



Essex County Council

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

10:30	Thursday, 17 September 2020	Online Meeting
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The meeting will be open to the public via telephone or online. Details about this are on the next page. Please do not attend County Hall as no one connected with this meeting will be present.

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

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Members of the public will be able to view and listen to any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

		Pages
**	Private Pre-Meeting for PAF Members Only Please note that Members are requested to join via Zoom at 9.30am for a pre-meeting.	
1	Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	5 - 5
2	Minutes PAF 23 July 2020 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020.	6 - 11

3 Questions from the Public

A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting. No statement or question shall be longer than three minutes and speakers will be timed.

If you would like to ask a question at the meeting, please email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk before 12

Noon the day before the meeting (Wednesday 16 September).

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5 Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends 54 - 86

6 Work Programme 87 - 90

7 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8 October 2020. This may be a private committee session, meeting in public, briefing etc. - format and timing to be confirmed nearer the time.

8 Urgent Business

To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

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Urgent Exempt Business

To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Committee: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: 4)

Councillor J Chandler	Chairman
Councillor J Baker	Vice-Chairman
Councillor J Deakin	
Councillor B Egan	Vice-Chairman
Councillor M Durham	
Councillor C Guglielmi	
Councillor M Hardware	
Councillor J Lumley	
Councillor P May	
Councillor R Pratt	
Councillor P Reid	
Councillor C Souter	
Councillor M Steptoe	
Councillor L Wagland	

Refreshed nominations are being sought for educational representatives to be co-opted to serve on the Committee as independent non-voting members. These co-opted members may advise and vote on all matters relating to children's services in schools.

Two places are available for church Diocesan representatives. Two further places are available for parent governors at maintained schools in Essex (one primary and one secondary school). An election is being organised for later this month to determine the representative for primary school parent governors as more than one nomination was received.

It is expected that representatives will have been identified in time for them to be in place at the October meeting of the Committee.

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 10.35am by video conference on Thursday, 23 July 2020

Present:

County Councillors:

J Chandler (Chairman)
J Baker (Vice Chairman)
M Durham
B Egan (Vice Chairman)
C Guglielmi
M Hardware
S Lissimore (substitute)
J Lumley
P May
R Pratt
P Reid
C Souter
M Steptoe

Joanna Boaler, Head of Democratic Services and Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, were also present throughout.

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report on updated Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received and noted. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Deakin and Wagland (for whom Councillor Lissimore substituted)

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

4. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Joint Care Quality Commission and OFSTED Inspection

The Committee considered report PAF/14/20 comprising an update on the progress of improvement actions required in response to the CQC/OFSTED inspection of SEND services in Essex.

The following joined the meeting to introduce the item:

County Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member – Education and Skills;

Adrian Coggins - Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council;

Ralph Holloway - Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation, Essex County Council;

Lianne Nunn, Associate Director of Nursing- Mental Health and Children at Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group;

Lisa Nobes, Director of Nursing and Clinical Quality, Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System

During the discussion the following was acknowledged, highlighted and/or noted:

- (i) The inspection had identified three key areas of weakness –
 - too much variation in joint commissioning between CCG areas;
 - apparent over-identification of pupils with moderate Learning Disabilities and uncertainty as to whether it was masking other underlying difficulties;
 - Too many Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) did not comprehensively identify needs and there was ineffective strategic oversight.
- (ii) OFSTED had already recognised that the pace of progress in implementing actions had been adversely impacted by the pandemic and that some key people had been reassigned to new pandemic related responsibilities as a result of it. However, meeting the overall 18-month deadline for completion of all actions was still the target. An OFSTED re-inspection was likely at the end of that 18-month period although the pandemic could yet still impact on that re-inspection timing.
- (iii) Some further clarifications and detail had been requested by OFSTED to supplement the submitted Written Statement of Action (WSOA). These were to make clear how the local area intended to carry out activities and how they would be evaluated.

-
- (iv) The roles of all sectors would be represented in the review of governance. It was highlighted that the Children and Young People's Partnership Board was already a joint health, care and education board. The SEND Improvement Board had met regularly before the lockdown and it had just been rebooted again and it was anticipated that it would meet every two months in future.
 - (v) North East Essex CCG were pleased to take on the role of the health lead for all the Essex CCGs on SEND provision. Some of the work underway was focussed on how to reduce variability across the different CCG areas starting with waiting times - once access to health provision became consistent then that would lead to more robust joint commissioning arrangements.
 - (vi) A risk register would be developed over the next few months to identify risks and mitigating actions. One of biggest risks identified at present was the impact of Covid-19 on young people who had not been able to access formal on-site education for a considerable time.
 - (vii) Whilst the WSOA stressed that the importance of education settings, further clarification had been sought by the CQC/OFSTED on the specific roles and accountabilities of leaders in schools and other educational settings. Clusters of schools would be encouraged to work collaboratively together to deliver some of the changes required.
 - (viii) More work may be done with schools regarding their identification criteria for referral for assessing learning difficulties. It was acknowledged that it was possible that the over-identification of moderate LDs could be linked with an under diagnosis of those on the autism spectrum although early indications suggested it might be more around clearly identifying speech and language difficulties;
 - (ix) The Family Forum would be challenged on the reach of their current engagement and to broaden other communication options to make sure that everyone's voice was captured.
 - (x) It had been identified that EHCPs did not consistently secure the right professional advice to meet needs and did not have specific details of the provision that would be put in place. An independent review of the quality of Health and Social Care plans was underway and would start from the point of identification through to formal assessment.
 - (xi) The WSOA set out the intention to inform parents and carers of intentions to cease EHCPs in a timely way where it was appropriate to do so. However, it was acknowledged that the

plan currently lacked information about how to make sure that the rationale would be clearly understood by parents and carers. Members stressed that it was essential to give parents the confidence that support was still available for them if needed even if no formal EHCP was in place.

- (xii) Members flagged up the Outcome measure relating to the number of young people aged 14 who had been assessed as having SEND and identified as not ready for the next stage of life. The expectation was that greater working with other partners in the system was needed so as to make them ready in future.
- (xiii) There was an acknowledgement that too much focus on specific diagnostic pathways could push families down a certain route/'pipe' and yet sometimes not get a clear diagnosis at the end. Often a young person did not have just one specific challenge or difficulty.

Conclusion:

The Cabinet Member stressed that he considered that significant progress had been made and that joint working had improved.

It was **agreed** that the Committee should continue to monitor progress broadly on a six-monthly basis. In the meantime, an adjusted action plan would be circulated once the timings for improvement actions had been updated.

The two witnesses from the NHS were thanked for their attendance by the Chairman and then left the meeting. The remaining witnesses stayed to support the following agenda item.

5. Essex County Council - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Structure Update

The Committee considered report PAF/15/20 updating members an update on the implementation of the SEND redesign and to inform the Committee of the impact of Covid-19 on the ability to undertake an early review of the new structure with schools, settings and parents.

The following remained from the previous agenda item to introduce the item and respond to questions:

County Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member – Education and Skills;

Adrian Coggins - Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council;

Ralph Holloway - Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation, Essex County Council;

During the discussion the following was acknowledged, highlighted and/or noted:

- (i) The ability of the Education senior leadership team to work with schools and education settings to assess the success of the launch of the new service in January 2020 had been significantly impacted by Covid 19. The postholders in the new posts designed to support schools and other settings had been severely restricted in their ability to work and any review of the service at this stage would have been limited. However, officers stressed that the new SEND structure has been instrumental in meeting the challenges of Covid 19 in a way in which the previous structure could not have supported;
- (ii) The support for schools and other settings included the design and completion of individual risk assessments to determine whether it was safer for vulnerable children and young people to be in school or at home. This had enabled a multi-agency approach to risk assessment across schools, education, social care and health;
- (iii) A comprehensive response plan had been designed with input from the Essex Family Forum which had seen schools work with families and other agencies to look at which elements of a EHCP could not be met during the pandemic restrictions and, where there were gaps, using reasonable endeavours (as permitted under temporary emergency legislation) to provide other forms of support such as outreach work or a virtual learning platform;
- (iv) The recently announced new special schools to be built were Free Schools but these were not outside the mainstream Essex educational system and would fill a 'gap' in the current provision;
- (v) Individual circumstances would determine if it was better to educate a young person with SEND in a mainstream or special school. The challenge was to enable and facilitate all mainstream schools to be able to step up to meet the need and further collaboration between the two sectors would assist this.

Conclusion:

It was **agreed** to provide monthly analysis on attendance at school during the lock-down, and planned recovery actions, at a meeting of the Committee in Autumn.

The witnesses were thanked for their attendance by the Chairman and then left the meeting.

6. Work Programme

The Committee considered and noted report PAF/10/20 comprising the current work programme for the Committee. Some changes would be made to the scheduled timing for items in September and October.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 10 September 2020.

[Subsequently the date of the next meeting was re-arranged and confirmed as Thursday 17 September 2020].

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Chairman

Task and Finish Group Report – Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

Reference Number: PAF/17/20

Report title: Task and Finish Group Report – Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 17 September 2020	For: To consider receipt and endorsement of the report and identifying follow-up actions
Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

This is the final report of the Task and Finish Group established in response to the Full Council request for this Committee to look at the multi-agency response to the issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County lines in Essex.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Receive and endorse the attached final report of the Task and Finish Group looking at the multi-agency response to the issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex (Appendix).
- (ii) To consider how it wishes to monitor future progress in multi-agency working and timing for any updates;
- (iii) To consider how it wishes to monitor implementation of recommendations, including identifying ownership of each recommendation and timing for any updates;

3. Background

The issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines was discussed at Full Council on 12 December 2018 and the following motion passed:

'This Council recognises the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as a local, regional and national issue.

This Council commends the work of multi-agency statutory and voluntary partners in Essex, Southend and Thurrock in relation to these issues, particularly given the judgement of "Outstanding" by Her Majesty's

Task and Finish Group Report – Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

Inspectorate of Probation, following a recent inspection.

This Council is pleased to see this work is being recognised by the Home Office in awarding the sum of £640k to the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner's Office to further expand this multi-agency work.

This Council therefore:

- *Calls upon all political parties to work together to drive down the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines on the residents of Essex.*
- *Requests that the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has oversight of and contributes to the multi-agency strategy and its development.'*

The Committee resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at the issue in more detail which met for the first time in July 2019. Working closely with Tanya Gillett, Head of Youth Offending, the Group then held 12 evidence sessions over five main evidence days between August – December 2019. Discussions were held with a variety of witnesses ranging from a National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines, Essex Police, the Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, and representatives from community and voluntary groups through to County Council Cabinet Members and Officers (these are listed in Annex 3 to the report).

The Group has been beset by various delays in finalising its review and final report culminating in the pandemic lockdown and a decision was then taken to not attempt to publish the report until social restrictions began to be relaxed.

The conclusions of the Task and Finish Group are at the end of the report starting on page 26. These conclusions comment on partnership working, leadership, funding, the role of education and raising awareness, and communication and transparency. As a result, the Task and Finish Group has made eight recommendations reproduced below for ease of reference:

Increasing prevention and intervention

Recommendation 1 – that further consideration be given to:

- (i) identifying the gaps in educational provision for young people on the periphery of exclusion;
- (ii) finding further alternative options to support schools dealing with behavioural problems instead of exclusion and, where a young person has been excluded, that there is resource allocated to facilitate a safe return to formal education;
- (iii) encouraging schools to minimise the number of young people being excluded and to sign-up to the Inclusion Policy if they have not already done so;
- (iv) requiring schools to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to an exclusion;

Task and Finish Group Report – Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

(v) support a process whereby schools continue to be held accountable for the educational attainment and welfare of permanently excluded pupils;

(vi) resources being made available to schools to facilitate the safe return to school following an exclusion.

(vii) having clearer oversight of the off-rolling process at schools and encouraging clearer and comprehensive guidance being available to parents and carers contemplating off-rolling.

(viii) reviewing the current provision of the Pupil Referral Unit and look to expand this closer to a full-time syllabus.

Recommendation 2:

That a more visible comprehensive directory of locally available youth services and support groups should be available including those initiatives commissioned and funded by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit).

Recommendation 3:

That the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider reviewing the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity in Essex.

Recommendation 4:

(i) The Group supports the work being done with London Boroughs to investigate developing a broader informative notification process and sharing interim support costs;

(ii) That the County Council should continue to work with Essex District Councils to develop a process for the County Council to have a greater input and influence on consideration of applications for permitted development rights and that relevant officers ensuring ongoing links with the work of the VVU. [Note: This will ensure that cases like the Terminus House in Harlow should never happen again].

(iii) That national lobbying be considered for government to review the permitted development rights process.

Adding Value to existing and planned activities

Recommendation 5:

That further local funding granted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex by local partners (such as Essex County Council) should be provided on a conditional basis making clear that:

(i) it should be spent on community initiatives focussed in the County of Essex;

Task and Finish Group Report – Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

(ii) there should be the expectation that much of it should link to the priorities around county lines identified by the Community and Safety Partnerships; and

(iii) a clear assessment framework be established to review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from the allocated funding.

Cross border and partnership working

Recommendation 6:

That there should be a regular review of the leadership of key strategic groups as part of maintaining overall diversity of leadership within the governance structure.

Recommendation 7:

District Councils have local connections and influence and should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of county lines and building resilience in the community.

Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity

Recommendation 8:

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit should drive and lead a local communications strategy that should focus on how drug taking is socially unacceptable and highlight the personal abuse and harm that is seen and exercised through the supply line.

4. Update and Next Steps

The final report is attached as an Appendix. Next steps are as outlined under Section 2 - Action Required.

The following have been specifically invited to attend to give their initial response to the conclusions and recommendations in the report:

County Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member – Education and Skills;
County Councillor Dick Madden, Cabinet Member – Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships;
County Councillor Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

5 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – final report of the Task and Finish Group looking at the multi-agency response to the issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex

Drug gangs, knife crime and county lines

A report by a Task and Finish Group
established by the People and Families
Policy and Scrutiny Committee

September 2020

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Foreword

This report responds to a request from Full Council that there is oversight of the development of multi-agency working to confront the issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex.

Task and Finish Group Members have recognised that their main task was to ensure that the County Council was getting value for money for its financial contribution to the multi-agency working and that this funding was making a difference in the lives of those young people caught in the awful trap of County Lines. However, it became apparent right at the offset that this social scourge on our communities also has had a significant effect on our public services.

We most certainly hope that the findings within this report will be picked up and given serious consideration by the relevant bodies outside Essex County Council, otherwise it would be a truly short-sighted response to the work that has been carried out. We will be distributing a copy of it to all Essex MPs, and to those relevant Counties who are plagued by the same issues.

Our Recommendations are directed to local agencies and government and includes suggesting that future contributions by Essex County Council to the local multi-agency working be made conditional and encouraging London Boroughs to forge stronger partnership working with all the Essex Districts, Boroughs, and City Council to combat County Lines.

The report highlights the short shelf life, and the irregular way of funding granted by government - this needs to be urgently reviewed so that a coherent strategy to combat County Lines can be supported and sustained. While it is difficult to compare directly with Glasgow, it is noted that they seem to have had access to more sustainable longer-term funding.

As our work was undertaken before the Covid-19 Pandemic, it does not comment or speculate on its impact on County Lines activity as it is too early to do so.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow Task and Finish Group members for their commitment and due diligent approach and professionalism during this review.

I commend this report to you.

