

Report to Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 5th March 2024

Portfolio: Community Health & Wellbeing – Cllr Smruti Patel
Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board Chair – Cllr Aniket Patel

Subject: Progress of the partnership Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy

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Recommendations:

That the Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made on the priorities and objectives of the Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026.

Report:

1. Background

1.1. Structure and governance

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 Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (Hets & West Essex ICB), the NHS and a wide range of local health and voluntary sector organisations.

1.2. Vision and principles

The strategy's vision is;

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

1.3. Principles

The strategies delivery is underpinned by six key principles which are:

- A Whole system approach, in recognition 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 the numerous factors including employment, education housing and more. These factors are known as the 'social determinants of health'.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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

1.4. 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.

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.

1.5. Delivery and governance

The strategies objectives are delivered via themed Multi Agency Action Groups. The groups are aligned to the themes of the Robert Wood Johnson Wider Determinants of Health Model (2020) as shown below.



Figure 1 Robert Wood Johnson Wider Determinants of Health Model (2020)

The Clinical Action Groups which form part of the governance structure are delivered

by the Herts and West Essex ICB but also report to the Health & Wellbeing Board. Each Action Group is chaired by a lead officer from a key partner organisation, supported by Epping Forest District Council's Public Health Officer. In addition, Health and Wellbeing Board members are also represented on the Community Safety Partnership to ensure partnership working across shared priorities.

Each year partners on the multi-agency Action Groups conduct analysis into the emerging health and wellbeing needs of the district. The analysis identifies where further intervention is needed in order to add value to the plethora of work being delivered across the system and meet the priorities of the Strategy. Action Group partners then collectively develop projects and activities in collaboration with the wider system to address the identified needs.

1.6. Progress reporting

To monitor the annual progress of the Strategy, the Board approved the development of a data dashboard. (See Appendix 1). The dashboard was developed following extensive analysis of open-source data portals and consultation with system partners. The process highlighted a number of indicators that best matched the desired outcomes of each of the Strategy's objectives and that are updated annually. The dashboard allows the Board to measure annual progress as well as identify long term trends in respect of residents health and wellbeing.

Whilst data can provide a level of insight into the progress of the Strategy, the Board does acknowledge that many indicators can also be influenced by factors that the Board cannot impact on such as; economic recession, pandemics, the core demographics of the district's population etc... Therefore, the indicators and the data contained in the dashboard are considered by the Board alongside wider system service mapping, Action Groups Action Plans and case studies, to ensure all evidence is used to show the extent to which the system is engaging and impacting on the health and wellbeing of local residents.

2. Action Group Plans – 2023 - 2024

2.1. Needs analysis.

In April 2023, following detailed analysis of baseline data and a comprehensive mapping exercise which captured all of the projects, interventions and activities taking place against each of the Strategy's priorities, the Board and Action Groups identified gaps where there was little or no intervention happening in support of key objectives. The Groups then developed a series of refreshed partnership projects and interventions for the year to address these gaps.

A total of twenty-seven different partnership projects were identified across the four thematic Action Groups, addressing twelve different priority objectives.

To monitor progress and impact each Action Group plotted their projects using a simple Plan on a Page format and reported progress quarterly to the board via a RAG rating system as shown at Appendix 2.

2.2. Action Group Interventions

Overall, as shown by RAG rating monitoring, the majority of projects have been successfully delivered. A small proportion of partnership projects have either not been initiated or have been slow to deliver the desired impact. It is important to acknowledge that the landscape of partnership working is complex, with partners and key stakeholders having to have the ability to consistently align time and resources against a backdrop of challenging economies. Nonetheless the new governance structure has been effective ensuring engagement with a wide range of partners who

have collectively developed some incredibly impactful projects. In fact, the governance structure developed in the district is seen as a model of best practice and is being replicated in other areas of Essex.

At the time of writing, Action Groups had just updated the Board on Quarter 3 progress. Many projects will not achieve their full potential until the end of Quarter 4, however, already many of the projects have been delivered and have had a significant positive impact for residents.

