

**The West Essex District Councils' Group - A Memorandum of Understanding**

Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils when acting together agree to be known as the West Essex Councils Group.

Whilst each Council has its own sovereignty and characteristics, which each partner will continue to recognize and respect, they are committed to working together to promote the interests of West Essex and to improve their organisational economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Councils collectively recognise:

- The need to promote and to protect the interests of West Essex.
- The need to work together to develop ways to improve their value for money, the performance of their services and their responsiveness to the needs of their communities.
- That significant and continuing constraints on public sector resources mean that there is an increasing need to work collaboratively as the West Essex Councils with each other and with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations to achieve economies and efficiencies.
- The need to maintain their individual roles as community leaders but to work together to develop strategic responses to pan West Essex, sub-regional and national issues.
- Individually, where appropriate, they may need to look beyond West Essex for a solution to a problem affecting their area.

The Councils agree to:

- Jointly provide a strong West Essex voice to ensure that its interests are heard at the highest level and that the resource investments and the commissioning of services by others meet the needs of its communities.

- Work jointly on strategic issues where it is appropriate and will benefit the residents and businesses of, and visitors to, the communities of West Essex.
- Develop opportunities to achieve economies of scale, improved efficiency and improved effectiveness through partnership working together.

The Councils therefore undertake to:

- Always look to a West Essex Councils Group approach to the influencing, commissioning and delivery of services for the benefit of the communities they serve wherever it would facilitate best practice, best outcome and value for money.