COUNCILLOR CARLO GUGLIELMI

Lead Member

Task and Finish Group - Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

September 2020

Executive Summary

This review was prompted by a request by Essex County Council's Full Council for the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the multi-agency response in Essex to the challenge of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines and contribute to the multi-agency strategy and its development. The background, establishment of this review and its Terms of Reference are detailed in Annex 1 to this report.

The Task and Finish Group has sought to focus on the effectiveness of multi-agency funding and joint working. It's primary source of evidence has been through face to face discussions with a variety of stakeholders as listed in Annex 3. This evidence has been supplemented by some presentational and written material which is listed in Annex 4.

The conclusions of the Task and Finish Group are at the end of the report starting on page 26. These conclusions comment on partnership working, leadership, funding, the role of education and raising awareness, and communication and transparency.

As a result, the Task and Finish Group has made eight recommendations:

- seeking to minimise school exclusions;
- further promoting a directory of youth services;
- that the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity;
- increasing local input to permitted development rights;
- improving accountability and governance around multi-agency funding;
- seeking greater diversity of leadership in the local multi-agency governance structures;
- seeking a greater role of district councils in promoting community awareness; and
- suggesting a different focus for future public communication strategies.

These are all listed together overleaf for ease of reference but also appear individually within the main part of this report.

Recommendations

The Group has made eight recommendations and requests that these should be carefully considered for implementation.

Increasing prevention and intervention

Recommendation 1 (page 14) – that further consideration be given to:

- (i) identifying the gaps in educational provision for young people on the periphery of exclusion;
- (ii) finding further alternative options to support schools dealing with behavioural problems instead of exclusion and, where a young person has been excluded, that there is resource allocated to facilitate a safe return to formal education;
- (iii) encouraging schools to minimise the number of young people being excluded and to sign-up to the Inclusion Policy if they have not already done so;
- (iv) requiring schools to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to an exclusion;
- (v) support a process whereby schools continue to be held accountable for the educational attainment and welfare of permanently excluded pupils;
- (vi) resources being made available to schools to facilitate the safe return to school following an exclusion.
- (vii) having clearer oversight of the off-rolling process at schools and encouraging clearer and comprehensive guidance being available to parents and carers contemplating off-rolling.
- (viii) reviewing the current provision of the Pupil Referral Unit and look to expand this closer to a full-time syllabus.

Recommendation 2 (page 17):

That a more visible comprehensive directory of locally available youth services and support groups should be available including those initiatives commissioned and funded by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit).

Recommendation 3 (page 18):

That the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider reviewing the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity in Essex.

Recommendation 4 (page 18):

- (i) The Group supports the work being done with London Boroughs to investigate developing a broader informative notification process and sharing interim support costs;
- (ii) That the County Council should continue to work with Essex District Councils to develop a process for the County Council to have a greater input and influence on consideration of applications for permitted development rights and that relevant officers ensuring ongoing links with the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Unit. [Note: This will ensure that cases like the Terminus House in Harlow should never happen again].
- (iii) That national lobbying be considered for government to review the permitted development rights process.

Adding Value to existing and planned activities

Recommendation 5 (page 20):

That further local funding granted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex by local partners (such as the County Council) should be provided on a conditional basis making clear that:

- (i) it should be spent on community initiatives focussed in the County of Essex;
- (ii) there should be the expectation that much of it should link to the priorities around county lines identified by the Community and Safety Partnerships; and
- (iii) a clear assessment framework be established to review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from the allocated funding.

Cross border and partnership working

Recommendation 6 (page 23):

That there should be a regular review of the leadership of key strategic groups as part of maintaining overall diversity of leadership within the governance structure.

Recommendation 7 (page 24):

Essex District Councils have local connections and influence and should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of county lines and building resilience in the community.

Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity

Recommendation 8 (page 26):

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit should drive and lead a local communications strategy that should focus on how drug taking is socially unacceptable and highlight the personal abuse and harm that is seen and exercised through the supply line.

Findings and evidence

Context

County Lines is a term used for organised drug dealing networks usually controlled from urban areas which distribute illegal drugs across a county using runners, who are often young and vulnerable, which is co-ordinated by utilising dedicated untraceable mobile phones. County Lines is based around supplying drugs that drive dependence and addiction.

The criminal gangs operating in England are complex and ruthless organisations, which use sophisticated techniques to groom children and chilling levels of violence to keep them compliant

Source: Children's Commissioner – Keeping Kids Safe – February 2019

It is estimated that there are 2200-2300 working County Lines in England and Wales (source National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines) with around 135 lines coming into Essex at the time of this review (source: Essex Police - 2019). Whilst it is thought that County Lines operations are essentially exports from large cities (London in the case of Essex), there is also some evidence that there are some County Lines operations coming into Essex across borders other than from London (e.g. Suffolk). Essex's location makes it a prime target for County Lines, being close to London and having good transport links.

In addition, it is estimated that there are just over 40 mapped gangs in Essex with the majority of them home-grown. These tend to have a common and successful local business plan and purpose and often get supplies from elsewhere other than through County Lines operations. There is some suggestion that different tactics and approach may be needed to confront these particular gangs.

However, agencies are specifically seeing a robust 'franchise model' in operation where County Lines come into an area and take over already successful local drug supply operations.

Essex is no different to other areas in seeing significant criminal exploitation of young people. There is also an indication that there is increasing in-county exploitation (exporting to elsewhere in Essex). Essex County Council representatives reported there was evidence that ever younger children were being exploited.

27,000 children in England identify as a gang member but there are children who are groomed and exploited by gangs who would not identify as gang members:

- 313,000 know a gang member

- 60,000 are gang members or siblings of gang members
- 34,000 know a gang member and have been a victim of violence

Source: British Crime Data held by the Office of National Statistics

Comparisons with other areas still suggest that Essex is a relatively safe area in which to live. Overall fewer young people are actually using drugs so there is a need to keep a perspective. Most violent crime against individuals is being conducted within a mile and a half of their home and predominantly the violence is not being imported into their area – only the drugs. Despite this there are still a substantial number of serious offences being recorded with arrests for trafficking drugs having increased by 30% in recent years although this may also be partly due to increased police activity and vigilance. At the same time, a visible local police presence should have some deterrent effect on most forms of street crime.

Essex has the highest number of violent incidents linked to county lines across the East of England. Serious violence in Essex is increasing at a lower rate in Essex than the rest of the country but it is still rising, and its high profile can have a detrimental impact on local communities. Serious violence offences are concentrated, with clusters around urban areas, and town centres. The following areas have all shown significantly higher volumes of serious violence – Basildon, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Grays and Tilbury, Harlow and Southend.

In the year to September 2019: In Essex 2271 individuals had been affected by serious violence including 920 suspects and 1390 victims.

Source: Essex Police

Whilst some of the drug related serious violence can be shocking and traumatic, a considered perspective is still needed on such an emotive issue to get proper context and avoid creating a moral panic. The availability of illegal drugs supplied through local operations is not a new phenomenon but it is now being more efficiently run through a dynamic evolving business model which enforces its operations in a robust and violent manner with few moral boundaries.

The rate of serious violence offences is significantly higher for 16-21 year-olds than any other age grouping

Source: HM Government – Serious Violence Strategy – April 2018

This Task and Finish Group review has spoken to a number of key contributors to ascertain how the local system is responding to challenges and the extent and effectiveness of multi-agency working. It has not focussed on the causes of knife crime as there is already significant research available on that.

The Violence and Vulnerability Framework in Essex

The Government's response to the increase in serious violence in the last few years has been to establish a Serious Violence Strategy in April 2018. The strategy identified the risk of county lines gangs as a key driver of the increase and places a new focus on early intervention alongside robust law enforcement. Various funding initiatives have arisen from that.

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) has been established as a multi-disciplinary partnership team led by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex and includes Essex Police, the Youth Offending Service and other agencies and is set up to deliver on the objectives set out in the Violence and Vulnerability Framework. The VVU undertakes joint operations and interventions and encourages further sharing of data and intelligence across all those agencies where appropriate.

The VVU is also expected to highlight where cross-border and partnership working would be beneficial. It is recognised that this is a complex governance structure with all partner agencies looking at the issue and they need to avoid duplication of work as there are so many different strands of work.

During 2019/20 the work programme of the VVU was utilising a partnerships fund of approximately £2.2 million, made up of £350,000 from the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund, £1.16m from Home Office funding to establish local Violence Reduction Units, £500,000 contributed by Essex County Council and a contribution of £200,000 from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. With partners providing funding, the whole local system needs to have confidence in the governance and financial management of the work being undertaken and so the Group has also considered this aspect during its review and comments elsewhere in this report. This funding has continued into 2020/21 but future funding beyond that is uncertain. It is unclear whether Thurrock or Southend have made any financial contribution to this fund.

Separately, Essex Police have been awarded 'surge' funding from the Home Office to help directly with targeting county lines activities being run by drug gangs operating in Essex. Police surge funding is primarily operational and street focussed and often involves short term enforcement activity. In December 2019 a further £1.1m of government funding was announced.

The VVU has five broad strategic objectives and we have structured the rest of the report under those headings for ease of reference (although not necessarily in the same order as stated by the VVU) and to make linkages clearer and more transparent.

Increasing prevention and intervention

The voice of young offenders

The Group were very interested in a research and evaluation project conducted by the Essex Youth Offending Service during the summer of 2019. The project looked at the lived experiences of young people and families and carers exposed to County Lines, gangs and criminal exploitation in Essex. Front-line practitioners were used as researchers so there was a better understanding of the views being stated by young offenders' on how well the wider system worked for them. At the same time the project also gained different perspectives of the same relationships (i.e. family, social worker, young person) and a common message was that the signs of vulnerability and exploitation were there to be seen and that the Essex system should have seen them earlier.

People who can be groomed into it are looking for a bit of family, a bit of love and just want to belong to someone or something. That's how it tends to start

Police Officer - Youth Offending Service – 2019 Summer Project

Some of the most common triggers exposing young people to be criminally exploited to be identified in the project were a sense of isolation or exclusion from school, family and friends. This can be exacerbated by bullying and underachieving academically which can be attributable to unmet learning needs. Schools are in prime position to identify early signs of vulnerability and exploitation. Yet one of the common issues raised during the project about what young people wanted to see done differently was that greater effort should be made to keep young people engaged in school which might mean a more non-academic focus for some but to identify what interests them and who they engage with.

Between 2006/7 and 2012/13 the number of permanent exclusions in England reduced by nearly half, but it has risen by 40% over the past three years.

Source: House of Commons Education Committee (2018) Forgotten Children: Alternate Provision and the Scandal of Ever-Increasing Exclusions, Fifth Report of Session 2017-19

The Timpson review of school exclusion has also stressed the protective role of schools and the opportunity for young people to build trusted relationships in them. With the exception of home, the school environment is probably the only environment where a young person can benefit from safeguarding, health and wellbeing and learning.

Therefore, early intervention can be a key step in reducing the recruitment of vulnerable children. Such intervention must start in schools which can offer a protective environment through building support mechanisms, relatable role models and awareness amongst teaching and non-teaching staff. The investment increasing awareness and support should complement direct enforcement operations against gangs which is critical to establishing an overall system that helps prevent young people from being exploited.

Early Help

Members heard that many schools have struggled to adapt and respond to the challenge of the County Lines gang model (as opposed to the traditional gang model) and that further work is ongoing to fully understand where vulnerability is originating in and around the school environment. So much of a robust response will depend on the leadership and transparency of each school which does seem to vary considerably across the county. There needs to be greater clarity on the message to schools on how to confront the challenges – for example most schools have a zero-tolerance policy towards the carrying of knives and possession of drugs but that leads to more permanent exclusions which may then make those excluded more vulnerable to exploitation. However, at the moment, schools are limited in their available responses to disruptive and violent pupils.

Risk Avert

There is evidence that the Risk Avert behavioural programme encouraging personal resilience is changing personal behaviours. Until recently this has been focussed at secondary schools with around two thirds of them taking it up although schools often raise the issue of their capacity to deliver the programme. The ECC School Improvement Team do not specifically visit schools on the issue of take-up and this could be reviewed. A primary schools version launched in 2019. At the moment, there was only anecdotal evidence that the programme had cut the numbers of exclusions and referrals to multi-agency safeguarding hubs. It was also reported at the time of the Group's evidence session in late 2019 that the Youth Service had not yet fully engaged with the programme.

Peer support

Some members of the Group have seen local schools piloting forms of peer support, mainly in terms of mental health and wellbeing, led by older pupils. However, in the

instances cited the initiative did not extend to whistleblowing opportunities in respect of drug use and drug dealing.

The dynamic county lines business model in schools is only being challenged through Educational programmes when perhaps more is needed.

Exclusions

Being excluded from school can materially change a child's 'direction of life' and members heard a number of witnesses stressing that the basis for exclusions needed more attention to ascertain if thresholds for exclusion were too low and discretionary.

They [gangs] tend to target marginalised children with multiple interlinked vulnerabilities both at individual level – such as mental health or special educational needs – and at family level – such as abuse and neglect.

Source: Children's Commissioner 2019 – Keeping Kids Safe.

Exclusions are an important component of effective behaviour management in a school but they should be a last resort in a long-line of disciplinary measures. The Group has heard that outcomes for these children can be poor. The Timpson Review, in particular, concluded that exclusions affected academic outcomes and that those excluded achieved poorer academic outcomes on average compared to their peers in mainstream education. In addition, it is widely acknowledged that those excluded can become more vulnerable to exploitation.

Between 2006/7 and 2012/13 the number of permanent exclusions in England reduced by nearly half, but it has risen by 40% over the past three years.

Source: House of Commons Education Committee (2018) Forgotten Children: Alternate Provision and the Scandal of Ever-Increasing Exclusions, Fifth Report of Session 2017-19

Everything should be done to prevent a young person from being excluded from school and exclusions should only be a last resort. Schools should be required to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to excluding the pupil. With this in mind, the Group were pleased to note the programme underway to encourage schools to sign up to an Inclusion Statement.

...while it is incorrect to suggest that exclusion of any kind causes crime, or that preventing the use of exclusion would, by itself, prevent crime, it should be recognised that school exclusion is one indicator of a higher risk of exposure to, and involvement in, crime.”

Source: Gov.UK (2019) – Timpson Review of School Exclusion, online.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) do not provide a full-time timetable. Therefore, pupils can have more spare time on their hands and possibly be more vulnerable to exploitation. Placing all excluded pupils together in one place also could create a further risk of exploitation. With that in mind, the Group were particularly pleased to hear that the PRU model for primary school pupils is being reviewed to try to reduce the mixing of vulnerable primary school pupils with secondary age pupils. However, further thought needs to be given to how the PRU model can avoid being a ‘breeding ground’ for further exploitation.

There has been a significant capital programme investment in the Pupil Referral Unit estate and future communications around this should be carefully drafted to avoid giving an impression that extra capacity is being created solely to encourage an expansion in the number of exclusions.

The Group has been interested in the links between PRUs and the community and voluntary sector. Vulnerable Pupil Referral panels already look at individual circumstances and the YOS has data suggesting a significant improvement in those cases where there have been bespoke personal packages put in place.

