context to the report. The report represented the start of the Budget process, and took stock of what has happened in the last financial year.

There are many changes within the Budget, reflecting a change in funding streams and changes in legislation e.g. The Business Rates Retention Scheme, Council Tax

benefits within the welfare reform, and the uncertainty due to the economic downturn, impacting on fees, charges and service demands.

Mr. Plummer said the overview situation was a current budget forecast gap of £812,000 for 2013/14 (details of how this figure is derived and drawn to Members attention was illustrated in paragraph 4.2 of the report).

Councillor Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources drew Members attention to Risk Areas identified within the report, and where the outcomes remain uncertain, and welcomed comments from the Panel. Councillor Offen said the future is so uncertain, and it is very difficult to have a comprehensive budget without including risk areas, and this has been done.

Mr. Plummer confirmed to Councillor Bentley that the £2,000 contribution to the Police and Crime Panel would be a contribution made by Colchester and all that other districts were making their own contributions.

In response to Councillor Bentley, Mr. Plummer said there is no contingencies specifically set-out in the budget for community budgets. Where common areas of work are identified resources can be pooled for funding. Welfare reform is an area where Colchester is working with Essex County Council. Councillor Bentley said engagement with Essex County Council was crucial on 'City County Deal' and Members needed to understand this initiative because of the likely positive financial impact.

Councillor Smith confirmed to Councillor Naish that the risk associated with park and ride was the impact of the scheme on town centre car park revenue streams.

Mr. Plummer clarified that the £100,000 of revenue balances with a delegated approval to the Leader of the Council provided the ability to spend on potential unplanned items of expenditure, but that this sum of money is not provided for within the budget. It was confirmed that the proposal agreed by Cabinet was to reinstate the limit of this delegation back to £100,000.

Mr. Plummer said discussions with the business community continued throughout the year, though the formal statutory meeting would be arranged at the end of December, early January once there is more certainty on the final budget proposals.

*RESOLVED* that the Panel considered and noted the 2013/14 Budget Strategy, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable.

## **11. Work Programme**

The Panel agreed that the review of Public Transport should be scheduled for a meeting date as close to the opening of the new Bus Station, probably at the start of the New Year.

*RESOLVED* that the Panel commented on, and noted the Work Programme 2012/13.