



Essex County Council

## People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>09:30</b>	<b>Wednesday, 11 January 2023</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH</b>
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**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Telephone:** 033301 34574

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		<b>Pages</b>
<b>**</b>	<b>Private Pre-Meeting for PAF Members</b> Please note that there will be a virtual private pre-meeting for members at 4.00pm on Tuesday 10 January.	
<b>1</b>	<b>Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>4 - 4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes: 14 December 2022</b> To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022.	<b>5 - 17</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Questions from the Public</b> 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. Please note that members of the public wishing to ask a question must email <a href="mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk">democratic.services@essex.gov.uk</a> by noon on the date before the meeting (Tuesday 10 January 2023) and that questions must relate to an item on the agenda for the meeting.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 Update</b>	<b>18 - 45</b>

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|---|---|---------|
| 5 | <b>Update on the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service</b>   | 46 - 53 |
| 6 | <b>Work Programme</b>   | 54 - 57 |
| 7 | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b><br>To note that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 February 2023, in Committee Room 1, County Hall.  |         |
| 8 | <b>Urgent Business</b><br>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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| 9 | <b>Urgent Exempt Business</b><br>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. |
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## Agenda item 1

**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

Councillor R Gooding	Chairman
Councillor S Barker	
Councillor M Durham	
Councillor J Fleming	
Councillor M Goldman	
Councillor I Grundy	
Councillor C Guglielmi	Vice-Chairman
Councillor J Lumley	
Councillor P May	Vice-Chairman
Councillor A McGurran	
Councillor R Playle	
Councillor L Shaw	
Councillor W Stamp	
Councillor A Wiles	

Co-opted educational representative 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). All places are vacant but a new nomination for a church Diocesan representative has now been received – an update will be provided at the meeting.

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**Minutes of the meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 9.30am on Wednesday, 14 December 2022 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.**

**Present:**

*County Councillors:*

Cllr Ray Gooding (Chairman)  
Cllr Susan Barker  
Cllr Mark Durham  
Cllr Jane Fleming  
Cllr Marie Goldman  
Cllr Ian Grundy  
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Peter May  
Cllr Aidan McGurran  
Cllr Ross Playle  
Cllr Laureen Shaw

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, and Gemma Bint, Democratic Services Officer were also present.

**The following joined remotely via Zoom:**

Cllr June Lumley  
Cllr Wendy Stamp  
Sharon Westfield De Cortez (Healthwatch Essex)

**1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received.

- Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors June Lumley and Wendy Stamp and Sharon Westfield De Cortez from Healthwatch Essex, all of whom however joined the meeting instead via Zoom.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 4 – The last sentence under bullet point (iii) which stated ‘However, it also depended on how ‘carer’ was defined’ to be deleted.
- Minute 4, third bullet point under conclusion replace ‘may be’ with ‘will be’ and also to be reflected in Matters Arising Report

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**3 Questions from the public**

There were none.

**4 Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022-2027: End of Year One Update**

The Committee considered report PAF/23/22. The following attended the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

Cllr Beverley Egan, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years  
Ralph Holloway, Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation  
Carolyn Terry - EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager

Contributors provided the Committee with an End of Year One Update on the Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022-2027. During the presentation and subsequent discussion, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

- (i) The establishment of an early years Data Dashboard and the implementation of gathering key data which would enable the prioritisation of key areas to focus on each year.
- (ii) A target had been set to increase by 1% the take-up of eligible 2 years-olds accessing funded care. The increase in the past year had been a 2.4% increase meaning 77.1% of eligible 2 year-olds had accessed a funded place compared to national average of 61.8%. A Year 2 priority would be to maintain and further increase the take up of eligible 2yr olds to access a funded learning place.
- (iii) There was not any significant evidence to suggest that there was a greater proportion of children with SEND within the 20% that currently did not take up a funded place. Most early cases of young children needing SEND support would be identified by the Health Visitor.
- (iv) An earlier integrated system check (conducted through the Essex Childrens Wellbeing Service) would be used to inform who was on track and identify interventions that needed to be in place. However, there would also be some communications to normalise that children each develop a little differently. It was important to ensure that young children had the appropriate assessment of additional need at an early stage which might in some cases mean that a formal Education Health Care Plan is not needed as the extra support needed can be provided without one.

- (v) The pandemic lockdowns had resulted in speech and language development delays, social communications development delay and delayed independence skills for some young children.
- (vi) There was increasing focus on reaching the economically disadvantaged to help narrow the word gap. Significant focus was on Canvey Island as it was identified as one of the County Council's Levelling up priority areas. However, work continued as part of Levelling Up projects particularly in Basildon, Harlow and Tendring areas as well. Community make-up and demographics, and lower levels of parental aspiration and engagement and access to resources could all contribute to an area underperforming.
- (vii) Results for those children where English was an additional language were encouraging.
- (viii) Adult Community Learning were engaging with and supporting parents, especially to help parents return to work.
- (ix) There was some further consideration towards encouraging and facilitating employer based childcare schemes possibly through their sponsorship of places. Parent collaboratives were also being looked at.
- (x) Some changes in the early years support required by parents had been seen since the pandemic, notably some parents moving childcare nearer to supporting family members and seeing shorter days of support being needed as parents may be increasingly working from home and no longer commuting resulting in less demand for services early morning and later in the day.
- (xi) The role of grandparental support was increasing in importance.
- (xii) There needed to be flexibility in Early Years' provision and an appropriate balance between school-based and private provision available locally.

#### Sustainability in the Early Years' sector

- (xiii) There were financial pressures on Early Years' settings from rises in the minimum wage, NI contributions, utility and food costs and business rates.
- (xiv) The Early Years' Sector were advising that government funding levels currently being paid for funded places were not covering the cost to Early Years' settings of providing the funded place.