Recommendation 1 – That further consideration be given to:

- (i) Identifying the gaps in educational provision for young people on the periphery of exclusion;
- (ii) Finding further alternative options to support schools dealing with behavioural problems instead of exclusion and, where a young person has been excluded, that there is resource allocated to facilitate a safe return to formal education;
- (iii) Encouraging schools to minimise the number of young people being excluded and to sign-up to the Inclusion Policy if they have not already done so;
- (iv) Requiring schools to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to an exclusion;
- (v) Support a process whereby schools continue to be held accountable for the educational attainment and welfare of permanently excluded pupils;

- (vi) Resources being made available to schools to facilitate the safe return to school following an exclusion.
- (vii) Having clearer oversight of the off-rolling process at schools and encouraging clearer and comprehensive guidance being available to parents and carers contemplating off-rolling.
- (viii) Reviewing the current provision of the Pupil Referral Unit and look to expand this closer to a full-time syllabus.

There was suggestion from voluntary and community group witnesses that some disruptive young people could have their teaching hours reduced by the school but still remain on the school roll so that the school could still receive funding for them. The Group have viewed this as anecdotal evidence and cannot verify if this is a widespread practice or not but any reduction in teaching hours should be discouraged.

Pastoral support

Voluntary and community group witnesses have highlighted to the Group their concerns that schools may be reducing their levels of pastoral support (albeit evidence was anecdotal and area specific and so may not be able to be extrapolated across the county). However, this is a possible consequence if schools feel they are under budgetary pressures in being asked to provide other additional oversight and support services. Whilst the voluntary sector can provide opportunities for socialisation and developing peer group support networks this perhaps is not as linked-in with formal education facilities as it could be.

Home schooled children

There is a further challenge for home-schooled children (who may or may not have been excluded as a precursor to being home-schooled) as often they are not in any regular contact with school peer groups and will not necessarily have access to educational and emotional support programmes available if they were enrolled at a mainstream school. This is compounded by the County Council having no oversight of the delivery of the curriculum and teaching standards in the home. The Group are aware of and endorse the conclusions of the cross-party group led by Councillor Gooding, Cabinet Member – Education and Skills, looking at these challenges and the planned lobbying approach.

Whilst not receiving specific evidence on the matter, there is also some suggestion that drug and gang issues are not just reserved just to the state education sector and that private school pupils can also be vulnerable to exploitation and may not access or benefit from mainstream educational and support programmes. In these

circumstances, the existence and ongoing support of services such as the Safe In Essex early intervention service delivered by the Children's Society is essential as an option before any formal referral to Family Solutions.

Training

There seems to be an acknowledgement that there may need to be more thought about how ECC works with schools to both help further improve their education offer and, where necessary, to challenge them. This enablement and challenge should be multi-agency with police, and other agencies forming a collegiate approach to assisting schools. The ECC Education department can serve as a conduit between these agencies, stakeholders and partners and should be further encouraged to build upon existing relationships.

Parenting support

Parenting support services are vitally important as part of enabling a strong early intervention and prevention approach. These can be universal available across early years services, social workers and youth offending service amongst others as well as some specific early help that is delivered through the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service. The Group supports the regulatory framework enforced through OFSTED on the schools safeguarding policies.

Youth services

There has been significant media coverage of reduced funding in local government and, in particular, reductions in the number of youth clubs. Members have heard from ECC that despite those reductions it was felt that the overall effectiveness of youth delivery had improved in Essex with more delivered away from school settings and in the community instead. Members felt that that assertion probably needs to be further challenged as access to community run groups could be more limited, be subject to more discretionary eligibility criteria, and have concerns about long-term funding and sustainability. In any case, it is clear that the issues currently being confronted cannot be solely, or probably neither significantly, attributable to that change in youth services. Young people are being targeted by a ruthless business model which will continue to target young people (and entice them with promises of greatly exaggerated earnings) irrespective until demand and supply of illegal drugs can be significantly reduced.

The Group also notes the reduction in front-line police numbers in recent years and that this would have had some effect on the capacity of police to engage in their local communities and build positive relationships with young people in schools and on the

streets. This has been particularly evident in wider resource planning and restructuring leading to a reduction in the number of community support officers and school outreach officers. It was reported that the Commander in Chelmsford had started to put some officers back into a liaison role with local schools. Recent Government announcements now indicate further funding to the Police and it is hoped that a significant portion of it can go to increase community and neighbourhood policing.

Recommendation 2:

That a more visible comprehensive directory of locally available youth services and support groups should be available including those initiatives commissioned and funded by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit).

Public Health

There is an important role for Public Health to promote prevention and early intervention as relying on retribution and punishment through the justice system will not be sufficient to eliminate the drug gang culture and operations. A Public Health approach has to be multi-agency to fully understand the issue through evidence and respond to it through carefully designed interventions. The objectives are to reduce re-offending and improve health and social functioning but achieving this is getting more complicated due to the complexity of the system and presenting issues.

In Essex an integrated health and justice service has been developed to better serve the needs of the individual and develop more meaningful community interventions. The Group were encouraged to hear that there were future plans to more effectively identify complex presenting issues and develop a wider range of referral routes and provision for offenders and those vulnerable to committing crime. The Full Circle service now provides some brokered support to offenders fulfilling a probation order and only 7% who enter Full Circle then re-offend in the next 12 months. The Horizons project works intensively with a small number of the most difficult individuals to integrate them into the community and provide ongoing support. Those with gangs related offences will have targeted provision. It is noted that both the Full Circle and Horizons Projects are services for adults.

Members have noted the public health approach in Scotland which it is thought contributed to reducing violent crime. However, at a local Essex level there needs to be more evidence of the impact of such an approach on day to day practice.

Recommendation 3:

That the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider reviewing the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity in Essex.

Local Planning Framework

Members heard concerns raised by a number of witnesses about the apparent increasing use of permitted development rights to change previous commercial and industrial property to residential use and the concentration of these new developments in specific areas of the county. Planning permission was no longer required for such change of use and this could be used by local authorities to relocate people - often from the London Borough areas. The YOS has seen such an increase in the number of people transferring from London Borough areas and members have challenged whether there need to more robust discussions with these 'exporting' councils. It is acknowledged that there is some ongoing work with the London Boroughs to discuss a broader more informative notification being made to the importing authority (beyond just the s208 notification that making a placement) and a possible agreement with them to pay some interim support costs. The Police confirmed that there was some evidence of a rise in unsocial behaviour but did highlight also that some of the noticeable levels of migration into Harlow, for example, actually was from Thurrock. With BAME and other vulnerable groups often disproportionately represented at these re-purposed sites, the Group feels that the County Council should be empowered to have greater control over permitted development rights and resulting residential accommodation that is created.

Recommendation 4:

- (i) The Group supports the work being done with London Boroughs to investigate developing a broader informative notification process and sharing interim support costs;
- (ii) That the County Council should continue to work with Essex District Councils to develop a process for it to have a greater influence on consideration of applications for permitted development rights and that relevant officers ensure ongoing links with the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Unit.
- (iii) That national lobbying be considered for government to review the permitted development rights process.

Adding Value to existing and planned activities

The nature of funding

Members heard from multiple witnesses that the short-term nature of the Home Office grant funding to the local Violence and Vulnerability Strategy and Framework did not allow 'capability-building' within communities nor provide sustainability. It means that many funding structures are still focussed on short-term interventions so it is difficult for local organisations to plan a programme or project that could make a permanent change and improvement. In some cases, there also could be gaps in delivery due to funding insecurity. Voluntary and community representatives emphasised the importance and need of stable, sustainable and long-term funding to provide certainty for planning purposes. Yet they felt that funding was often provided as part of a 'knee jerk' reaction. All of this can undermine the broader public health approach that everyone believes is essential.

The use of funding

As a key part of their review, members sought clarification on the decision-making process and accountability for how partnership funding was being allocated and spent. In particular, the Vulnerability and Violence Unit Board, which had representation from various partner agencies and chaired by the PFC Commissioner, needed to be clear and accountable for decisions being made and evaluating impact.

The Group wanted to see evidence of, and test, the success of interventions being funded through partnership monies but were not reassured at this time that there was a proper process in place for this that was being co-ordinated and monitored by the PFCC. This needs to be developed over time otherwise there is a risk that focus switches back to enforcement, the impact of which is easier to measure.

The first tranche of VVF funding was used to commission external consultants to report on (and evaluate) interventions that had already showed some evidence of working. The PFCC admitted that on reflection the report had not gone as far and they would have wanted it to as they already knew they wanted to continue to invest in some existing projects and test new ways of working. The report had cost £30,000 and members were concerned that, at the time of challenging the PFCC about how money was being spent, that this report was one of the more prominent activities being highlighted by the PFCC.

The Group are disappointed that the late provision of the work programme prevented the Group from being able to spend more time discussing at the work programme in more detail.

It is fair to say that funding from partners (such as Essex County Council) was initially provided without any conditions and without the hindsight of knowing about the award of national funding as well. It seems that this has perhaps led to the perception that less accountability to local partners was needed on the use of funds.

There has been some reluctance in providing the Group with information on this in an easily digestible and transparent manner. Perhaps the legal and regulatory framework for formal accountability and scrutiny of PFCC (through the Police, Fire and Crime Panel) has not helped the Group pursue its work with the PFCC and diluted its potential influence. The Group has been frustrated by this and the significant delay in being provided with any form of financial breakdown, or an analysis of outcomes, after requesting it and feels that the scrutiny function should form part of the governance process for this information.

Recommendation 5:

That further local funding granted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex by local partners (such as Essex County Council) should be provided on a conditional basis making clear that:

- (i) It should be spent on community initiatives focussed in the County of Essex;
- (ii) There should be the expectation that much of it should link to the priorities around county lines identified by the Community and Safety Partnerships; and
- (iii) A clear assessment framework be established to review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from the allocated funding.

Gaps in current and planned activities

Police and neighbourhood policing

Using government 'surge' funding Essex Police had spent £1.7m for focussed street-led activity at the time of the review. As a result, there had been a 255% increase in the use of stop and search activity in the year to August 2019. This broadly correlated with the increase in arrests. Whilst the funding had enabled more investigations there was also some work looking at education settings and, in particular, PRUs but this needs to be pursued sensitively with schools (see section on Exclusions and PRUs).

The Group heard from a number of witnesses in the community that they were not seeing the most effective engagement with neighbourhood policing but with anecdotal evidence that Neighbourhood Watch meetings often focus on enforcement rather than one to one engagement. The Group believes there is a challenge here for the Police (through the VVU) to further resource community policing and ensure greater consistency as part of the overall system response.

National considerations

The Group heard from the National Crime Agency Co-ordinator and other witnesses that they would like to encourage more focus on prosecutions for modern slavery (as more prohibitive) rather than possession of Class A drugs. There have also been some pilot projects where custody officers had also had lines of questioning to use to try and identify coercion and vulnerability.

Perhaps performance indicators for the Police are too quantitative and could impact on the ability and opportunity to assess those apprehended as if they are victims. It was suggested during discussions that there could be a greater focus on safeguarding and vulnerability when young people were brought into custody. Such a focus could reduce further exploitation and re-offending. The Group were pleased to hear that a County lines code had been created for inputting on the national police database which flashes up for repeat offences and possible vulnerability but all partner agencies need to be able to access such indicators. There could also be an opportunity for neighbourhood policing teams to take a greater role.

Whilst there may have been more funding for police there had been a reduction in funding for the criminal justice system in recent years leading to an increase in waiting times. A change in bail laws also means that a young person can be arrested and then not immediately charged and, instead, released pending further investigation. However, in doing this, by the time the young person did eventually appear at court they may have committed multiple further offences in the meantime. ECC was working with the Youth Offending Teams in Southend and Thurrock to intervene earlier and have support in place for that period before the case comes before court.

The Group have discussed the wide range of Essex Youth Offending Service (YOS) provided interventions including pre and post Court support. The YOS has two key priorities – increase the use of Restorative Interventions and improve access to good quality education and training for young people in contact with the service. The YOS has the benefit of enhanced provision for young people at risk of custody or who are assessed as posing a high risk of harm. The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) can be a condition of bail or be an alternative intervention to custody and seeks to engage young people through daily activities designed to enable them to move away from serious offending . It is based on a bespoke plan for each individual which could include attending relevant courses, undertaking community work or some one-to-one sessions. The YOS adopts an evidence informed approach to its work and as current evidence suggests that re-offending rates for those who have participated in restorative justice interventions is much lower this is ‘woven’ through all interventions including ISS.

Due to the intensity of the programme (7 days a week), ISS is only available to a small number of people at any one time and it is difficult to quantify the money that ISS is saving the overall local system. The Group are very aware not to rush to conclusions on the upside of any ‘released under investigation’/released on bail

options as there can still be safeguarding issues and the individual released without mobile phone, or money could still be particularly vulnerable and at risk.

Data collection

Despite a strong commitment to multi-agency collaboration in the VVU to tackle the issue, discussions during the review suggest there seems to be room for further significant improvement in stronger data recording, analysis and processes for the sharing of information. The Essex Centre for Data Analytics is tasked with developing a strategic picture of gang activity and a dynamic tool to share intelligence across partner agencies that would inform decisions. A set of dashboards has been developed to look at vulnerable locations and placements of cohorts of individuals at risk to be produced as near 'real-time' as possible. The Group supports this piece of work as critical to effective multi-agency working arrangements and co-operation.

Efficient intelligence sharing is critical to promote agile responses to confront a drug business model that is dynamic and quick to change. The Essex Data platform has been commissioned by partners to share intelligence so as to get an accurate multi-agency view of county lines activity. This is expected to provide a further opportunity for disruption and enforcement and assist prevention and early interventions. It combines data from adult and children social care services, drug and alcohol, Treatment services, education, Essex Police Athena system, Youth Offending Service records and includes Experian Mosaic market research and lifestyle data which provides a detailed view of communities in respect of housing, employment, health and social trends. At the time of the review, the work had identified approximately 16,000 households within Essex that met one or more defined vulnerability risk criteria (approximately 4% of total households in the county). Of those 16,000 households, the presence of serious and drug related violence, or at risk of being identified at risk from county lines recruitment, equated to 0.4% or approximately 2,500 households.

There also remains issues around consent and differing interpretation of current legislation on data protection which impacts on the effectiveness of the local system to respond as effectively as it could to concerns. For example, the Group has heard about difficulty in disclosing information without parental consent. Ultimately, clearer direction on interpreting the legislation will need to come from the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and other national agencies working closely together to give one clear message.

There still remains limitations of sharing information cross-border (i.e. Metropolitan Police sharing with Essex Police) and this type of cross border co-operation may need further encouragement nationally.

Cross border and partnership working

The Group have stressed throughout that encouraging strong partner relationships was fundamental to its review.

Governance structure

The Group has heard that Violence and Vulnerability activity in Essex works within a governance framework. Strategic groups (Round Table and Executive Group) determine the contents of the work programme and are responsible for overseeing delivery as well as setting the strategic direction for partnership activity. There was some assurance that Essex County Council had adequate political and officer representation on the strategic groups. Reporting to the strategic groups on the progress of activities within the work programme is the Violence and Vulnerability Operations Board chaired by a police representative and including various ECC officers as members.

During the course of the Group's review, the Chairmanship of Safer Essex was changed from being a local government representative (the Chief Executive of Tendring District Council) to a police representative. This seemed to further re-enforce the Group's view that there seems to be a concentration of PFCC leadership within the current local governance arrangements. The chairmanship of a Strategic Domestic Abuse Group changed to Essex Police and various other strategic groups within the VVU governance structure were also chaired by the Police and/or the Commissioner. Whilst the Police and PFCC are vital local partners, the local system may benefit from more diverse leadership with different partners heading up different strands of work and different components of the governance structure. Such greater diversity may help in further promoting particular focus in different work streams – e.g. a higher profile and greater focus for prevention and early intervention work rather than more reactive responses. In addition, it may be the opportunity to further align leadership with statutory responsibilities.

