

Report to Full Council

Date of meeting: 26 September 2013

Author: Councillor Gavin Chambers

Subject: West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Executive Summary:

Epping Forest District Council agreed in late 2012 to participate in a West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee with Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils. Full Council agreed to appoint two members (Councillors Boyce and Chambers) to represent Epping Forest on the West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee with terms of reference as outlined in Appendix 1 for reference.

The Committee met for the first time at Harlow Council on 23 July 2013.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established Health and Wellbeing Boards as a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. Each County and Unitary Council has its own Health and Wellbeing Board. Board members collaborate to understand community needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners of services to work in a more joined-up way. The intention is that patients and the public should experience more joined-up services from the NHS in the future.

Health and Wellbeing Boards have influence over service commissioning decisions across health, public health and social care. Other services that impact on health and wellbeing, such as housing provision, may also be discussed by the Committee.

It is essential that the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board is relevant and responsive to the needs and priorities within the communities of West Essex. As such, the community leaders for the communities within West Essex (Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford Councils), together with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, agreed the need to have a strong voice within the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board. To ensure that this takes place it was also agreed that West Essex should have a local and democratically accountable forum to support effective joint working to produce better health outcomes.

The West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee aim is to provide a governance structure for partnership working. This Joint Committee consists of representatives from each of the partners; the (3) and co-optees from the CCG (3) with full voting rights. The Joint Committee decide on co-optees/invitees from other partners, but seek to keep the membership of the Committee to a maximum of 15. No decisions at this stage have been made to co-opt other partners but a decision will be made at the next meeting scheduled for October 2013.

It is important to state that the West Essex Joint Committee is not accountable to, nor a part of, the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board but a Joint Committee of the three District Councils. This provides West Essex with a formal locally accountable democratic governance structure with authority to act and the ability to make formal representations to both the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board and to other key players outside of Essex.

Result of the first meeting:

It was agreed that each of the three participating councils would take annual responsibility to chair and host the meetings. Harlow District Council agreed to chair the meeting for the first year.

It was also requested by the three Council representatives that we needed more knowledge of the Clinical Commissioning Group exact responsibilities. A presentation of their work will be given to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

The Clinical Commissioning Group members reinforced that the West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee is not a forum to scrutinise their work but a forum to work together to set priorities for West Essex.

The Committee acknowledged that the wellbeing of West Essex is affected by many things including lifestyle choices, access to health services, housing, leisure facilities, environmental pollution, transport, education, access to care services and economic development. It is important that any approach to community wellbeing should not be limited to a consideration of just health and care service commissioning, but to the wider issues that may affect it.

The three councils have different health needs and the committee is very keen to identify common priorities in the near future. Work has started on a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for West Essex which should achieve this objective. Input into this strategy will also come from 'One Epping Forest' the Local Strategic Partnership's Health and Wellbeing Group, which includes a number of key practitioners and the voluntary sector.

The Committee is still very much in its infancy and further work is needed to ensure that the Committee is effective in its new role and this is why the Committee has decided to meet more frequently than quarterly In the first instance.

I can be contacted at cllr.g.chambers@gmail.com for any questions.

Appendix 1

- (a) To provide effective local democratically accountable leadership for wellbeing within West Essex.*
- (b) To agree a West Essex Wellbeing Strategy to identify the priorities for wellbeing in West Essex and to influence the resource allocation, service commissioning and service provision within West Essex.*
- (c) To act as a Local Health and Wellbeing Partnership for West Essex and to represent the needs and priorities within West Essex in the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board.*
- (d) To monitor the performance of service commissioners and providers in improving the wellbeing of communities within West Essex in the context of the West Essex Wellbeing Strategy.*
- (e) To evaluate the resource allocations within the whole of Essex to ensure that resources reflect comparative needs between communities.*
- (f) To act as an advocate for West Essex for wellbeing issues.*
- (g) To contribute to the development of the Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy.*