- (xv) There were increasing numbers of children with emerging additional needs that needed more support which increased the pressure on providers. There were also efforts to distinguish those who had been adversely impacted by pandemic lockdowns who needed some additional support to catch up but did not have SEND needs.
- (xvi) Recruitment and retention in the Early Years' sector remained a challenge and the County Council were working with regional colleagues in looking at what could be done to help providers.
- (xvii) Some providers were changing their business model as a response to all the challenges being faced.
- (xviii) The County Council were expecting to see an increase in closures of Early Years' settings. Members challenged if such closures would adversely impact the implementation of the Strategy and achieving outcomes. The County Council were continually working with and supporting providers and finding ways to 'scaffold' them including helping them to renegotiate rents with landlords, changing their business models possibly through a slightly reduced offer, and quicker payments to help cashflow.
- (xix) The County Council gave regular feedback to the Department of Education on the challenges being faced by Early Years' providers.

Conclusion:

It was agreed that:

- (i) Further information be provided on the lobbying undertaken by the County Council with Government, the Local Government Association and other bodies to help drive further improvement in standards and outcomes.
- (ii) A more detailed report of the 2022 EY Foundation Stage profile which measured a good level of development – which had been the first published data since pre-pandemic – would be circulated.
- (iii) A further broad update would be arranged in due course.

Contributors were thanked for their attendance and Councillor Egan left the meeting with supporting officers remaining to support the next agenda item.

The meeting adjourned 11.22 and recommenced at 11.35am



## 5 SEND Strategy Update

The Committee considered report PAF/24/22. The following attended the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

- Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability
- Clare Kershaw, Director: Education
- Ralph Holloway, Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation
- Carolyn Terry - EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager

Contributors provided the Committee with an update on SEND services and support.

During the presentation and subsequent discussion, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

The approach for Home to School transport in relation to climate considerations would be set out in a paper which was expected to be considered at Cabinet in January 2023.

- (i) Ofsted and the CQC had conducted a revisit of Essex SEND services in May 2022. Their report of the re-inspection had confirmed that Essex as a system was making sufficient progress to address the areas of weakness previously identified and that ongoing monitoring was no longer required.
- (ii) Ofsted and the CQC found that there had been a palpable change in the culture among partners related to joint working which enabled joint commissioning in a more strategic and systematic manner. However, the impact of this improvement work was not yet being felt universally by children and young people with SEND and their families.
- (iii) Improved input was being encouraged from partners outside the County and how they could contribute to the Local Offer.
- (iv) The Essex Family Forum (EFF), the local parent carer forum, was working closely with area leaders to address the weaknesses identified in the written statement of action and act as true and genuine advocates for parents and carers.
- (v) A new Local Offer website had been launched and initial feedback was that the information and signposting available from that site was clearer.
- (vi) Since the regulatory inspection in October 2019, the area had managed significant challenges including the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing organisational structures and leadership in health services. These factors had had an

impact on the timeliness to deliver some aspects of the written statement of action. However, there was now a view that it was easier to work with the new Integrated Care Systems with each of them now having a designated SEND Lead for example.

- (vii) A new inspection framework would go live in early 2023 including a greater focus on what happens in schools as well as across the local area.
- (viii) One of biggest ongoing challenges was continued differences in waiting times for diagnostic pathways across the county and identifying needs earlier. There was some evidence that some parents were paying for private assessments and diagnosis. Whilst there were recovery plans being implemented to address the backlogs, the success and quality of these plans varied across the geographical area. The regulators found that the three health integrated care systems in Essex were working independently of one another on this aspect and not sharing collective responsibility.
- (ix) There were still concerns about how young people accessed and navigated the pathway, and how they were supported whilst awaiting diagnosis and the handover after diagnosis.
- (x) A weakness identified during the original 2019 regulatory inspection had been the quality of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) and professional training had been improved and new guidance put in place to integrate and align all partners. However, the high number of requests coming into the system continued to have an impact on trying to improve timescales and there remained a national shortage of educational psychologists. There were plans to try and increase the workforce in response to demand pressures.
- (xi) There were still parents with historic support plans that still needed to see improvement in the support being received by their child.
- (xii) A further weakness identified during the original 2019 regulatory inspection was possible under identifying of moderate Learning Disabilities and speech and language difficulties and work continued to improve this. There was increased training both in Early Years' settings and within social care teams to assist earlier identification.
- (xiii) Assessing outcomes in relation to SEND services was difficult and often might require assessing over the very long term. It was reported that the Department of Education may be looking at commissioning a longitudinal study to look at this further. Some

outcomes may be quicker to assess such as timelines for assessment of need.

- (xiv) There were an increasing number of appeals against placements as special schools were generally operating at or close to full capacity. With high demand for appeals some hearings were scheduled for up to 12 months' time and interim support for those cases became very important. The Tribunal process still indicated that there were still some serious weaknesses and risks in the system.
- (xv) Independent schools could make request for assessment in same way as maintained schools and the County Council would respond in the same way.
- (xvi) Some parents had a personal budget to source some of their own support such as therapists although these were generally in a school setting.
- (xvii) There were approximately 11,000 people with an EHCP in Essex with a further 22,000 receiving other SEN related support.
- (xviii) In November 2022 a total of 299 requests for assessment had been received including 206 from schools and 86 from parents. There had been a total of 2,893 for the last academic year which represented a significant increase compared to pre-pandemic.