Recommendation 6: That there should be a regular review of the leadership of key strategic groups as part of maintaining overall diversity of leadership within the governance structure.

The Group have been advised that the work programme for Violence and Vulnerability Unit has been developed to respond to the priorities identified for the county and to work to co-ordinate and develop a more joined-up approach. However, whilst the establishment of the VVF has been important in setting a welcome precedent of partnership working in the local system, the Group has not been

entirely convinced that partner agencies are working together well enough to avoid some duplication of work and further effort is probably needed to minimise this duplication. In particular, partners need to continue to move towards respecting the expertise within the system and recognising who is best placed to lead on issues and specific approaches.

The County Lines model is dynamic, multi-pronged and evolves. System partners struggle to be as flexible and respond and adapt as quickly as that. However, the system partners can still respond in a significant and effective way using their own strengths with, for example, a consistent and robust educational programme to heighten awareness and early detection and to further build personal resilience. Communities will play a large part in this and system partners perhaps need to do more in promoting their community work and to recognise who in the wider local system is best able to deliver such community work.

Recommendation 7:

Essex District Councils have local connections and influence and should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of county lines and building resilience in the community.

Community safety arrangements in each district

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are operating in each district area and their activities vary from area to area although the group were advised that there was overall cohesion through the shared Violence and Vulnerability Framework. The Partnerships were set up to be a conduit between statutory and voluntary organisations, to minimise duplication of work and provide a collective local approach to community safety (and not just drug gangs and county lines risk). The CSPs report back to the PFCC and Safer Essex. The latter, in particular, should be ensuring the sharing of good practice and consistency across the Community Safety Partnerships.

The Group were keen to see that the role and objectives of each hub were clearly communicated and that there is a performance/evaluation framework put in place to ensure consistency of approach and activity. The Group have questioned the outputs expected from the Hubs. The hubs set their own priorities each year although they should deliver against the Police and Crime Plan priorities. The Group has questioned to what extent do the hubs identify vulnerability and whether there were enough strategic links between the hubs and other strategic forums to help that and citing bodies such as the Children's Partnerships Boards and the wellbeing hubs (such as the one at Great Bentley focussing on mental health) as examples.

There has been some acknowledgement that the profile and visibility of the Partnership and hubs may not be as high with other less strategic partners as it should be but the ongoing development of the hubs is an opportunity to further 'draw-out' partners who do not directly participate in the Partnerships.

School Inspection Regime

Whilst there can be an appetite to promote collaborative work there can be legislative and structural barriers that inhibit this. School engagement is a critical part of a prevention and early intervention approach, yet the County Council's influence and oversight powers arguably have been reduced as a result of the academisation process. Part of the OFSTED inspection framework is now around gangs' awareness and it is likely that any mandated change to approach towards academies will only come through formal OFSTED recommendations. There also remains a need for enhanced powers to have greater oversight over home schooling (see elsewhere for further comment). Similarly, a greater alignment of resources both at a local and national level would maximise effectiveness so that those partners and government departments best placed to lead and direct on specific issues do so without duplication from others.

A consistent strategic approach is needed. Part of the cross-agency approach should be to further strengthen young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health and fully linking Education up with the service delivered by the North East London Foundation Trust and family hubs (under the Essex Child and Wellbeing Service) is critically important. The Group welcome the ECC whole school workforce programme that has been developed to respond to children with challenging behaviour with empathy and encouraging staff to seek to understand underlying causes.

Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity

The Youth Offending Service has developed training modules to highlight awareness of vulnerability and building resilience. There is an opportunity for this to be delivered as part of social work training, teaching, policing and wider community settings as a revenue generator for re-investment back into local YOS projects. The impact and outcome of successful training could be that stakeholders are empowered to make more informed and more appropriate referrals and further strengthen preventative interventions.

Drug gangs, County Lines and Knife crimes are a national and county wide problem and a county wide solution will be needed to confront the specific issues in Essex.

The media can often stoke a significant negative storyline creating moral panics that we are all 'under attack'. There is a significant threat but there is also a need to focus attention on what can be done – such as reducing the demand for these drugs. The Group believes that alongside a national campaign should be a local one driven and led by the VVU that gives a message that drug taking is socially unacceptable and unfashionable and to highlight the consequences further down the supply line.

Recommendation 8:

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit should drive and lead a local communications strategy that should focus on how drug taking is socially unacceptable and highlight the personal abuse and harm that is seen and exercised through the supply line.

Conclusions

This Task and Finish Group review has spoken to a number of key contributors to ascertain how the local system is responding to challenges and the extent and effectiveness of multi-agency working in confronting drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex. The review has included trying to ascertain how partnership monies have been allocated and used within the Violence and Vulnerability Framework activities.

Partnership working

It is probably not surprising that, as with any complex partnership working, there is always room for improvement, and this is particularly the case here where the system has the additional challenge of confronting a County Lines operation that is a focussed, dynamic, evolving and ruthless business model. It is fair to say that system partners struggle to be sufficiently flexible to adapt and respond to that. However, the Group have noted that the development of the local Violence and Vulnerability Framework has necessitated joint working between agencies where perhaps they have not done so much in the past and this is a significant positive development.

Leadership

There is a significant challenge for the local system to become more proactive in its planning and response. The Group has recommended a greater diversity in leadership of different component parts within the local governance structure and this should facilitate being able to give greater prominence to different approaches and contributions to the overall system response, including education, public health and the role of voluntary and community groups.

However, impact of prevention and early intervention initiatives are not seen straightaway and outcomes cannot be evidenced immediately. It is still too early to evaluate the success of a public health approach in Essex. May be a stronger message needs to be made through all the governance structures that the cost of doing prevention and early intervention programmes should be cheaper than custody and the cost of increased risk of re-offending. With pressure to demonstrate outcomes, careful balance needs to be maintained whereby the emphasis does not shift too far to increased police presence, stop and search and knife crime prevention orders which could be detrimental to young people's trust in the police and yet for which a degree of impact can be more easily evidenced.

Funding

Overall, the Group have been frustrated by the level of engagement and provision of information from the PFCC and have tried to explain this through the prism of the current legal and regulatory framework for the PFCC. The County Council has contributed financially to the activities of the local Violence and Vulnerability Framework and yet the Group has struggled to gain the assurance that there is enough accountability and transparency in the governance structure relating to the allocation and use of partnership funding. Early in the review, it became clear to the Group that any future funding should be conditional on a number of ongoing obligations being met and this has been a key recommendation of the Group. It was specifically highlighted to the Leader of the County Council at an early stage in the review and well ahead of the drafting of this report.

The Group has also seen that the short-term funding basis for the VVF (both national and local partners) does not help the development of a coherent long-term strategy to confront County Lines. This short-termism needs to be urgently reviewed to ensure sustainability and certainty in planning.

Role of education and raising awareness

It has become very clear that educational settings will make a substantial contribution to the local system response in confronting the county lines operations and promoting a more prevention and early intervention-based approach. There is significant evidence that excluding pupils from attendance at schools just further exposes them to the risk of exploitation. The Group view the promotion and enablement of inclusivity in educational settings as a critically important contribution to building community resilience and have recommended actions to facilitate this.

Education settings can play an important part in raising awareness and developing skills and approaches which help contribute to building overall community resilience. It is important however, that this also captures raising parental and carer awareness to the early signs. It was eye-opening to hear some of the personal testimonies in the YOS's Summer Project of young people involved in County Lines highlighting that often the early warning signs were just not seen by parents, schools or other

responsible individuals. This highlights that more work needs to be done to raise such awareness.

However, raising awareness goes beyond just the formal education settings and we would expect further collaboration between agencies to heighten awareness with training programmes targeted at a wider audience which could begin with staff at these agencies. The Group has noted that the YOS has been developing a training programme which could be a valuable contribution to such a programme. In due course, we would expect to see some impact analysis on levels of awareness built into the VVF performance assessment.

However, communities can also play a large part in heightening awareness and system partners perhaps need to recognise who in the wider local system is best able to deliver this and, in particular, the Group has recommended that district councils should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of County Lines and building resilience in the community.

Communication and transparency

Media coverage tends to focus on the violence at the end of the supply line. There also seems to be a challenge in overcoming a societal view that some drug taking may be acceptable. In a way, this may have been supported by mixed or absent messaging about how drug taking is socially unacceptable and that significant personal abuse and harm is exercised by gangs throughout the supply line. The VVF has a strategic objective to improve the visibility and awareness of partnership activity and the Group has concluded that a clearer communications strategy should be developed to address this.

Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown occurred after the conclusion of this review and so there is no specific mention of it in the main report. Whilst there may be some anecdotal evidence, it is far too early to speculate with any authority on its impact on County Lines and gangs' activity. However, an indirect effect may be that national focus is becoming redirected to concern about mental health and personal physical health as a result of prolonged lockdown and social restrictions. It is important that the focus on County Lines and gangs' activity is not diluted as a result and that the issue remains near the top of both national and local policy agendas. Statutory agencies already struggle to react quickly enough to the dynamic evolution of the County Lines model without further diluting their focus.

Glossary

BAME	Widely used abbreviation for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK).
Children's Commissioner	The Children's Commissioner has powers to highlight the views of children and young people and influence policymakers to make changes. The Commissioner is independent of Government and Parliament. A link to website for the Children's Commissioner is here - Children's Commissioner
The Children's Society	A charity providing a range of free and confidential services to children, young people, adults and families. It works in partnership with statutory and other agencies to deliver joined-up services and interventions. A link to the website of the Children's Society is here - Childrens-society-east
County Lines	County Lines is a term used for organised drug dealing networks usually controlled from urban areas which distribute drugs across a county (and county borders) using runners, who are often young and vulnerable, and which is co-ordinated by utilising untraceable mobile phones.
Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service	Virgin Care and Barnardo's provide a range of child and family health services in Essex which includes Health Visitors, Parenting Support, School Nursing, and Family Health. A link to the website of this service is here - Essex Family Wellbeing
Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services	An independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in Essex which aims to support, network and resource the voluntary youth sector whilst building links with statutory services that wish to engage with the sector. A link to the website of this service is here - www.ecvys.org.uk
Essex District Councils	In addition to all the District Councils in Essex, this term also includes the Borough Councils in Essex and Chelmsford City Council
Essex Youth Offending Service (YOS)	The Essex Youth Offending Service supervises young people subject to interventions ordered by Magistrates and Crown Courts and cautions issued by Essex Police. Essex YOS also oversees the youth justice system in Essex county. Essex YOS works to prevent offending and reoffending and to ensure that custody is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour. A link to the website of this service is here - essex-youth-offending-service
Essex Youth Service/The Youth Service	Runs youth services for young people in Essex. A link to the website of this service is here - Essex youth service
Family Innovation Fund	This is a fund developed by Essex County Council and its partners to help voluntary and community groups to establish early help services such as coaching, peer

	support, counselling and mediation, and managing aggressive behaviour. A link to more information is here - Essex Family Innovation Fund
Family Solutions	Family Solutions is aimed at helping families with a range of issues on a voluntary basis. They work with families for up to 12 months by helping them identify their own solutions to their problems. A link to this service is here - Essex Family Solutions
Full Circle	A single integrated service to co-ordinate support for people across prison, courts, probation and police custody settings and encompassing services for older people, people with learning disabilities, substance misuse and mental health problems. A link to more information on this service is here - Full Circle
The Home Office	The Home Office is the lead national government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police. A link to the Home Office website is here - The Home Office
Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund	The Government launched its serious violence strategy in April 2018. Within the strategy was a fund available to Police and Crime Commissioners to bid (as lead bidders) with local community safety partnerships for funding to support targeted early interventions and prevention activity for young people.
Local Education Authority (LEA)	Has oversight of all schools in their area including the distribution and monitoring of funding for some schools, in partnership with the Schools Forum. They also co-ordinate the admissions process. In Essex the LEA is Essex County Council.
National Crime Agency	An operationally independent non-ministerial government department leading the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime. A link to the website of the National Crime Agency is here - National-crime-agency
National County Lines Coordination Centre	Launched in September 2018. A new multi-agency team to develop a national intelligence picture of the complexity and scale of county lines and promote engagement across government.
People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PAF)	An Essex County Council Scrutiny Committee, comprising elected Councillors, that reviews and scrutinises the planning and provision of local services. PAF looks at education, social care and children and families' services.
OFSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It is a non-ministerial Government department. It inspects and regulates services that care for and educate children and young people. More information on OFSTED is available using this link - OFSTED
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)	This is an elected post. The Commissioner sets the priorities for Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, sets the budgets and tax precepts, and holds the Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account for their

	services' performance. A link to the website of the PFCC is here - PFCC
Police Fire and Crime Panel	The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will be scrutinised by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Their role is to support the effective exercise of the functions of the PFCC. A link for further information is here - PFC Panel
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	Pupil Referral Unit - An alternative education provision for children who are not able to attend school. This could be because they have a short- or long-term illness, have been excluded, or are a new starter waiting for a mainstream school place.
Public Health	The team within County Councils and unitary councils' which commission preventative health services such as health checks, weight management programmes, and other healthy lifestyle programmes.
Safe in Essex	The Children's Society and Kids Inspire provision of either one to one or group support for young people aged 8-19 with risky behaviours, who are previously unknown to statutory services and who have not previously received any specialist interventions. A link to further information is here - Safe-in-Essex
Safer Essex	Is the local statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in each district council area. The purpose of the Partnership is to provide a strategic and co-operative approach to addressing local crime and disorder between agencies and the communities within the area.
Timpson Review	This made 30 recommendations to ensure exclusions are used appropriately and that Government commits to new school accountability. A link to the review is here - The Timpson Review
Violence Reduction Units/Violence and Vulnerability Unit	Government funding was awarded in 2018 to set up specialist local teams to tackle violent crime in their area. The Violence Reduction Units bring together different organisations, including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes and come up with a co-ordinated response.
Violence and Vulnerability Framework (VVF)	A framework to encourage a coordinated approach amongst organisations who are working to reduce the threat of violence across Essex. Its aims include improving the visibility, awareness and effectiveness of partnership activity and identifying opportunities to add value to existing and planned activities.

Annex 1 - Background, Terms of Reference and Membership

Motion to Full Council

The issues of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines were discussed at Full Council on 12 December 2018 and the following motion passed:

This Council recognises the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as a local, regional and national issue.

This Council commends the work of multi-agency statutory and voluntary partners in Essex, Southend and Thurrock in relation to these issues, particularly given the judgement of “Outstanding” by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation, following a recent inspection.

This Council is pleased to see this work is being recognised by the Home Office in awarding the sum of £640k to the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner’s Office to further expand this multi-agency work.

This Council therefore:

- Calls upon all political parties to work together to drive down the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines on the residents of Essex.
- Requests that the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has oversight of and contributes to the multi-agency strategy and its development.

Full Committee discussion

The People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee had initial discussions with representatives of Essex Police and the Police Fire Crime Commissioners Office at its February and April 2019 meetings respectively and a link to the meeting papers for both those meetings is here:

[PAF 14 February 2019 meeting papers](#)

[PAF 11 April 2019 papers](#)

Thereafter, the Committee subsequently resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to conduct a detailed review. The initial current scoping agreed by the Committee was as follows:

Terms of Reference

To consider the adequacy of current agency work to reduce the destructive impacts of gang culture in Essex. To have oversight of, and contribute to, the multi-agency strategy and its development.