2.3. Healthy Behaviours Action Group

The past year has seen the Healthy Behaviours Action Group face challenges in terms of partnership engagement; however, it has still delivered value-added projects that have engaged hundreds of residents in physical activity.

2.3.1. Places Leisure Free Swimming

One of the best examples of a whole system-approach has been the free-swimming project developed by Places Leisure. As a key partner on this group, Places Leisure used the Health & Wellbeing Strategy to form the basis of a business case in order to offer free swimming for families receiving free school meals. This has been in recognition of the fact that the cost-of-living crisis is having a detrimental effect on local children and their families ability to take part in certain leisure activities. 105 families applied for membership over the summer holidays resulting in 236 free swim places being taken up.

2.3.2. Find Your Active Funding

A collaboration between Active Essex and Epping Forest District Council in supporting local clubs and groups to access Find Your Active Funding, and then sustain activity through additional funding and support, has been hugely successful. In total over £50K has been invested in Epping Forest to start and sustain local clubs and activities, with funding supporting the development of 30 different sports and physical activity clubs or programmes.

2.3.3. Specialist Activity for Neurodiverse Adults

Thanks to a partnership between Places Leisure and the Buddy Up Project, regular physical activity and gym sessions are being delivered at Loughton Leisure Centre to support neurodiverse adults to become more physically active. This initiative, which was funded via Public Health Community Funding, saw Places Leisure instructors and EFDC's Adult Inclusion Officer work in collaboration to support neurodiverse adults to attend the Centre. Over 30 neurodiverse adults have been supported to become physically active.

2.4. Socio Economic Action Group

The Socio-Economic Action Group has performed strongly this year with all of the projects on the Action Plan now underway.

2.4.1. Community Hubs

The Community Hub established on the Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey by Epping Forest Citizens Advice forms part of the Council's place-based approach and continues to support the most vulnerable residents. It has been recognised as a model of best practice and is being replicated across Essex. A new Community Hub is being set up on the Oakwood Hill Estate in Loughton in partnership with Restore, a local third sector organisation. The new Hub will see six different partner organisations deliver drop-in services from the Community Building on the estate. In Chigwell a Hub of services is being established across two locations; in The Limes Farm Community Centre Epping Forest Citizens Advice offer drop-in sessions in partnership with the Council's Revenues and

Benefits Team, and at Victory Hall a Community Supermarket has been developed by the Council's Community Champions. The supermarket has received funding from Essex County Council, and a range of services such as Social Spaces, Counselling and Mental Health support drop-ins are being delivered as part of this work.

2.4.2. Warm Places & Social Spaces

As the financial crisis developed in the winter months of 2022 and prices of domestic gas and electricity supplies increased significantly, putting pressure on the finances of local residents. The Council's Community Development & Wellbeing Team worked with local community groups, churches and volunteers to set up Warm Places. These are venues in the community where all residents can come together, share a hot drink or meal and socialise, while not having to spend time in potential cold homes. Fourteen Warm Places have been established with the support of Public Health Community Funding. This initiative has highlighted a very real need for these informal spaces to continue so, Council staff worked with the "Warm Places" providers to keep the spaces open in the spring and summer and re-badged "Social Spaces".

2.5. Clinical Action Group

Rather than develop new Clinical Action Groups, the Herts & West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) agreed that, as part of the new Health & Wellbeing Strategy, there should be Epping Forest District Council representation on the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Primary Care Locality Groups. This is to ensure that both partners could work together across the clinical system on shared priorities. The groups have performed well in this year delivering a range of district wide and placed-based projects.

2.5.1. West Essex Falls Car Pilot

A new Falls Response Car Service was launched in June 2023. The aim was to reach people who have fallen in a domestic setting within two hours. The specially equipped ambulance vehicle is staffed by an ambulance clinician from the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) and either an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist or Nurse from the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT). This new pilot service benefits patients as it reduces waiting times preventing the further deterioration of the patient's conditions. It also provides specialist care in domestic setting avoiding the need for hospital admission. In the first quarter of operation the service had a non-conveyance rate of 76%.