#### Conclusion:

It was **agreed** that:

- (i) The next step for the Committee would be to talk to representatives from the Family Forum in the new year to seek their views on the changes to services being seen and the challenges still being faced.
- (ii) The Committee would then need to assess the impact of the changes being seen and invite the Cabinet Member and officers to come back in six months with a further update.
- (iii) As part of the above update the Committee to be provided with some analysis of numbers and spend compared with other local authorities

Contributors were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

**6. Performance Monitoring falling within the Committee's remit, as reported to the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered and discussed report PAF/25/22 comprising a report of the background to arrangements currently in place to scrutinise performance of the Everyone's Essex Strategy and the latest scrutiny session hosted by the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee. Under this agenda item the Chairman and Vice Chairmen had the opportunity to highlight any issues arising that may be relevant to the Committee to pursue and scrutinise in further detail. Although nothing was specifically highlighted this time there was the suggestion that consideration should be given to seeking more financial information on service areas within the Committee's remit to help support future scrutiny items.

**7. Work Programme**

The Committee considered and discussed report PAF/26/22 comprising the work programme for the committee.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 14 December 2022.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 13.25pm.

**Chairman**

MATTERS ARISING (page 1 of 5)

Further to the request at the 14 December 2022 meeting of the Committee, further work will be progressed to close-off as many of the outstanding items as soon possible.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
14 December 2022	Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022-2027: End of Year One Update	Further information be provided on the lobbying undertaken by the County Council with Government, the Local Government Association and other bodies to help drive further improvement in standards and outcomes.	
		A more detailed report of the 2022 EY Foundation Stage profile which measured a good level of development – which had been the first published data since pre-pandemic – would be circulated	
		A further broad update would be arranged in due course	
	SEND Strategy Update	To talk to representatives from the Family Forum in the new year to seek their views on the changes to services being seen and the challenges still being faced.	
		Cabinet Member and officers to come back in six months with a further update to include some analysis of numbers and spend compared with other local authorities	

10 November 2022	Carers Update	Further information on Carer friendly schools and how many schools have engaged with this programme would be provided. There was reference also to young carers' passports in schools and accreditation linked to the Healthy Schools Programme.	Further information circulated
		Further consideration be given as to whether the estimate of 153,000 carers in Essex could be further broken down and compare figures with other local authorities to see if Essex had a higher penetration rate.	Further information circulated
		Further disclosure on male and female family carers may be needed in the next iteration of the strategy.	Further information circulated
		The Insight Team work regarding respite would be shared once completed.	Date TBC
	Adult Community Learning	A further update would be brought to the committee in the new year including a work plan (particularly on implementation of strategy and related workstreams), progress and impact of actions so far.	TBC
13 October 2022	Domestic Abuse update	Further data on how domestic abuse cases broke down by area to be provided to the Committee.	Timing TBC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Domestic Abuse update continued...	An information leaflet/card would be circulated to food banks before Christmas.	TBC
		Information cards for COMPASS would be sent to members if this had not already been done.	TBC
		It would be looked into whether support was provided to those victims who were directed to commercial rental market.	TBC
		Further information on cases where private legal proceeding in family court being brought against victims inappropriately.	TBC
		Opportunities to work with the Refugee Council would be raised with the Domestic Abuse Board.	TBC
		The impact of Court backlogs was discussed regularly at the Domestic Abuse Board. It was agreed an update would be provided on the current situation	TBC
		More detail would be provided on the figures showing a rise of repeat victims.	TBC
8 September 2022	Essex Adults Safeguarding Board	An operational briefing would be arranged [this may incorporate further information on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards]	To be scheduled later in the year
		Further information and breakdown on the age bands use for some disclosures	TBC
		A breakdown of the contributions made by the three statutory partners would be provided	TBC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Essex Adults Safeguarding Board cont..	More information would be provided on the continued upskilling of the care sector in safeguarding and awareness.	TBC
		Further update to be provided in due course incorporating suicide prevention work	Chairman and VCs to decide on timing for a formal follow-up
14 April 2022	Essex Safeguarding Children Board update	Information on accessing services in the Dengie area to be provided	TBC
		More knife bins should be placed in smaller towns, including placing them within Essex libraries to prevent vandalism	TBC
		Broader conclusions around (i) MASA arrangements, (ii) further streamlining Board activities, (iii) continued focus on County Lines and (iv) stronger links to Everyone's Essex aspirations and priorities,	To be taken up by the PAF Chairman and VCs with the Independent Chairman
	Our Co-Parenting Strategy – How we do Corporate Parenting in Essex	A Champion within each district/borough for children in care and care leavers should be considered	TBC
		Priority policies on housing allocation to help give young people the opportunity to progress in life be considered	TBC
		That figures be included within the introduction section showing the number of children taken into care in the last three years	TBC
		The paragraph regarding co-grandparents in the Strategy be expanded	TBC
		Further consideration be given to increasing the corporate parenting role at Full Council	TBC



<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
		Further consideration be given to how to encourage other anchor organisations to help and that a guarantee of a job interview could be a significant first step.	TBC
10 March 2022	Consultation and development of the new library plan: Everyone's Library Service 2022 - 2026	Encouraged ongoing work with individuals, partners and other groups to continue to reach out to those residents not currently using libraries. Encouraged trying to further expand the number of subscribers for the library newsletter.	TBC/ to follow up at next update
		To consider whether further breakdown and analysis of responses and feedback was possible to see if certain types of usage could be identified in certain areas for example.	TBC/ to follow up at next update
		To look at how future communications can be further targeted to improve interaction with local groups and organisations including school-aged children.	TBC/ to follow up at next update
		To look further at the pre-pandemic launch of the London Library Community Fridge initiative to see if similar was viable in Essex.	TBC/ to follow up at next update
		To consider adding virtual tours of some libraries onto ECC's website.	TBC/ to follow up at next update
		A further update on promoting literacy may better be incorporated into the next committee discussion on educational attainment.	To be raised in preparatory planning discussions for educational attainment item.
		Factoring in aspirations and changes for some library buildings with the capital programme.	Likely to be follow-up scrutiny work specifically for the Place Services and Economic Growth Committee.