Key Lines of Enquiry

- (i) To gain assurance that challenges being faced have been clearly defined and recognised by all agencies;
- (ii) To gain assurance that the role and responsibilities of all agencies is clear;
- (iii) To gain assurance that, to the extent necessary, there is an organised and robust system wide (and partnership) working in challenging and reducing the destructive impacts of gang culture;
- (iv) To understand ECCs specific role and its contribution as a key contributor to and driver of actions being taken.

Membership

Volunteers were sought from beyond the membership of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Task and Finish Group and final membership was agreed as below:

Councillor Carlo Guglielmi (Lead Member)
Councillor Jenny Chandler
Councillor Mark Durham
Councillor Anthony Hedley
Councillor Peter May
Councillor John Moran
Councillor Pat Reid

Annex 2 - Library of background reports and publications

Prior to and during the course of the scrutiny, a virtual library of supporting documents and reports, news articles, was established and maintained.

1. Article - MPs call for police in schools to cut youth violence – BBC.co.uk – July 2019;
2. Counting-Lives-disrupting-child-criminal-exploitation-Parliamentary Briefing- The Childrens Society - July 2019;
3. Counting-Lives-report-summary – The Childrens Society - July 2019;
4. Grooming-gangs-and-victim-support- debate-briefing-14th-May 2019 -The Childrens Society;
5. Home Affairs Select Committee - Serious Youth Violence - 31 July 2019;
6. Home Affairs Select Committee - Serious Youth Violence - summary of report – 31 July 2019;
7. Causes of knife crime and serious violence – London Assembly briefing;
8. Article - National County Lines Coordination Centre to crack down on drug gangs – bbc.co.uk - 21 September 2018
9. Press article - stop exclusions and close pupil referral units – Evening Standard – 20 June 2019;
10. Serious-Youth-Violence-briefing- The Childrens Society- March-2019;
11. Youth Select Committee- Knife Crime Inquiry – The Childrens Society Submission - June 2019;
12. Youth Services Funding- 24th July 2019 – The Childrens Society-and- Barnardos;

Annex 3 - Contributors

Evidence gathering took place between August and November 2019. Members would like to extend their gratitude to those who contributed to the review. These were:

Name	Title and organisation
Pastor James Bell	Tile Kiln Evangelical Church (Chelmsford)
Rachel Brett	CEO, Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS)
Ian Davidson	Chief Executive of Tendring District Council, ex-Chairman of Safer Essex and representative of the Essex Community Safety Partnerships.
Duncan Evans	National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines (representing the NPCC National Police Chiefs Council)
Leanne Fuller	Service Manager, Safe-In Essex, Children's Society [and also manages the Children at risk of Exploitation Team]
Jane Gardner	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Tanya Gillett (twice)	Head of Youth Offending, Youth Offending Service
Councillor Ray Gooding	Cabinet Member – Education and Skills, Essex County Council, Essex County Council
Tracey Harman	West LPA Commander, Chief Superintendent 2220, West Local Policing Area, Essex Police
Ben Hughes,	Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council
Clare Kershaw	Director – Education, Essex County Council
Councillor Dick Madden	Cabinet Member – Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships, Essex County Council
Councillor Louise McKinlay	Cabinet Member – Children and Families, Essex County Council
Michael O'Brien	Head of Specialist Education Services, Essex County Council
James Pearson	Team Manager Youth Offending Service/Team Manager ISSP, Essex County Council
Jane Ryan (twice)	Acting Team Manager, ISS Team and Gangs Prevention Service, Youth Offending Service

Altogether the Group held 12 evidence sessions (some with more than one witness in attendance) over five main evidence days. Most evidence was oral although some written material was also considered. Advance questions were provided in many instances to help structure the discussions.

Tanya Gillett, Head of Youth Offending, has been a key subject matter support to the Group and the Group would like to express their gratitude to her for her advice and guidance. In two instances (sessions with Jane Ryan) Tanya withdrew from her advisory role and attended as a witness.

Annex 4 - Written evidence

Power Point presentation from James Pearson, Team Manager Youth Offending Service/Team Manager ISSP, Essex County Council;

Power Point presentation from Ben Hughes, Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council;

Power Point presentation from Duncan Evans, National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County lines;

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex's Work Programme;

Written answers from Councillors Gooding and McKinlay to pre-set advance questions.

Lived Experiences of County Lines, gangs and criminal exploitation in Essex – Essex Youth Offending research and evaluation project 2019 – Essex Youth Offending Team

The following events were attended by some members of the Task and Finish Group to support the review

Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services Conference 2019 – Youth Violence and Knife Crime in Essex – 12 October 2019 – Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford

The National Combating gangs, Violence and Weapon Crime Conference – 3 December 2019 – London Government Events.

Annex 5 - Limitations of the review

The Group is content that it has received a range of views and collected evidence from a number of key witnesses to help it have oversight of multi-agency arrangements both already in place and also being planned to confront issues around drug gangs, knife crime and county lines and the overall co-ordination of services. This has enabled it to come to some reasonable evidence-backed conclusions. However, the Group also acknowledge that, due to time and resource constraints, they have only just 'dipped below the surface' on some of the associated issues identified.

There were further investigations that could have been made and other witnesses with whom the Group could have consulted. For example, the Group could have visited local schools to see at first hand the perception and level of awareness of vulnerability to drugs, gang culture and bullying and coercion. However, the Group acknowledges that such an exercise would still have had limitations as it would have relied on a small sample size of all schools in Essex, and in a relatively concentrated geographical area, when trying to draw broader conclusions.

The Group have not spoken directly with parents, children or young people. Instead, through discussions with representatives from the Youth Offending Service and representatives from the voluntary sector, the Group believes it has received a reasonable representative evidence base of their views and experience.

The Group did not look in any detail at the direct causal links that may exist between certain health and environmental issues and vulnerability to drug and gang activity although there is significant evidence to indicate such links.

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Democracy and Democracy

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Published September 2020.

Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends

Reference Number: PAF/18/20

Report title: Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 17 September 2020	For: Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

This item has been requested by the Chairman and Vice Chairmen as a broad ranging introduction to some of the changes and trends being seen in residential and domiciliary care as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to consider:

- (i) **The attached update (Appendices 1 and 2); and**
- (ii) **Identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions**

3. Background

3.1 See Introduction.

4. Update and Next Steps

The update is attached as Appendices 1 and 2. Next steps are as proposed under Action Required.

The following officers from Essex County Council will attend and support the discussion:

Steve Ede - Head of Procurement

Moira McGrath - Director, Commissioning (Adult Social Care)

Jo Rogers - Commissioning Manager.

Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends

5 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report titled Briefing on the Adult Social Care (ASC) response to Covid-19

Appendix 2 - Power Point presentation titled Briefing on the Adult Social Care response to Covid-19 from Moira McGraph and dated September 2020.

**People & Families Scrutiny Committee
Briefing on the Adult Social Care (ASC) response to Covid-19****1. Purpose**

This paper provides an overview of Adult Social Care services during Covid-19. It highlights the changes in supply and demand seen as a result of the pandemic, other related trends and the impact on anticipated future planning of services and capacity. Service definitions can be found in Appendix A.

2. Headlines**Supply and demand**

- There are currently approximately 17,000 Adults in Essex using one or more support service
- Supply and demand dropped in March 2020 across all cohorts and services with Council and provider staff being repurposed as appropriate
- The majority of services continued meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community (identified using a risk stratification tool), using business continuity plans, additional Covid related funding and mutual aid arrangements. The less vulnerable were supported by friends, family and Essex Wellbeing Service volunteers
- There has been a slow increase in demand in some services such as Live at Home domiciliary support, the market currently has capacity and unmet need is historically low

Costs

- Covid related costs for providers (personal protective equipment (PPE), recruitment, workforce logistics, transport and social distancing guidelines) are creating additional unexpected financial pressure for providers

Adult's needs and expectations

- There are behaviour changes in the population resulting in fewer residential and nursing placements being sought by ASC and private self-funders – this is impacting on the financial viability of care homes, so co-produced market shaping activity is underway
- Post Covid health impacts, in those who are either working age or elderly and frail with one or more pre-existing long term condition, are largely unknown and are likely to impact on future demand as people present with increased and/or more complex needs. Work is underway with Health to develop a post Covid rehab offer
- Joint planning is underway to prepare for seasonal pressures during winter alongside further Covid waves/spikes
- It is widely recognised that consistency and quality beyond the statutory CQC requirements are important to all stakeholders and partners. The Council's Quality Improvement Team is working hard to embed further quality assurance mechanisms across the piece.

Economic impacts

- Brexit – there is a potential impact on the overseas care workforce when Great Britain leaves the European Union although the EU workforce in Essex is about 8% - lower than in some other areas of the UK
- Post Covid economic impact – the country is facing a severe and prolonged financial depression and there could be mass redundancies which may affect the care workforce. Some social care employers are finding that this is having a positive impact on recruitment
- School opening and childcare availability directly impacts the care workforce
- The challenges faced at this time are not unique to Essex and are recognised nationally

Successes

- A risk stratification tool was developed, used consistently to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable people and contact was maintained with adults and their families/carers
- Extensive assistance was given to ensure that people using DPs were fully supported through the crisis
- Care Home Hubs – a successful local integration model has been implemented and work is underway to see how the model can be further developed and sustained
- An ECC 7 day Rapid Response Service was developed to act as a central point for provider concerns and enquiries
- The Council flexed services and embraced technology to undertake our statutory functions (e.g. Care Act assessments/reviews) and enhanced service delivery with digital innovation (e.g. Alcove tablets) to reduce social isolation
- The Intelligence Hub was developed to give live oversight
- Essex Wellbeing Service provided valuable community support, helping with food shopping and medication collection
- 'Bedfinder' care home bed availability and placement technical solution and support service was introduced across health and social care to support rapid discharge
- Regular Provider webinars took place and daily bulletins were uploaded to the Care Provider Hub
- Support to the market included a two way flex tolerance of up to 125% of commissioned hours, provision of PPE, invoices were paid until September on commissioned not actual hours/sessions/beds; linked to this providers were given the opportunity to deliver care in a different way e.g. through telephone calls as welfare checks/carrying out shopping trips/cleaning the home environment where needed, guaranteed beds etc.
- A new multi-disciplinary Step 2 Home facility in Howe Green was rapidly mobilised and opened at Easter to prevent hospital admissions and support acute discharge for people who were Covid positive
- Relationships between the council and key strategic partners in the NHS have strengthened during Covid, with information sharing and strategic planning taking place in coordination. The intention is to build on this to improve the whole-system response, including working to prevent hospital admissions and begin the recovery and reablement process at an earlier stage

3. Statutory Activity

The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to

- Assess for and meet eligible needs

- Prevent, reduce and delay needs
- Promote wellbeing

Providing information, advice and guidance (IAG) and support services to meet those needs – or a cash payment in lieu of them – are recognised ways to meet people's needs. These duties have to some extent been amended by the Coronavirus Act 2020, but the Council continues to aspire to meet these needs in line with the general strategic direction of enabling people to live and age well and be as independent as possible for as long as possible. Beyond its legal obligation, the Council has the ambition of optimising the quality and continuity of care within the financial envelope available.

The Council is committed to joining the whole health and social care system together and supporting the NHS 5 year Forward Plan in promoting a strengths based Home First approach as the default.

Changes to statutory provision during Covid

Direct Payment (DP) - there are currently around 3,000 adults using DPs. In March a risk assessment was undertaken to understand the likely impact of Covid on those who use DPs to manage their needs. The Council proactively contacted those most at risk, communicating advice and guidance and supporting people to use their DP to access appropriate and alternative support where required. The Council also worked closely with Purple (who provide direct payment administrative/process support) to ensure high quality support was maintained and they provided insight as to those who may be at risk/any provider concerns etc. Guidance was produced for providers who support those who have DPs to ensure they successfully implemented and adhered to national guidance. The Council ensured adults had access to additional funding if required (including via Covid funds) without the need for a full review. On the whole people have been able to remain utilising their DP's effectively, have sought support from families and local communities and there has been positive feedback from adults and carers.

Intermediate Care - Reablement

The total spend per annum on Reablement/In Lieu of Reablement is approx. £20M.

- **ECL** - Demand dropped significantly in April and May. Due to current high levels of demand, they are delivering 8,500 hours per week countywide against their block contract of ~7,300 hours. Since July there have been over 650 people in the service at any one time. ECL's contracted hours used to be increased month on month (ramped up), but this has stopped since Covid. A revised ramp up plan is being developed
- **Domiciliary Care In Lieu Of Reablement** - This service supplements the contract with ECL to provide additional capacity as hours with ECL are increasing. Demand dropped significantly during April and May. Currently around 2,400 hours are being delivered against a contracted block of 3,300 hours. There are typically 180-200 people in the service at any one time. There is variation in capacity across quadrants. Often the reason given for delivering below contracted hours is lack of referrals, except for North where staffing has been the main issue

Intermediate Care Beds - Residential recovery beds were purchased for 6 months in March 2020 in anticipation of a need to rapidly discharge large numbers of people from hospital or

prevent admission to hospital and free up beds for people with Covid-19. The numbers of people requiring hospital admissions was significantly lower than originally modelled nationally and locally and lockdown has meant that emergency admissions and admissions for planned surgery were much lower than usual. The numbers of care home beds were therefore reduced in June and contracts for new placements end in September 2020. In addition for those beds filled in March 2020 we guaranteed payments for 12 months for Health and Social care use until March 2021.

Live at Home Domiciliary Support – The Council currently supports around 6,200 people (a third of whom pre Covid were 85+), with 112,000 commissioned hours of personal (average package size of 18 hours) and domestic support, night sleep and 24 hour live in care in their own homes a week, from 300 providers, at a cost of approx. £100m per annum. A small number of people self-suspended their support packages in March. Of those who formally suspended their care, 78% reported increased levels of support from family, friends or universal services. People moved in with family or vice versa, used local low cost/no cost solutions and/or community volunteers and digital technology solutions (Alcove tablet/internet shopping/social media). 25% restarted their care and support at their previous level indicating no change in long term needs. A primary concern highlighted was access to a GP or other medical appointments and services.

Future plans include a framework refresh which aims to channel more support through fewer, higher quality strategic suppliers, mandates electronic homecare monitoring to improve safeguarding of Adults and risk management and a series of test and learns to trial different delivery methods to optimise delivery and customer outcomes - see section 5. A paper on this process is going to Cabinet on 15 September and is subject to approval. The cabinet paper provides further detail.

Supported Living for Adults - There are 1,161 people living in 1,291 units in Essex costing £68M per annum. In June there were 146 voids across all schemes which dropped to 102 in August and this figure along with the number of available units fluctuates monthly. There are currently 120 people on the waiting list. The properties became vacant through normal turnover with little evidence of a significant Covid impact. There was, however, reduced focus on filling voids as social care workers were diverted to Covid critical activity, and unnecessary accommodation moves were not allowed. Councillor Spence has signalled support of the concept for 3-4 new complex needs schemes and the Council is progressing plans in terms of firming up a specification, learning lessons from Thistley Green, working with Essex Housing to identify potential sites, and exploring capital funding options to ensure a speedy return on investment. Work is also underway to secure supported living for those with Physical Impairments and those who are congenitally deafblind as there are known gaps in the market for this cohort. The Council awaits planning decisions for two pipeline schemes in Epping Forest and Maldon (planning processes were affected by Covid-19 and there is a backlog).

