

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 4 March 2010

Subject: Health Inequalities in Epping Forest



Officer contact for further information: Derek Macnab

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (i) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the key issues identified in the presentation by the Director of Public Health.**
- (ii) That the Committee note the ongoing role that the District Council is playing with respect to partnership working and the delivery of services to address Health Inequalities and comment accordingly.**

Report:

Introduction:

1. In November 2008, Ms Alison Cowie, Director of Public Health, West Essex Primary Care Trust gave a presentation to the Committee on the Health Profile of the Epping Forest District. Particular attention was drawn to the health experience and health outcomes between different sectors of our local community. It was explained that these health inequalities can be determined by socio-economic status, geographical area, age, lifestyle, educational attainment, disability, gender or ethnic group. It was explained that improving health and wellbeing and narrowing the health gap between disadvantaged groups and the rest of the population is one of the West Essex Primary Care Trust's key objectives. This has also been reflected as a priority by the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership. Ms Cowie will be giving an update on the Health Profile of the District, highlighting action that is being taken to address health inequalities.

Update:

2. As part of the discussions on Ms Cowie's original presentation, reference was made to a Study undertaken by the Audit Commission in 2008, to assess arrangements across Essex on the Health Inequality Agenda. One of the key findings was that addressing such a complex issue should not be the preserve of any one organisation, but could best be addressed through co-operation and joint action. To this end, when the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership "One Epping Forest" undertook a review of its structure and priorities in early 2009, four main thematic partnership groups were formed, namely Sustainable Communities, Safer Communities, Children and Young People and Healthier Communities.

3. The Healthier Communities Theme Group, chaired jointly by the Assistant Director of Public Health at the West Essex PCT and the County Council Area Co-ordinator, brings together representatives of the various statutory and voluntary agencies who have a role in health improvement. The Group's Terms of Reference are to act as a strategic partnership for the commissioning of health improvement and wellbeing for the population of Epping Forest; ensuring that resources are focused on those services that have the greatest health

need. It is also tasked in trying to ensure that services deliver agreed outcomes in Health and Wellbeing as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (See Appendix 1 for Terms of Reference).

4. The Healthier Communities Group has met on three occasions and based on health profile data, is developing its work programme. Initial focus is likely to be targeting health improvement initiatives in Waltham Abbey to include a bid to the Harlow Health Centre Trust for funding to establish a "Change for Life" Centre in Waltham Abbey. This will be staffed by Health Advisers and provide a range of patient education and prevention programmes, to young people, to include advice and information on sexual health, smoking cessation and obesity prevention.

5. As part of the earlier discussions around Health Inequalities, Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee were interested in the practical role that the District Council plays. It was recognised that the Council has a good track record of engagement with the local Primary Care Trust, jointly delivering a number of initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. These range from the successful GP Referral Schemes and Cardio-Rehab Classes running within the Council's Leisure Centres to outreach programmes run by the Council's Sports and Health Development Staff. Attached at Appendix 2 is an update on some of the current work being undertaken.

6. In November 2008 the Committee confirmed the Council's commitment to work in Partnership with others to address Health Inequalities for our community. This report and presentation seeks to demonstrate current joint action.