

Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee



Date of meeting: 15th November 2022

SCRUTINY



Portfolio: Wellbeing & Community Partnerships – Cllr Aniket Patel

Subject: Refresh of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy

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Recommendation:

That the Stronger Communities Select Committee notes the refreshed Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026 and associated revised partnership delivery structure arrangements.

Report:

2.1 Background

The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26 sets out the aims and aspirations of the multi-agency Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living in the district. The partnership Board is made up of representatives from Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, the West Essex Health & Care Partnership, the NHS and a wide range of local health and voluntary sector organisations.

The Board published its original ten-year strategy back in 2018 however, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the decision was taken to review and refresh the strategy early to ensure the district has a robust and meaningful roadmap to maximise resources and expertise to support the best possible outcomes for residents.

More than ever before, the Covid-19 pandemic called for organisations to come together to work collaboratively. The refreshed strategy aims to build on the momentum of positive partnership working in the district. The strategy also seeks to maximise the growing self-awareness of things that individuals can do for themselves to take care of their own health and wellbeing.

2.2 Engagement

On behalf of the partnership Board, the Council's Community, Culture & Wellbeing team took the lead in facilitating four months of extensive consultation to inform the refreshed strategy. Consultation included:

- Focus groups with Community Champions representing communities district-wide
- Public consultation via an on-line questionnaire
- Engagement with the Epping Forest Youth Council
- Facilitated Community & Wellbeing Directorate input via workshops and discussion groups
- A stakeholder consultation event hosted at the Civic Offices attended by 55

representatives from 30 organisations, including the community and voluntary sector. Findings and feedback were regularly taken back to the Board throughout the process and emerging themes were cross referenced with those similarly highlighted through the work undertaken to review the county-wide Joint Essex Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

2.3 Data and insight

The Council's Public Health Improvement Officer led on the gathering and analysis of a wide range of datasets made available from partner agencies and central resources. In this way it was possible to ensure a clear evidence base in support of the themes and needs highlighted in the refreshed strategy. Information and data sources which helped inform the final strategy included:

- Essex County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – 2019 English indices of deprivation
- Office for Health Improvement & Disparities – Local Health Profiles for England
- Hertfordshire Health Evidence – District Profiles

2.4 Vision and principles

Having carefully considered the views of local residents, professionals, and wider stakeholders along with the analysis of data and evidence, the partnership Board agreed the following overarching vision and set of key principles underpinning all aspects of the strategy:

“Working together to improve the health and wellbeing of Epping Forest residents by promoting a culture and environment that encourages health equity.”

Principles

2.4.1 A whole System Approach

We recognise that health and wellbeing is impacted on by more than just the food we eat or how active we are. Our health is affected by numerous factors including our education, our job, how much money we have and where we live. These factors are known as the “social determinants of health”. These determinants influence each other via a complex web of interconnected factors. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation approach to the social determinants of health provides a framework which illustrates all the factors that contribute to our health and wellbeing.

2.4.2 Prevention and early intervention

By improving the social determinates of health collectively we will prevent problems occurring. However, should problems arise, working in partnership will enable us to deal with them at the earliest possible stage through improved signposting and access to support services so that they don't get worse.

2.4.3 Self-Care and management of own wellbeing

Wherever possible we want to support individuals and communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. Partners will actively help to build knowledge, skills and confidence so that people can make healthy lifestyle choices. We will work to champion peer support and foster a culture of care.

2.4.4 Place based approach

We recognise that there are areas of our district that have a higher level of need than others. By targeting our collective efforts and resources on tackling the needs in specific geographic areas, and by working with our communities using an asset-based community development approach (ABCD), we aim to reduce the inequalities that exist in our district.

2.4.5 A life course approach

We acknowledge that health and wellbeing needs change as we move through the various stages of our lives. The following whole life course themes show how we will adopt and reference “Live Well” domains as part of our Strategy:

- Start Well – Children and young people have the best start in life
- Feel Well – People enjoy mental wellbeing throughout their lives
- Be Well – Adults are empowered to make healthy choices
- Age Well – People live safely and independently as they age
- Stay Well - Adults with health or care concerns are supported to maintain healthy productive and fulfilling lives

2.5 Strategic priorities

The five strategic priorities which have been identified within the strategy are:

- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Reduce loneliness and social isolation
- Increase physical activity
- Support residents in relation to the rising cost of living
- Tackle alcohol and substance misuse issues

Fundamentally, partners and stakeholders acknowledge the inequalities that exist in the Epping Forest district. These inequalities have a huge impact on residents' health and wellbeing, so much so that the difference in life expectancy between our most affluent and deprived wards can be as much as 13 years for males 11 years for females. Therefore, tackling health inequality is an overarching priority for the district.

For each of the five priorities, key objectives have been identified within the strategy. There is a shared commitment that partners will work together to develop and deliver projects, initiatives and interventions in line with the detailed objectives.

2.6 Delivery and governance

The stakeholder conference event held on 7th June 2022 afforded the opportunity not just to consult on the priorities and objectives for the refreshed strategy, but to also review and agree the partnership arrangements through which the final strategy would be delivered.

Agreement was secured to align multi-agency action groups with the wider determinants of health themes identified in the Robert Wood Johnson model. Themed action groups will be established around Health Behaviours, Socio Economic, Clinical Care and the Built Environment. Where possible, action groups will comprise of existing groups already in place, for example, the Safer Communities Partnership and various GP cohorts across the district. Crucially, the work of the action groups and delivery against their associated action plans will be overseen by the partnership Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board is committed to continuing to regularly consult with communities to seek their feedback on progress and to review emerging themes as appropriate.

Reason for decision: To note the refreshed Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026.

Options considered and rejected: N/A

Consultation undertaken: Extensive consultation as outlined at point 2.2 of this report.

Service review: N/A

Resource implications: There have been no increases in budget required from the Council.

Personnel: Community, Culture & Wellbeing staff

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision Ref (if required) N/A