Extra Care Housing for Older People – There are currently 523 people living in 13 Extra Care accommodation schemes in Essex and 50 voids. There is the Peace of Mind support (which is under review) in 9 schemes funded by the Council at a cost of £662,000 per annum (in the other 4 schemes the people living there pay for the Peace of Mind service).

Properties became vacant through normal turnover with low level impact from Covid. The design of these schemes allowed people to self-isolate easily however PPE was sometimes difficult to source, and some people experienced increased loneliness and poor mental health due the lockdown restrictions and inability to see family and friends. Covid restrictions also made it difficult to carry out assessments, viewings and referrals, as unnecessary moves were not permitted, and social care staff were focused on critical work.

Work is progressing on developing the pipeline of upcoming schemes. Marketing materials, videos and website to raise the awareness of Extra Care amongst the public and professionals are being refreshed. There is ongoing engagement with Social Care colleagues to generate more referrals through virtual drop-in Q&A sessions, open days and regular email updates. The referral process is being streamlined to move to virtual panels to make it easier and quicker to process nominations.

Day Opportunities – 1,871 people across all cohorts (but mainly people with learning disabilities and/or autism (LDA)) used day opportunities pre Covid at a cost of around £17M via a series of contracts – ECL Live, framework, spot purchase or direct payment. That figure dropped to 1,696 in August.

Closure notification was given to all providers in March 2020 with the exception of support to individuals who were identified as being most vulnerable. Providers were required to deliver support via alternative mechanisms e.g. outreach provision and there was ongoing two way dialogue with providers regarding the outcome of individual risk assessments, additional support requests, payments enquiries, outreach provision and general enquiries.

On 4th June the Council began to work on the recovery of day opportunities. An engagement webinar reflected the scope of the national guidance that was later published in July by SCIE <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/day-care/safe-delivery>

Working groups were established to address the key challenges and maximise the opportunities that Covid-19 presents, including Transport, Communication and Engagement with key stakeholders, Strategic Direction, Finance, Reviews and ECL LIVE Service contract. A Strategic Oversight Group was established to oversee progress, risks and issues, with Commercial, ASC Commissioning and Finance representatives.

Equipment - ASC spends around £9M per annum providing equipment and minor adaptations to enable people to regain (e.g. following hospital discharge) and maintain independence, prevent hospital admissions, reduce the need for domiciliary support and to enable formal and informal carers to carry out their role safely. Delivery, collection, servicing, repair, replacement and ordering was impacted during Covid with a reduced service in operation for only the most vulnerable people and to support safe hospital discharges. The volume of equipment and adaptations requested by ASC also decreased significantly as less people were assessed. Normal service has now been resumed.

Residential & Nursing Homes - Additional beds were purchased countywide in March in preparation for the predicted surge of people who would need them. These have now been decommissioned. There are currently 3,500 people placed by ASC living in 410 Residential homes and 350 people placed by CCG's living in Nursing homes in Essex. ASC occupancy is currently at circa 81% - a reduction of 10% since March 2020. Demand continues to decline current modelling indicates there will be an oversupply by March 2022, particularly in Tendring, Braintree and Halstead. Despite this there is a lack of enhanced or specialist residential care for people with very complex needs such as advanced dementia. A market position statement is being coproduced to help shape the market going forwards and the IRN contract refresh is in progress.

4. Impact on supply, demand and services

Supply and demand during the pandemic has fallen across all cohorts and service types due to suspension or termination of support services (either by the Council or Adults and their families/carers), less people being admitted to and discharged from hospital, fewer Care Act assessments and reviews taking place, fewer new placements or packages being sought, restrictions on moving home or deaths. With furlough still active there is an army of volunteers acting as unpaid carers and an ongoing trend of people not choosing a residential/nursing home due to high infection control risks. Some lived insight work is underway to help inform the future direction. Operational teams report a recent increase in activity, but the Service Placement Team remain generally quiet in comparison with pre Covid activity.

There are positive points to make about how we've managed markets, learnt to use frameworks to grow the market whilst retaining price control, built stronger relationships with Essex Care Association and brought more supply into Essex. In the domiciliary market the number of framework providers has grown from 65 -125 in four years and 70% of activity is now sourced through these providers compared to 40% four years ago. This has helped manage disruption (e.g. supplier failure) and puts the Council in a strong position to move forward and test new approaches.

Providers have shown resilience with fewer provider concerns being raised for discussion at the Serious Case Review Group (SCRG) and very low provider failure March – August. The market has reported generally positive news

- Following initial concerns about staffing, the reality was an increased pool of better qualified people looking for care work, presumably as a response to other industry challenges
- Providers were well prepared with clear plans in place early on, supported by good information and guidance on the Care Provider Information Hub hosted on the <https://www.livingwellessex.org/latest-news/> site
- Providers accessed and used technology to enhance and innovate to provide care to self-isolating and shielding adults e.g. cookery lessons via zoom
- Positive response to the support from ECC, with some national providers comparing Essex very favourably to other authorities

5. Future Planning

The Health and Social Care landscape is changing. The UK population is predicted to rise by 21% in the next ten years with the biggest increase being in the number of people aged 85+. There will also be more people with dementia with an estimated 80% increase by 2040 to 1.6M. Ensuring there is good quality capacity and consistency at the point of delivery is key. We want people to enjoy good lives in their communities with choice, control and decisions kept close to the person and the people that matter to them, and flexible creative support to enable them to achieve their aspirations and outcomes. The council recognises that one size doesn't fit all and is taking a more local place based approach to individual and population needs, demand and supply.

On 15th September Cabinet is considering a decision to award a programme partner contract to facilitate an Intermediate Care transformation programme over the next 12-18 months. ECL are onboard and engaged, with working groups mobilised to set up pilots and trials to design new ways of working such as the ward led Reablement in North. A key principal and output will be to

ensure that the Council utilises all the capacity available throughout the reablement pathway which will involve working with ILOR providers and the interface with ECL and ECC to deliver the best outcomes for people.

The Hospital Discharge Service policy and operating model is being aligned with social care practice and there is a commitment to work closely with partners in Health and Housing to improve and streamline pathways and the journey for people, making it seamless with the right support, at the right time, in the right place. Social prescribing and focusing on minimising the deconditioning that a bedded environment causes are critical in embedding a personalised strengths based approach across the whole system. We are also working on alternative ways to use the professional expertise of our Occupational Therapists to maximise our preventative and enabling approach.

Cabinet also recently considered the procurement of a new two tier, Live at Home framework, more focused on quality and social value, whilst a range of alternative hyperlocal solutions are tested. The aim is to use providers who are rated good and outstanding by The Care Quality Commission (CQC) in the first instance and to invest in and upskill the care workforce to maximise people's independence. Additionally the Council is working up a range of test and learns to secure good quality year round capacity, focusing on historically hard to source areas and where there has been high unmet need. This will include guaranteed hours, an integrated multidisciplinary health and social care team sharing caseloads, using a digital platform to create circles of support around people using Personal Assistants and an Individual Service Fund (ISF) Model, development of micro providers offering local flexible, personalised support and joint commissioning with neighbouring LA's and CCG colleagues for Continuing Health Care (similar care workforce). Essex pays one of the lowest rates regionally for domiciliary support and competes with nine neighbouring Local Authorities (and Unitaries) including four London boroughs for workforce.

Electronic Homecare Monitoring will enable transparency of capacity, consistency of carer and actual call times and duration – something people tell us is important to them, especially when they pay towards their cost of care. Bed finder and dynamic purchasing will allow us to digitalise and streamline processes, driving continuous improvement and efficiencies.

The issues we face in residential care with market sustainability are not unique to Essex and are recognised nationally. The decrease in the demand for residential and nursing home placements could, at least partially, mitigate the predicted increases in domiciliary demand (specifically Live at Home) – joint forecasting work with Health partners is underway to shape the future.

The workforce strategy will be embedded in all future contracts signalling our commitment to invest in and value care and support staff. The second care market workforce survey is live and has been adapted with Covid related questions. Findings will be available in October. Council led social media campaigns are underway to support and encourage care workforce recruitment.

The Council is actively working with Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) to improve the personalisation approach and direct payment offer and take up across the organisation. There are early ISF adopter sites in Braintree, Basildon and Uttlesford promoting personal responsibility.

Appendix A - Definitions of ASC Services

Services provided in ASC are mostly long term and generally subject to a means tested financial assessment.

Direct Payment - allows a person assessed as having eligible needs to choose to receive cash payments from the Council instead of care services. This gives them much more flexibility and greater control of their support package. There are several ways people can receive a DP

- Pre-Paid Cards
- Support from Purple (payroll and account management, employer advice and guidance, support to find PAs)
- Dedicated Bank Account

Adults can purchase care and support using their DP – this may include support in the home and could be via a Personal Assistant or a Home Care Agency. They can also purchase other solutions from the wider market in line with their care and support plan including support to access the community.

Individual Service Fund - a contractual model which allows an adult and their carers to have choice and control over how their needs are met. A personal budget is held by a provider and they work closely with the adult and their family and decide how best this is spent in line with their care and support needs. The provider is also able to use the funds to broker other solutions from a wider range of providers in line with the adult/families wishes. Payment is up front, and a contract is in place between the council and the provider with the provider having an onward agreement with the adult/family. This is an alternative solution to a DP or traditional managed service and provides choice and control without the complexities of managing a Direct Payment which for some is a barrier. It also involves the provider regularly reviewing how the adults outcomes are progressing which can reduce the capacity required from ASC when undertaking reviews.

Intermediate Care - short term care and support to assist recovery and increase independence.

Reablement - is a service designed to give free active rehabilitation support for up to 6 weeks to promote and improve independence. People can be referred from the community or on discharge from hospital. People may leave the service fully self-caring or may have ongoing support needs. A small number of people may need longer term residential care.

Live at Home Domiciliary Support – domiciliary care is defined as the range of services put in place to support an individual in their own home. Services may involve routine household tasks within or outside the home, personal care (washing, dressing, supporting with medication), and other associated domestic services necessary to maintain an individual in an acceptable level of health, hygiene, dignity, safety and ease in their home.

Supported Living - schemes that provide personal care to adults with disabilities as part of the support that they need to live in their own homes. The personal care is provided under separate contractual arrangements to those for the person's housing. The accommodation is often shared but can be single self-contained units.

Extra Care - housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of personal and domestic care and support (Peace of Mind) available on site sometimes provided by on-site staff and sometimes by a different agency. People who live in Extra Care

Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. Properties can be rented, owned or part owned/part rented. In addition to communal facilities (residents' lounge, guest suite, laundry), Extra Care often includes a restaurant or dining room, health & fitness facilities and computer rooms.

Day Opportunities – half or full day sessions, with or without transport, to a place based service where activity, purposeful occupation, education and training can be offered. The outcomes of this service include reducing social isolation, carer respite and providing education and training with a view to gaining employment.

Equipment - a range of equipment (from raised toilet seats to mobile hoists and slings), and minor adaptations (grab rails and chair raisers) for long term use are provided free to Adults according to their assessed needs.

Residential & Nursing Homes – a care home is a residential setting where a number of mostly older people live, usually in single rooms, and have access to 24 hour on-site care services such as help with washing, dressing and giving medication. Some care homes are registered to meet a specific care need, for example dementia or terminal illness. Nursing homes have a qualified nurse on duty twenty-four hours a day to carry out nursing tasks. These homes are for people who are physically or mentally frail or people who need regular medical attention from a nurse and are funded typically by Health.

Appendix 2

People & Families Scrutiny

Committee

Briefing on the Adult Social Care response to Covid-19

Moira McGrath
September 2020

Headlines

- Supply and demand decreased during Covid-19
- Unexpected cost pressures for providers e.g. PPE
- Adult's future needs and expectations are changing
- Economic impacts – Brexit, recession and redundancies, school opening/childcare availability
- Successes – flexible and creative solutions, accelerated partnership working
- Future demand uncertain – joint system modelling and forecasting underway

Business Intelligence and Insight



Forecasting Approach

- 1 Use historic data to understand services pre-Covid and throughout Covid
- 2 Map the expected increase in demand as a result from acute & community as non-elective/elective activity starts to come back. (These assumptions can all be edited to produce more scenarios)
- 3 Apply a selectable proportion of “pent up” demand, i.e. assuming some of the demand that has not been seen in the last few months presents itself throughout the next few months
- 4 Add the ‘extra demand’ of people currently in hospital with COVID who represent a cohort with higher needs and who’s anticipated discharge pathways differ from historic levels
- 5 Use historic trends and forecasting to inform what will happen once services have returned to some degree of historic activity and **to forecast beyond March 2021**

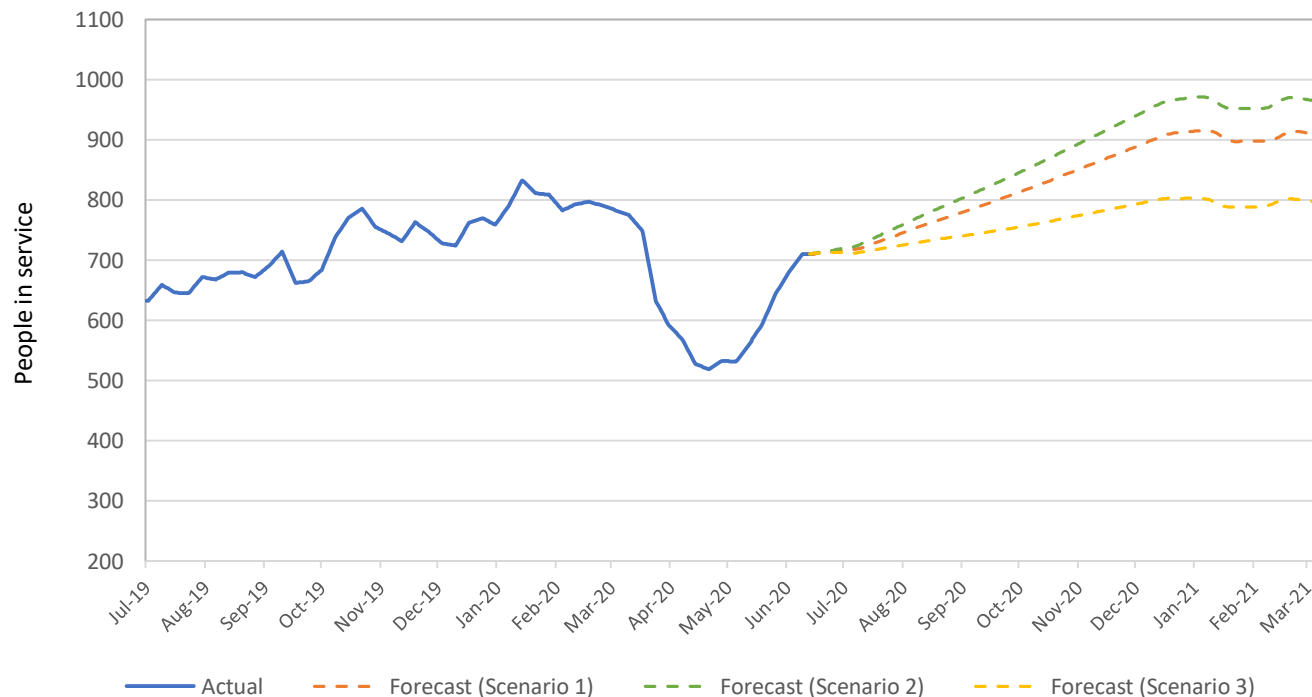
Forecasting Approach cont.