2.5.2. Health checks in area of health inequality

The Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell (LBC) Primary Care Group's health inequality priority for 2023/24 was to conduct health checks on the over five hundred residents aged 55 years or above who had not had a health check in the past five years and who live in an area of deprivation. The Council supported this particular Primary Care Group to develop a 'Health MOT session'. The session delivered at New City Collage in Loughton saw over 300 residents attend a health check delivered by volunteers with clinician oversight. The 'MOT' was also attended by 7 different system partners who supported residents with mental health, finance, and general lifestyle support.

2.6. Bulit & Natural Environment Action Group

The nature of planning policy and legislation means that it is challenging to deliver projects in this Action Groups area, however, the Group has been able to take forward a number of projects.

2.6.1. Health Impact Assessments (HIA`s)

Health Impact Assessments are intended to establish how a planned development both residential or commercial, can promote healthier lifestyles, support preventing poor health, and encourage inclusivity and accessibility whilst reducing health inequalities. The Group has been able to develop and implement Health Impact Assessment (HIA) quality assurance guidance for the district. This guidance is vital as it sets a standard that HIA must achieve in order to pass the quality assurance assessment. This ensures that all developers must consider the impact of their developments on existing and future populations and mitigate any issues identified with robust tangible solutions at the planning pre-application stage.

2.6.2. Improvements to Abbots Wood Nature Reserve Waltham Abbey

Thanks to Safer Streets Funding improved signage was installed at the entrance of Abbots Wood Nature Reserve in Waltham Abbey. The signage has helped improve wayfinding and knowledge of the nature reserves biodiversity. Furthermore, thanks to Public Health Community Funding, Epping Forest District Museum and Country Care were able to develop and deliver a series of wellbeing walks for children in Waltham Abbey to promote this previously under-used public space. The project engaged 200 children and young people from 5 schools in Waltham Abbey and also involved teenagers who attend the Ninefields Youth Group.

3. Next Steps

3.1. Expansion of place-based approach

Following the success of the place-based approach in Ninefields Waltham Abbey, Epping Forest District Council, with the support of system partners, will be replicating the approach in Limes Farm (Chigwell) and Oakwood Hill (Loughton) to tackle the inequalities that effect the areas. To support this approach a funding bid has been submitted to Essex County Council for Public Health Accelerator Funding. If successful, the funding will enable Epping Forest District Council to recruit additional Community Development Officers to coordinate an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) partnership approach in both areas.

3.2. Alignment of strategic priorities

In support of the whole system approach to health and wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council is aligning the priorities of the strategy across the Economic Development portfolio. This will ensure optimal use of the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funding to boost employment, skills and training opportunities for residents in our areas of greatest deprivation. It will also ensure that economic growth in our district supports improved wellbeing of our residents.

3.3. Fit for the Future

In respect of the councils Fit for the Future transformation programme, enhanced partnership working will be further maximised moving forward, to further support joint priorities in our District.

3.4. Planning for 2024/25

With an ever-growing system of partners working collaboratively across the four multi-agency Action Groups, the groups have begun the process of mapping interventions and projects in order to identify and refresh priorities accordingly. The priorities and the proposed interventions to address key objectives will be presented for approval to the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board in April.

3.5. Impact reporting

To ensure transparency in impact reporting, the Strategy's data dashboard will be updated and published early in the 2024/25 financial year. Alongside this, a full impact report of the 2023/24 Action Plans will also be published. The data and reports will show the system's progress in achieving the health and wellbeing priorities identified in the Strategy.

Reason for decision: To note the progress made on the priorities and objectives of the Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026

Options considered and rejected: NA

Consultation undertaken: System partners are consulted annually on the emerging health and wellbeing priorities for the Epping Forest District as outlined in 2.1 of this report.

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

Legal and Governance Implications, Relevant Statutory Powers: N/A

Corporate Plan Implications: None

Background Papers:

[Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026](#)

Risk Management: N/A

Equality:

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and there was no significant impact.
(Please amend as required - Note the EIA must be carried out and retained but is not required to be submitted)

Key Decision: (if required):N/A