<b>Report title:</b> Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 Update	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 11 January 2023	<b>For:</b> Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

## 1. Introduction

In September 2021 and March 2022, the Committee was consulted on the development of Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 Plan (see Background below). This is the requested follow-up and update.

## 2. Action required

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) **The attached update; and**
- (ii) **Identify any follow-up scrutiny actions**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 On 9 September 2021 the Committee discussed future ambitions for the library service ahead of public engagement sessions and a public consultation on the draft future strategy starting in October 2021. A link to the minutes is [here](#) and a link to the meeting documents is [here](#).
- 3.2 On 10 March 2022 the Committee discussed the consultation and engagement undertaken, the outcomes from the consultation, and the development of the Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 Plan (the Plan). It was agreed that there would be a further update with a more detailed implementation plan in due course. A link to the minutes is [here](#) and a link to the meeting documents is [here](#).
- 3.3 The development of the Plan overlaps with the remit of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee and colleagues from that committee have been invited to both the previous above referenced sessions and also to the session today (11 January 2023) to participate in discussion and identify any aspects they may wish to follow up on within their own committee at

## Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 Update

a later date.

### 4. **Update and Next Steps**

The update is attached in the Appendix to this report. Next steps are as proposed under Action Required.

Expected attendees to support the discussion:

County Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance

Suzanna Shaw - Director of Customer Services

Juliet Pirez - Head of Libraries

### 5 **Appendix**

Power Point Briefing Paper: Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026: dated 11 January 2023 and authored by County Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance and Juliet Pirez - Head of Libraries

## People and Families/ Place Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Louise McKinlay  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Community, Equality,  
Partnerships and Performance

Juliet Pirez  
Head of Libraries

11/01/2023

# Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026

# The story so far

Launched in 2022, the Everyone's Library Service Plan is built on 3 Pillars: Library Service and Literacy; Communications and Infrastructure; and Supporting Our Communities and Levelling Up.

These Pillars provide a clear structure, but also allow for an agile approach enabling Libraries to meet new challenges in ways which support the Plan and -most importantly- everyone in Essex.

The Library Plan reflects the Everyone's Essex Plan. The themes of economy; environment; children and families; and supporting the health, care and wellbeing of all ages can be seen throughout.

I am here today to give you an update on the Library Plan, and to put forward an ambitious motion regarding literacy within Essex.

**“Literacy sits at the heart of the levelling up agenda. Improving literacy will improve the opportunities of individuals and communities. It is great to see Essex committing to these priorities and placing libraries at the heart of their strategy. Libraries are lifelong centres of literacy, creating reading communities and of vital importance to the one child in 11 from our most vulnerable communities who don’t own a single book. With their commitment to literacy, Essex Libraries are showing themselves to be community activists and national leaders.”**

Jonathan Douglas CBE, Hon FRSL,  
Chief Executive, National Literacy Trust

Key themes under the 3 pillars of the Plan include:

## **Library Service and Literacy**

- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing

## **Communications and Infrastructure**

- Improve our communications to existing users and new audiences, to get people involved at a local level
- Improve communications with staff and volunteers
- Develop service outreach
- Improve our buildings and reduce our carbon footprint

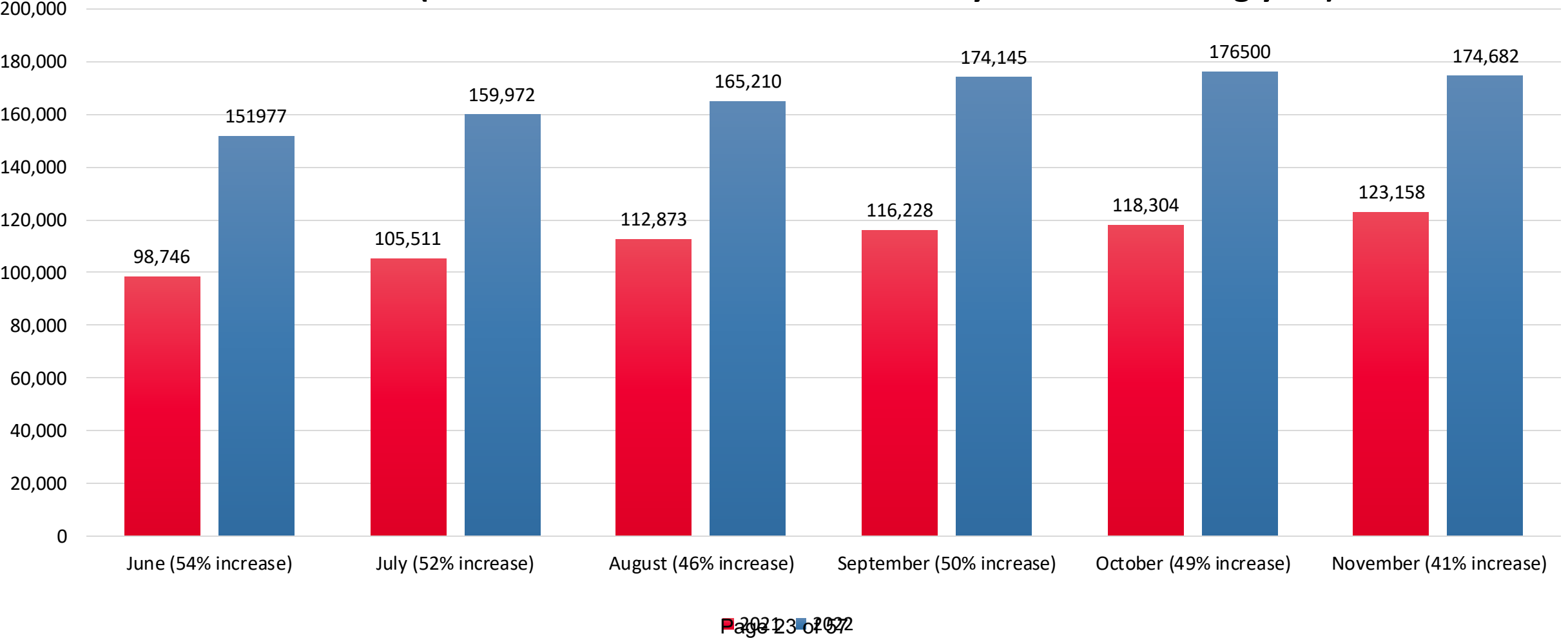
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## **Supporting our Communities and Levelling Up**