This modelling involves selecting when and how acute & community activity will ramp back up to historic levels. A discharge pathway % is then applied to each outcome *e.g. assume hospital elective & non-elective activity will ramp up to 100% of historic levels by November 2020, then going forward assumes 1.25% of all discharges are into community hospitals. We can look at this modelling for domiciliary care, residential care, community hospitals, residential recovery & reablement and these assumptions can all be adjusted*

Three scenarios are modelled based on expected activity in November 2020

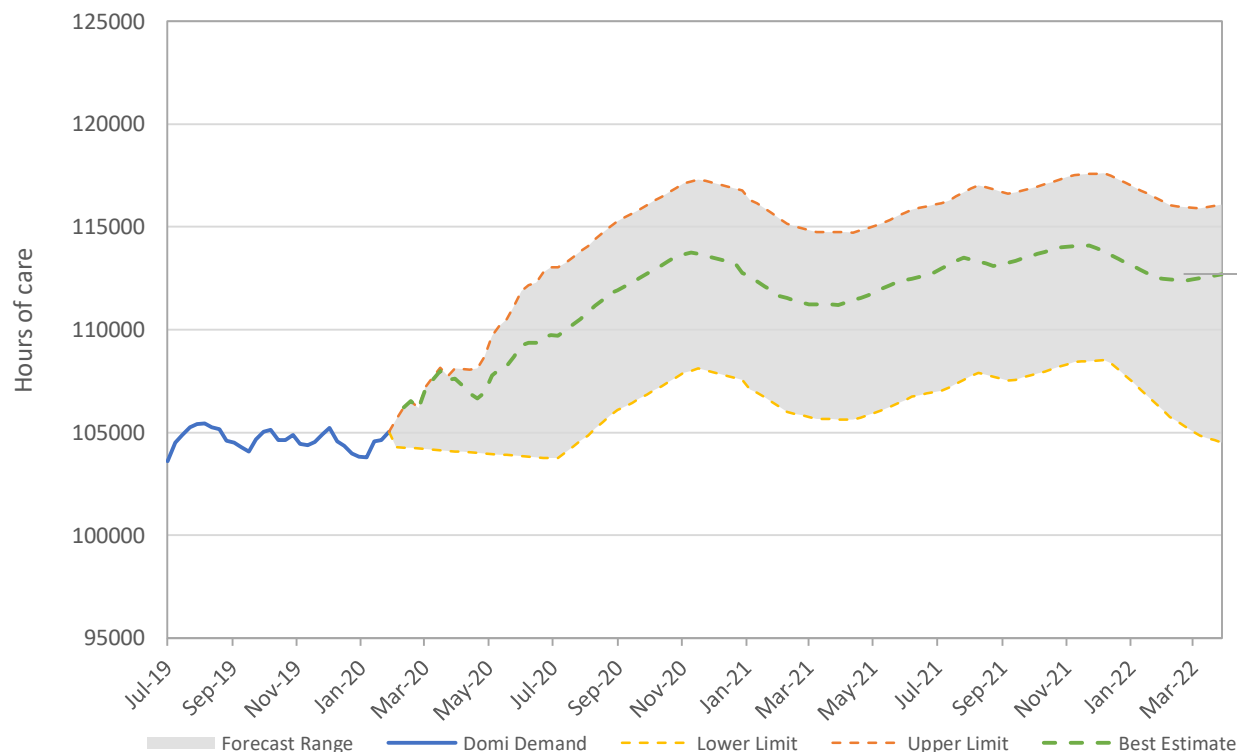
- Scenario 1 – 100% - this is the most likely
- Scenario 2 – 110% - this assumes demand is greater than expected
- Scenario 3 – 80% - this assumes demand is lower than expected

Reablement Forecast



This assumes demand will range from 800-970 people in Reablement at any time and that the average length of stay in the service will be 30 days

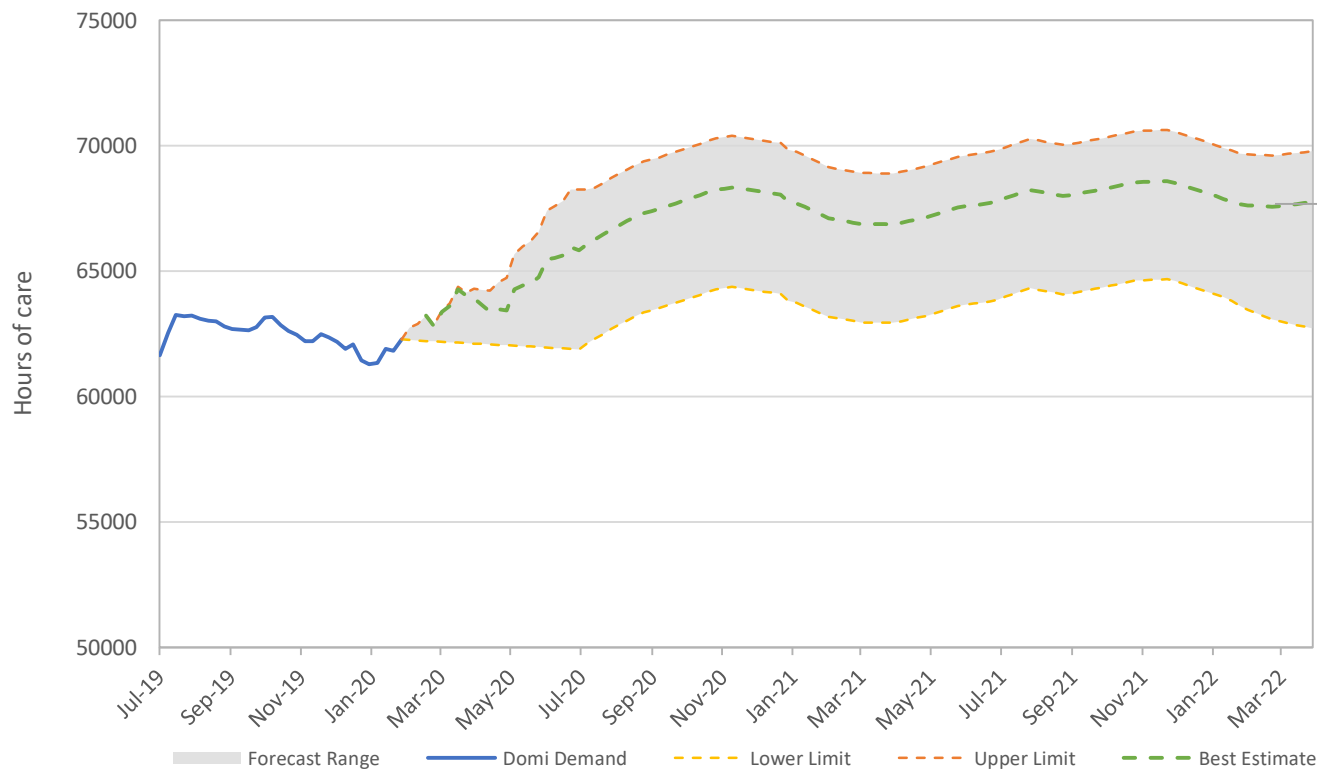
Domiciliary Care Forecast - 2022



The best estimate line is made up of demand (with suspended packages removed) and our expected **Scenario 1 forecast line** layered on top. This forecasts **~112,500 hours of care per week by March 2022**

This shows actual paid hours (not commissioned hours) per week. The increase in domiciliary hours Jan – June 2020 is potentially due to several data discrepancies/lags in Mosaic. This model therefore potentially over forecasts demand

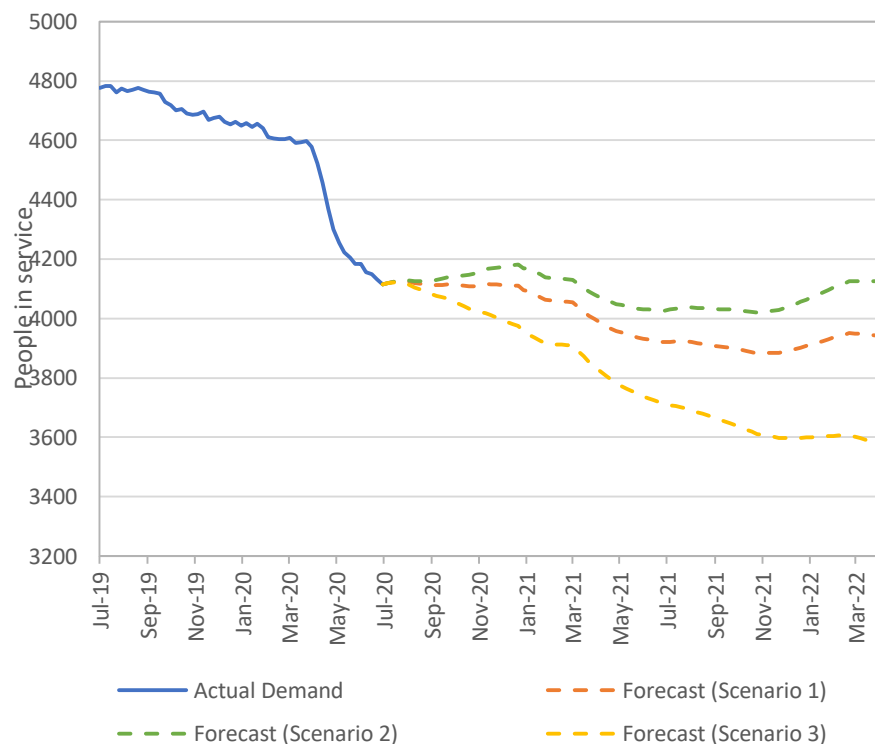
OP Only Domiciliary Care Forecast - 2022



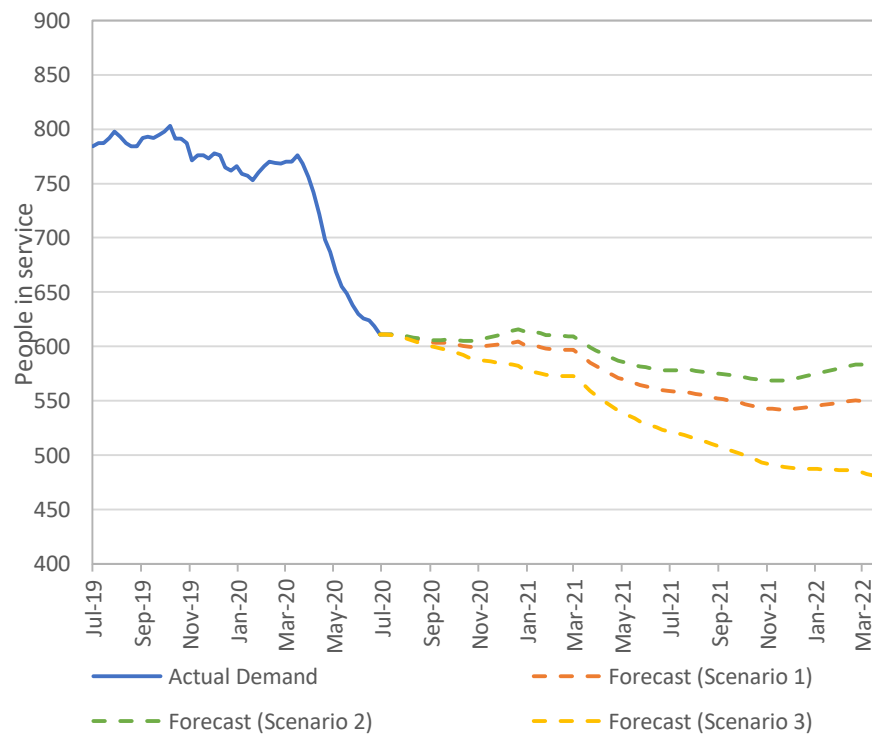
Best estimate line shows demand (with suspended packages removed) and our expected **Scenario 1 forecast line** layered on top for OP only. This forecasts **~67,500 hours (60% of total demand) of care per week by March 2022**

Residential & Nursing Care Forecast - 2022

ECC Funded Residential Care Forecast



ECC Funded Nursing Care Forecast



This shows a steady gradual decline in the number of people living in residential and nursing care homes

Domiciliary Support - Live at Home 2021 Framework



Background

- The Council commissioned, on average, 112,000 hours of domiciliary care per week, supporting around 6,200 Adults, as at June 2020
- The annual budget spend for 2020/21 is circa £100M (excluding Supported Living and Extra Care)
- Demand is projected to increase for several reasons, including people living longer and initiatives/technology to support people to remain at home for longer
- Since the implementation of the current framework in 2017, the proportion of domiciliary care sourced through the framework has increased from 40% to 70%
- The volume of framework providers has increased from 65 to 125, reducing the Council's reliance on the spot market, but creating challenges in terms of strategic market management
- Unmet need has remained low over the past two years, though there are still pockets across the county where it remains hard to source

Proposed Framework – Key Features

- The new framework will be the catch all back up approach. In tandem, several test and learns using alternative models will be run (subject to separate governance).
 - Four-year, two-tier framework - 12 districts plus HM prison
 - Closed, will only be opened for Lots where additional capacity or competition around price is required
 - Tier 1 providers
 - Strategic focus
 - Greater expectations – higher volumes; stronger links with community, health and CVS; embracing workforce strategy; delivering social value, CQC rated good or outstanding only
 - Greater reward – greater volume of work; trusted assessor; flexibility on package changes; signpost to tech; increased access to training
 - Tier 2 providers
 - Only approached once sourcing through tier 1 exhausted/less volume
 - May be hard to source or specialist packages of care
 - CQC rated good, outstanding and Requires Improvement
 - Suitable for SME's
 - Reduced complexity of ranked lists and price points – 2 client types: OP/MH/PSI and LD/A; one countywide 24 hr care ranked list; price matrix points reduced to 5 (6 in Epping) & TSA rates reduced to 3
- Page 76 of 90
- Electronic Home Care Monitoring will be mandated

Test and Learns

- Dengie Neighbourhood Team (joint domiciliary care hub model with Provide)
- Digital platform trial to stimulate individual circles of support around people using PA's through an ISF model
- Integrated commissioning with other Local Authorities and with CCG's for CHC
- Guaranteed hours in areas where it's hard to source, spot usage is high or there is unmet need, to drive down cost
- There are also other projects that the business is looking to support in the domiciliary space such as Significant 7's

Electronic Homecare Monitoring (EHM)