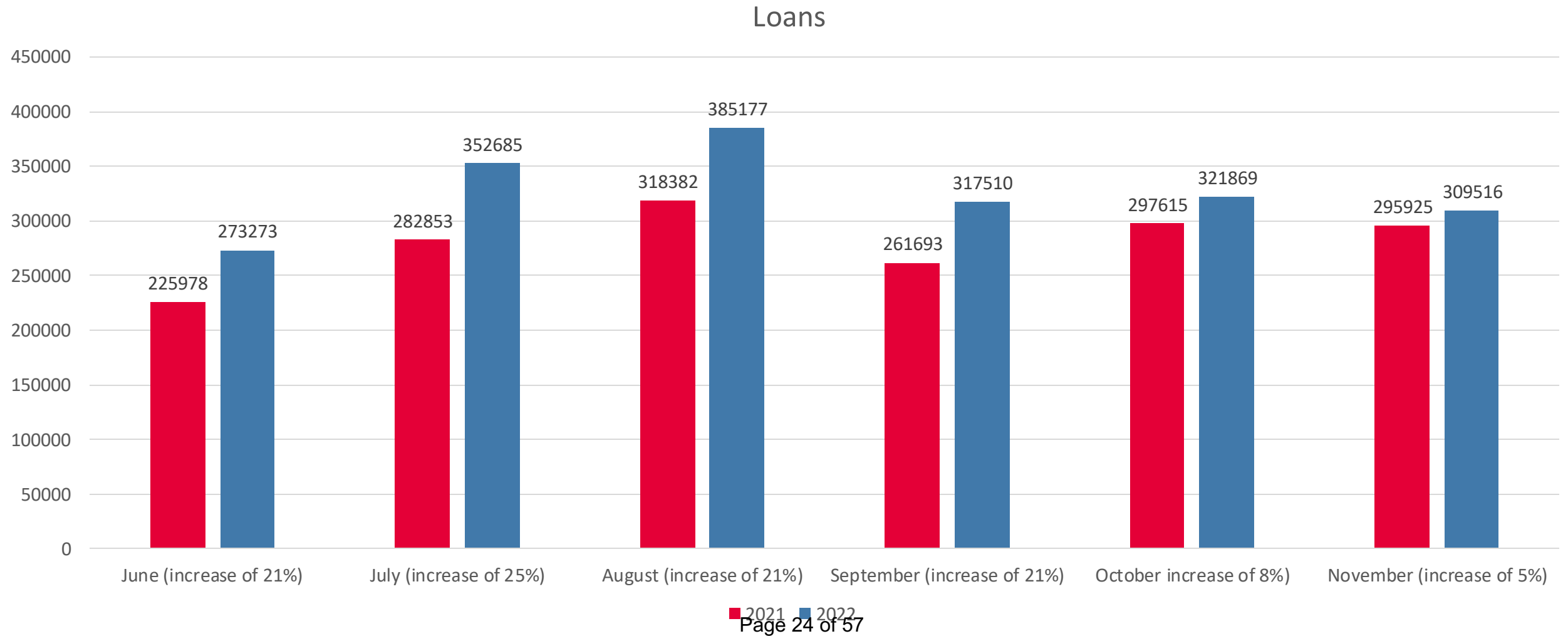
- Ensuring all residents have the same access to the support and skills they need to achieve their aspirations, regardless of where they live.
- Improving opportunities for everyone, locally and countywide.
- Encouraging new users, thinking of new ways to attract them

# Increase of active members 2021-2022

Active members (customers who have used the library in the last rolling year)

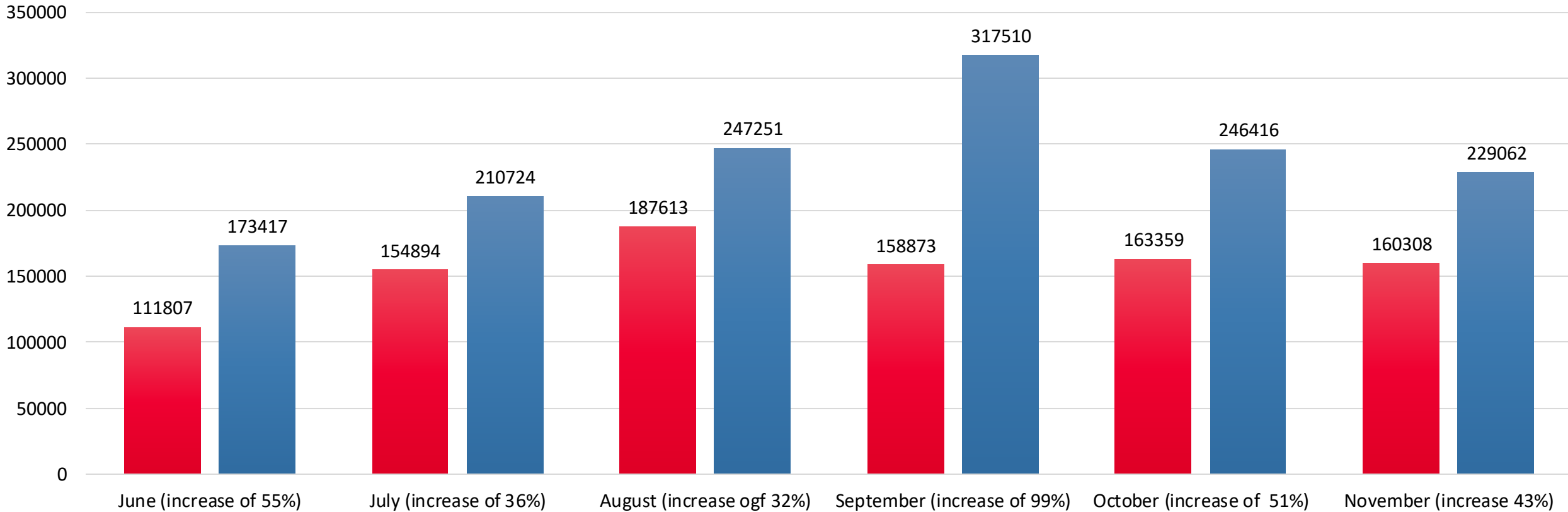


# Increase in loans 2021-2022





# Increase in visits 2021-2022



# 2022: New Members

Measure	2019	2020	2021	2022 (to end November)
New Members	55,123	15,307	29,474	60,132



# Juliet Pirez- Head of Library Service

Our Service Delivery Plan builds on the strengths of the Essex Library Service whilst challenging us to do even more.

We have made good progress on our plan. What follows are examples of ways in which our plan is making a difference to the people of Essex.

- Progress on the plan
- Mobile Outreach Vehicle
- Marketing
- Services for adults



# Progress on the Service Delivery Plan

Pillar	Commitment	Example of Activity	Progress vs Service Delivery Plan
1	1. Supporting children and adults to improve their literacy	Creation of Literacy Areas in every library	
1	2. Encouraging people to enjoy reading for pleasure.	Author events across the service	
1	3. Delivering further local and national initiatives and programmes to encourage residents to get reading.	Summer and Winter Reading Challenges	
1	4. Introducing relevant and exciting events and activities that will engage and inspire new and existing library service users.	Author in Residence (start date 16/01/2023)	
1	5. Increasing the range and diversity of online resources.	Introducing Kanopy (film streaming service) and Moshi Kids app (children's mindfulness)	
1	6. Engaging with residents as we shape the service and encourage local promotion of events.	Community involvement in delivering Warm Welcomes (e.g. Basildon CVS)	
1	7. Developing further our volunteering opportunities to expand the additional services we can offer through our libraries.	Health and Digital Literacy Champion volunteer role created, working in partnership with Mid and South Essex NHS Trust	
2	8. Benefitting from a programme of refurbishments to libraries across the county.	Refurbishment of Harlow Library	
2	9. Making use of our updated digital and IT services to improve the customer experience.	Library Service Platform intending to launch end of January 2023	
2	10. Using data and other information to better understand the trends, habits and interests of our library users.	Ongoing work, including the production of different surveys for different types of user	
2	11. Ensuring marketing of our services is dynamic and engaging, using relevant platforms e.g. Instagram.	Over 15,000 downloads of the Library App across Apple and Android devices	
3	12. Providing support and skills to residents to help them achieve their aspirations, regardless of where they live.	Mobile Outreach Vehicle visiting schools, events, targeted groups eg, travellers' sites	
3	13. Forwarding the Levelling Up agenda by targeting new and existing resources to specific areas in order to support families and communities.	Afterschool Welcomes in Harlow, providing tutor-led homework support as well as a meal to pupils (in partnership with ACL)	
3	14. Continuing to work with partners to provide joined up and equal access to additional services.	UK Visa Checking Service in Chelmsford Library	
3	15. Identifying opportunities to use the Library Service to help educate and inform on global subjects such as climate change.	October "Love Your Library" day had an environmental theme, highlighting steps we all can take to protect our environment. 73 libraries took part	



# Mobile Outreach Vehicle and Marketing

Since launching in May 2022, our Mobile Outreach Vehicle:

- Has made 27 visits to nurseries and primary schools, and attended 41 community events and parks
- Has had 2,885 visitors, issuing over 500 new library cards
- Has visited a hotel where people seeking asylum from Afghanistan are housed- with more such visits planned



**Our marketing has continued to develop, promoting our services in ways which are relevant to existing and potential visitors:**

- Over 15,000 downloads of our app (Android and Apple)
- Facebook reach of 1.2m over 12 months
- Internal and external communications plans
- Successful launch and promotion of Warm Welcomes

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# Library Services for Adults

## Library of Sanctuary

- Sourced stock in Ukrainian and various Afghan languages
- Visits to hotels housing asylum seekers from Afghanistan
- Started the process of making every library a Library of Sanctuary

## Memory Café/ Dementia Friendly Library Service

- Running in Harwich, expanding to Manningtree and West Clacton. Now running fortnightly due to demand
- Fantastic feedback and community involvement
- Working with Alzheimer's Society to make every library Dementia Friendly



Top left: an example of new stock for customers from Afghanistan

Top right: certificate thanking St Joseph's Primary School, Dovercourt, for their involvement with the Memory Café

Bottom: Christmas fun at the Harwich Memory Café



# Pillar 1: Jo Powell

Pillar 1 – Library Service and Literacy - Supporting residents with their learning, development and engagement with reading

Promoting literacy amongst the residents of Essex is at the heart of our offer and underpins everything we do.