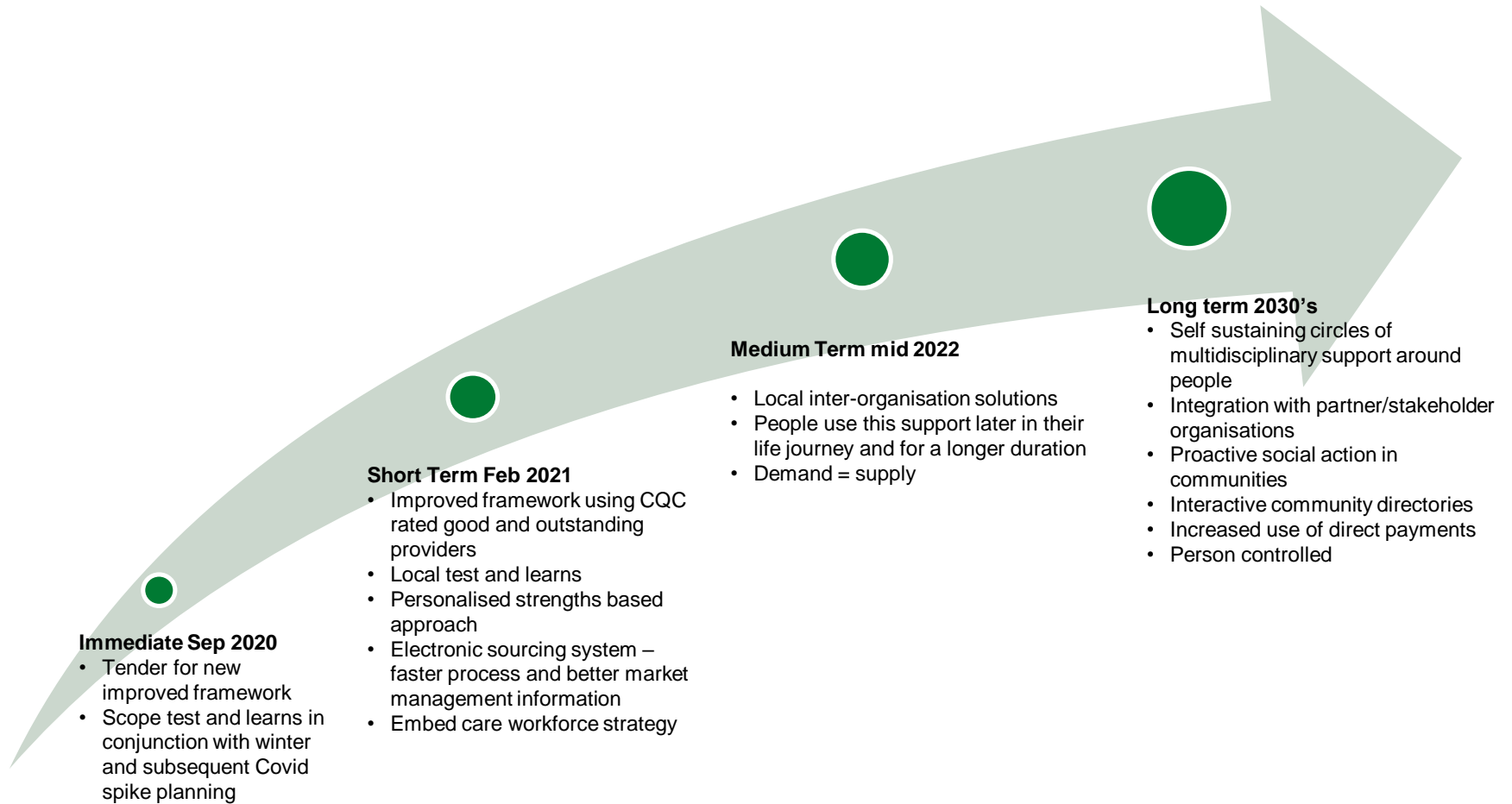
- Looking to mandate EHM across the domiciliary care service
- Awarded 'Proof of Concept' pilot to BJSS on 17th July. Concept is to pull data from providers existing EHM systems. Pilot to be run from July to December to inform requirements going forward
- Objectives: to improve the safeguarding of our most vulnerable Adults; to improve risk management; and to support the performance management of provision
- Switch on to be during the first year of the Framework
- In the interim, Providers will be required to upload EHM reports to a portal (continuity of carer, time windows, transparency of time spent especially when Adult pays for, or towards, the cost of care)

Proposed KPIs

KPIs to manage performance – aim is to use validated data and minimise Provider time spent on reporting

KPI	KPI Statement	Calculation Method	How	Frequency	Weighting
1	CQC Rating	Scores allocated for Overall, Safe & Well Led KLOEs	ECC to calculate from CQC published data	Monthly	20%
2	Missed Calls	% of planned visits not attended	Report from EHM system	Monthly	10%
3	Calls outside time window – time critical calls / non time critical	% of planned visits outside time window	Report from EHM system	Monthly	10%
4	Continuity of Carer	Number of visits / numbers of carers.	Report from EHM system	Monthly	10%
5	Packages accepted	Package starts / packages offered to provider	ECC to calculate	Monthly	10%
6	Social Value TOMS	£ generated / number of Adults	Provider to complete National TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) toolkit	6 Monthly	10%
7	Adult Satisfaction Survey	Score allocated on responses of Adults	ECC to commission independent survey	Annually	20%
8	Handbacks	Handbacks / total number of Adults	ECC to calculate	Quarterly	10%

Live at Home Roadmap



OP Residential and Nursing Market Shaping



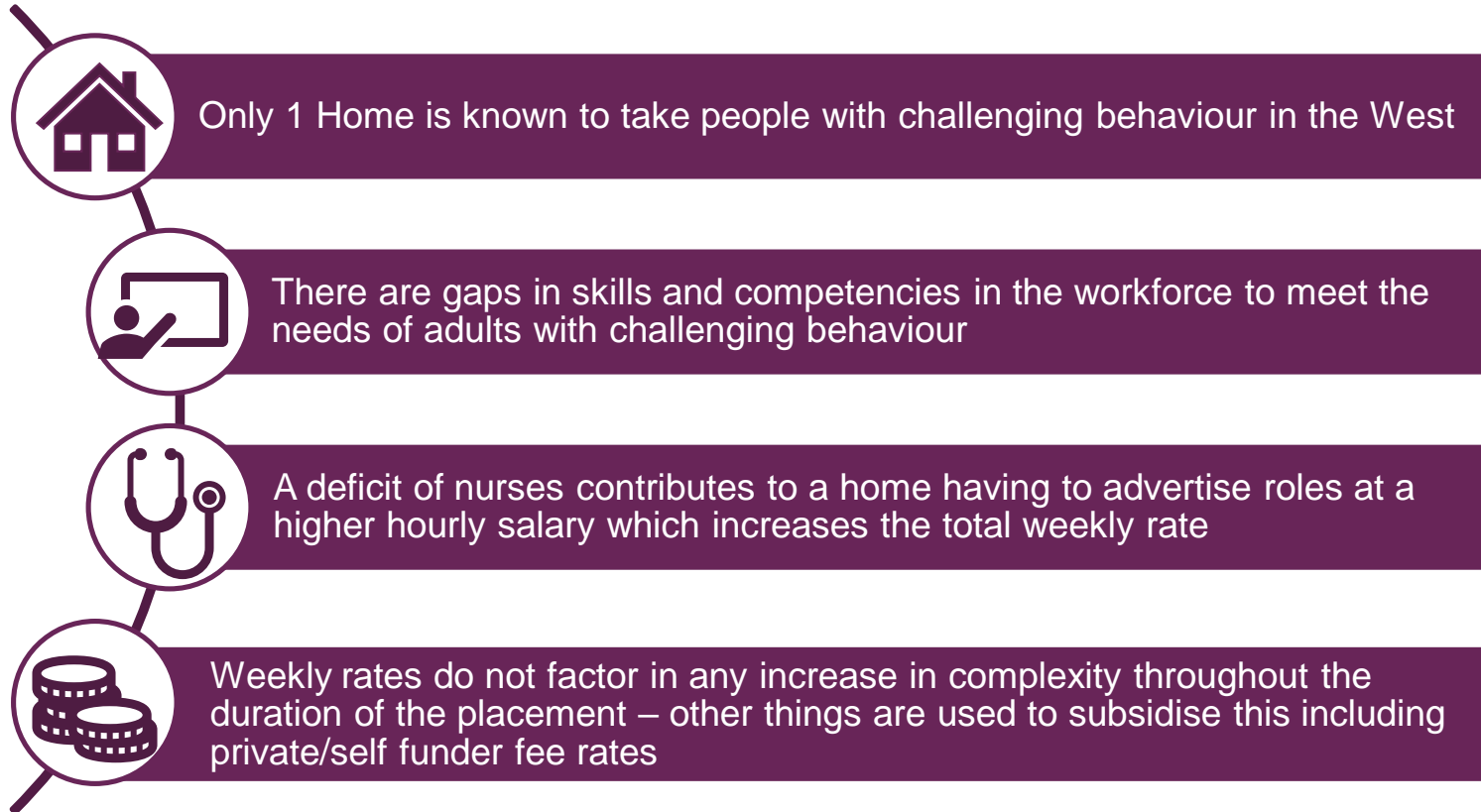
Background

- 410 Care Homes across the Essex System, are registered to provide care and support in a residential setting
- 266 homes are registered for older people services (CQC data)
- Several care homes have multiple CQC registrations e.g. registered for older people, mental health etc, although specialise in one area
- Current number of homes delivering care and support to older people only:
 - 152 Older People Residential Care Homes
 - 61 Older People Nursing Homes
- Current occupancy levels in Essex are c.81% - this is a reduction of 10% since March 2020
- ECC occupies c.31% of the total older people care home beds in Essex c.3500 beds
- CCG occupies c.3% of the total older people care home beds in Essex c.350 beds, although further work is being undertaken with the CCG's to understand whether it is anticipated that they will return to pre-Covid levels of occupancy of between 450 and 500 placements at any one time

Background cont.

- Demand for Older People Residential Care is steadily declining; resulting in over supply of residential beds across the Essex system
- Current modelling indicates that there will be oversupply in Essex by March 2022
- Affordability is a barrier to accessibility of the identified market capacity, particularly in West Essex where placements requiring nursing care can incur exceptionally high spot rates
- There is a lack of supply to support adults with more complex conditions e.g. advanced dementia. This is particularly prevalent in West Essex
- There is oversupply in Tendring, Braintree and Halstead
- Proposals and options need to be sensitive to local issues

Market Intelligence



Market Shaping Principles

To achieve and maintain market sustainability, providers must adapt and align their business model with future care needs. Older People Care Home Market Shaping is a multidisciplinary project involving ECC (Procurement and ASC) and Essex CCG's

The overarching principle of the project is to ensure we have the **right capacity**, in the **right place**, at the **right time** at the **right price**.

We also want to

- Maintain choice and control for individuals
- Promote community capacity and resilience despite a downward trend of residential care placements
- Increase collaboration with NHS, Districts and Boroughs
- Provide support and guidance to OP care Homes at risk of closure
- Retain the best quality providers in the market

Next Steps

- We are currently reviewing options for market engagement and shaping in collaboration with CCG's, ECC Commissioners, Finance, Procurement and Legal
- A market shaping workshop is planned for 16th September

Work Programme

Reference Number: PAF/19/20

Report title: Work Programme	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 17 September 2020	For: Discussion and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current work programme for the Committee is attached.

2. Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:
- (i) to consider this report and work programme in the Appendix and any further development or amendments;
 - (ii) to discuss further suggestions for briefings/scrutiny work.

3. Background

3.1 Briefings and training

Further briefings and discussion days will continue to be scheduled on an ongoing basis as identified and required.

3.2 Formal committee activity

The current work programme continues to be a live document, developed as a result of work planning sessions and subsequent ongoing discussions between the Chairman and Lead Members, and within full committee. Some items have been put on hold as a result of the pandemic.

3.3 Task and Finish Group activity

The final report of the Task and Finish Group looking at certain aspects of the multi-agency response to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines has been completed and is presented elsewhere on the agenda. It is anticipated that a Task and Finish Group will be established to look at particular aspects of domiciliary care.

Cont....

Work Programme

3.4 Chairman and Vice Chairmen meetings

The Chairman and Vice Chairmen meet monthly in between scheduled meetings of the Committee to discuss work planning and meet officers as part of preparation for future items. The Chairman and Vice Chairmen also meet the Cabinet Members for Education, Children & Families, and Health and Adult Social Care on a regular basis.

4. Update and Next Steps

See Appendix.

5. List of Appendices –

Work Programme overleaf.

Date/timing	Issue/Topic	Focus/other comments	Approach
Items identified for formal scrutiny in full committee			
17 September 2020	Residential and domiciliary care	Changes to demand pressures being seen as a result of the pandemic and other trends	Expected to, in part, inform a detailed Task and Finish Group review of domiciliary care
17 September 2020	Drug Gangs, knife crime and county lines - <i>follow up</i>	Responding to referral from Full Council to look in particular at multi-agency working	To receive the final report of the Task and Finish Group established to look at the issue.
8 October 2020	Education portfolio update: <i>further follow-up</i>	1. Consider the draft Early Years Strategy; 2. A further update on wellbeing programmes and personal resilience; 3. Update on disadvantaged Pupils Pilot	Cabinet Member and Director – Education to be present
8 October 2020	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Structure Update – <i>further follow-up specifically on school attendance</i>	Monthly analysis on attendance at school during the lock-down, and planned recovery actions (as requested at July 2020 meeting of the Committee);	Written report only - Thereafter, likely to be consolidated into the future updates on improvement actions being taken to address issues raised by the Care Quality Commission/Ofsted Inspection of SEND services (next one due January 2021)
8 October 2020	Children's Safeguarding	(i) consider Children's Safeguarding Board annual report; and (ii) an operational focus	TBC
12 November 2020	Adults Safeguarding	1. Consider Adults Safeguarding Board annual report (usually presented in September but delayed by the pandemic). 2. Focussed operational update (TBC)	TBC
TBC	Adult Community Learning – <i>follow up</i>	Consider new national outcomes framework and how being benchmarked against it – to include measuring the social investment.	TBC
16 December 2020 (provisional)	Respite Care – <i>follow up</i>	Update on further parent and carers workshops held, completing the full-service review and ongoing support during the pandemic.	Cabinet Member and Lead Officers to attend
16 December 2020 (provisional)	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards – <i>follow up</i>	Update on progress to reduce number of outstanding assessments.	Lead Officers to attend
14 January 2021	Special Educational Needs – Care Quality Commission/Ofsted Inspection – <i>further follow up</i>	To be updated on the multi-agency action plan and improvement actions being taken	Cabinet Member, Lead Officers and Health representatives to be present.

Cont....

Date/timing	Issue/Topic	Focus/other comments	Approach
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Task and Finish Group reviews

September/October	Domiciliary care	TBC	TBC – start date delayed due to current Corona pandemic but now due to start late September
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Further issues under consideration

TBC	Children's Services	Broad update on impact of the pandemic.	TBC
TBC	Adult Carers strategy	To be scoped	TBC
TBC	Autism services	Issues identified during joint briefing with HOSC including transitions between services, timing for support and diagnosis, promoting employment, and consistency of mainstream school offer.	To be scoped.
TBC	Provider relationships – <i>follow-up</i>	1. Refreshed Market Strategy 2. Further update on initiatives to improve supplier relationships	Opportunity to review and comment on draft and revisit any issues from previous discussions. This may be addressed during September discussions on trends identified in the residential and domiciliary care markets, and actions to be taken, as a result of the pandemic and lockdown
TBC	0-19 contract with Virgin Care – <i>further follow-up</i>	Continue review of contract performance, and the revised (more outcomes focussed) KPIs.	Cabinet Member, Virgin Care, and Barnardos to be invited.
TBC	PREVENT	TBC	TBC
TBC	Hip fractures and falls Prevention – <i>follow-up</i>	Follow up on Task & Finish Group recommendations that are relevant to PAF	To be picked up during work on domiciliary care.