- Literacy Areas
- Literacy Support sessions
- National Literacy Trust
- Targeted support for Levelling Up areas and cohorts
- Providing stock relevant to all our communities
- Community Connectors



# National Literacy Trust – Essex Stories

## Pillar 1: Library Service and Literacy

- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Relevant and exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing
- Providing training opportunities for staff volunteers
- Expanding volunteer roles

**Essex Stories Launch Event**



**Basildon Library**  
Thursday 8 December,  
10am-1pm

- Open to all with any children who are of early-years age from 10-11:30am for a rhymetime and other literacy-themed activities
- Open to all who have invested interest in early years education from 11:30-1pm to action plan how we can work together to improve literacy within all levelling-up areas
- Goodybags for child attendees whilst stock last

Supported by the National Literacy Trust

**Essex Stories**

## Headline facts and figures - 2021/22

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1  
**75%**  
down from 82% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading TA  
**67%**  
down from 75% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in writing TA  
**58%**  
down from 69% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths TA  
**68%**  
down from 76% in 2019

These are the first phonics screening check and key stage 1 attainment statistics since 2019, after assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

“Research has shown that in households where children hear fewer words, their literacy levels at age 5 are lower than those who have been exposed to a higher number of words, which impacts significantly on longer-term literacy and attainment outcomes (e.g. Gilkerson et al., 2017).”



# Specific Literacy Support Sessions

## Pillar 1: Library Service and Literacy

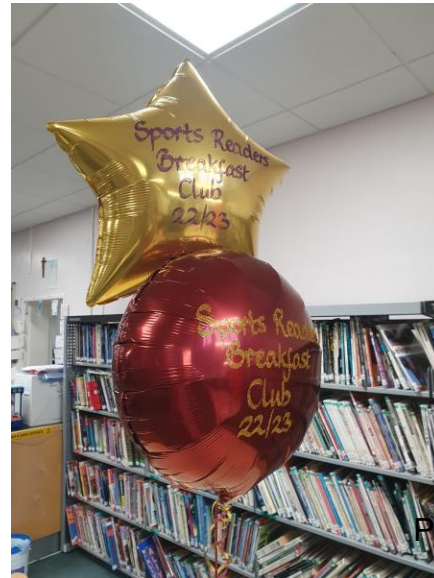
- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Relevant and exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing
- Providing training opportunities for staff volunteers
- Expanding volunteer roles



# Reading for pleasure

## Pillar 1: Library Service and Literacy

- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Relevant and exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing
- Providing training opportunities for staff volunteers
- Expanding volunteer roles



# World of stories



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**





# Community Connectors

Events attended from launch in  
August to mid-December 2022: 60  
Customer sign-ups: 332



# Pillar 2:

## Carolyn Peters

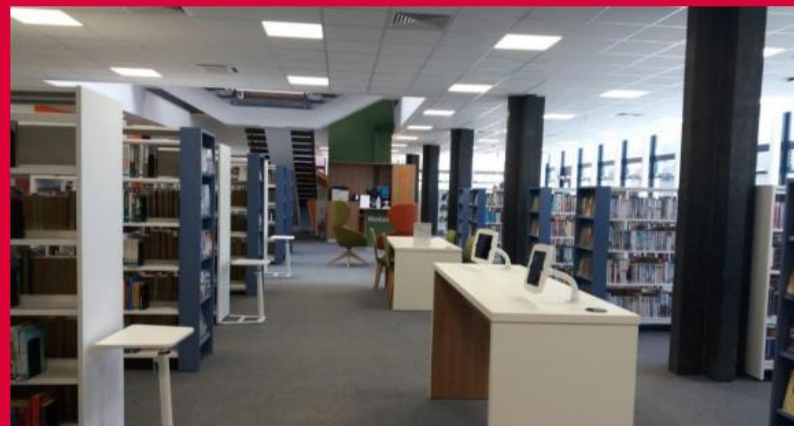
Pillar 2 – Communications and Infrastructure - Making sure our communication is accessible and our buildings are in the right place, modern and sustainable

Ambitious work across our estate is helping to make our libraries even more inviting, providing an enhanced range of services to support our residents whilst protecting the environment.

- New buildings and refurbishments
- Improvements to our Public Network system
- Exploring and implementing new ways to use IT
- Effectively marketing our offer to all







# Harlow Library is open!



- Shenfield Library temporary relocation to Adult Community Learning (ACL), Bishops Hill, Hutton. Essex Housing Project
- Refurbishment of ACL 'Small Hall' to accommodate temporary public library
- New build has begun with expected completion date around Spring 2024



# Pillar 3:

## Geoff Pearson

Pillar 3 – Supporting Communities and Levelling Up -  
Improving our ties with the community, making the  
library invaluable

Our libraries are seen as safe spaces and so our staff, volunteers and partners work together to give residents even more reasons to come in. By providing access to a wide range of information and services we can help to guide our visitors on their journeys.

- Warm Welcomes
- Partnership work- building links with internal and external partners, including from public health organisations
- ACL
- Multiply





# Warm Welcomes

Pillar 3 – Supporting our communities and Levelling Up



- Currently 33 Warm Welcome volunteers across the Library Service. They are involved in sign posting customers to organisations that can provide support and advice, having social conversations with those who may be lonely and/or vulnerable, explaining all the activities and events that take place in libraries and making refreshments.
- Staff have received Fuel Poverty training – provided by CAB
- Staff can signpost customers to local organisations and groups if support is required. Many of these organisations are using the library to speak to customers.
- Warm Welcome noticeboards in libraries to signpost people to help and support
- Activities, crafts, jigsaws, puzzles and newspapers are available for free in libraries along with free wifi, computers so customers can be occupied while keeping warm
- Increase in numbers for attending activities such as community teas. Discovered this is not only to keep warm but also people who are feeling isolated at home in the cold winter months.





# Warm Welcome Feedback

We've noticed our regular customers who pop in for books are actually staying in the warmth of the library for longer and longer

Hadleigh library staff

Just what I needed as I'm having problems with my heating at home

Stansted library customer

It's great to study somewhere warm

Student at Burnham –on-Crouch library

It's lovely and warm in here. I like the fact there are puzzles and newspapers too

Rayleigh library customer

I appreciate the warm library and being out of the cold

Great Tarpots library customer

Thank you for the warm drinks, it has made such a difference,

Pitsea library customer

Thank you for everything you are doing to help us during the cold

Greenstead library customer

What a great idea the Warm Welcome initiative is. I'll spread the word in the community

Galleywood library customer

Thank you for the warm library and great wifi

Student using Sible Hedingham library

# Partnership Work

## NHS:

- Digital Health and Literacy Volunteers (Mid and South Essex Trust)
- Working with mental health employment services (Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust)

## HSBC:

- “Always on” webinars, available via HSBC website

## UKPN:

- Targeted activity in Levelling Up areas

## Active Essex:

- Seated yoga classes, West Clacton (expanding in new year)
- Planters, compost, seeds given to libraries for community use
- Funding to support Geotech/ Lego STEM activities

**ECC Employment and Skills Team, ECC Working Group on Domestic Abuse, ECC Cost of Living Strategy Board, Digital Inclusion**

- Working together to make the difference

**Libraries and Public Health meeting, 13/12/2022**

- Brought multiple partners together



Above: Some of the NHS organisations we are working with

# Partnership working in action

## ACL:

- Shared spaces- Harlow, Shenfield
- Upcoming Skills Hub in Chelmsford Library
- Regular Library/ ACL meetings to report on joined projects supporting adult reading, wellbeing courses, Work Clubs and HMP Chelmsford
- Afterschool Welcomes, Harlow
- Apprenticeships within libraries
- Working together on sustainability



**Support for Ex-Offenders**

- Enjoy the opportunity to network with other agencies and find out what we have to offer within the Library Service.
- Presentations from Essex Library Service, Adult



## Multiply:



- Enable East (part of Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) will be delivering sessions within some of our libraries, particularly targeting Levelling Up areas
- The Library Service is in the process of bidding to deliver

Page 43 of 51 Multiply in a variety of ways supporting adult numeracy

# Looking Ahead – over the next 12 months

- Leading the way with literacy” - a pledge to ensure every resident has the access and opportunity to improve their literacy
- Developing outreach work – taking literacy and books out to the community
- Working with adults and parents to develop and support literacy levels
- Expanding and developing our Family School Readiness programme
- Building on the success of our Summer and Winter Reading Challenge
- Continuing to refurbish and modernise library buildings and facilities eg modern heating facilities that are environmentally friendly, enhance staff areas eg toilets, improve meeting rooms
- Continuing to build up partnership and collaborative space opportunities eg work with the NHS, Foster team, Active Essex, etc
- Growing our access to a wide range of service offers – eg Multiply, homework clubs, supporting targeted groups
- Review the skills of the workforce – to ensure the service has the right skill set to deliver and grow the service
- Improve technology through more staff tablets, IT skills hub at Chelmsford Library, wifi printing solution

# Questions?

## Update on the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

**Reference Number: PAF/02/23**

<b>Report title:</b> Update on the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 11 January 2023	<b>For:</b> Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

### 1. Introduction

The Chairman has requested an update on the performance under the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service and proposed next steps.

### 2. Action required

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) **The attached update; and**
- (ii) **Identify any follow-up scrutiny actions**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In terms of past discussions of the HCRG (formerly Virgin Care) contract at the Committee, the last time there was a dedicated separate item was in June 2019. However, due to the time elapsed the issues discussed and minuted may be less pertinent now but a link to those minutes is [here](#) (refer Minute 6).
- 3.2 On 18 March 2021 there was an update on the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service as part of a broader Children and Families directorate/service update and very much related to the pandemic response. The link to the minutes of that discussion is [here](#).
- 3.3 On 9 September 2021 there was a broad Children and Families update on the response to the pandemic. Although there was nothing recorded in the minutes that was specific to the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, some issues discussed would also have applied to the service so a link to the minutes of the discussion is [here](#).

## **Update on the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service**

### **4. Update and Next Steps**

The update is attached in the Appendix to this report. Next steps are as proposed under Action Required.

Expected attendees to support the discussion:

County Councillor Beverley Egan, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years

Christopher Martin - Director: Strategic Commissioning & Policy (Children and Families)

Carolyn Terry - EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager

Representative(s) from HCRG.

### **5 Appendix**

Briefing paper titled Report for PAF Scrutiny Committee – 11 January 2023 - Update on the HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service.

## REPORT FOR PAF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11 January 2023 UPDATE ON THE HCRG CONTRACT FOR THE ESSEX CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE

### 1) BACKGROUND CONTEXT

This contract combines the 0-19 years public health services and the 0-5 years children's centres services which Essex County Council (ECC) previously commissioned separately. Also included within the contract are the NHS commissioned children's therapy services which ECC and the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (formally the West Essex CCG) jointly commission under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006.

Bringing these services together into a pre-birth to 19 family hub model was a direct result of intensive research into children and families' experiences of the support system across Essex, which highlighted a need for better join up between services, for families to tell their story only once, to reduce social isolation of families, to support the opportunities for effective parent peer to peer support / contact and to have access to a consistent practitioner who could help them navigate a complex system of services.

The intention was to create a "service without walls" enabling services to be taken out into the community to deliver local support in either family homes or local venues that parents were already accessing, rather than relying on parents to travel to buildings that were either not necessarily convenient for them to travel to or were a barrier in them accessing support. The contract commissions a main Family Hub building in each of the twelve districts, each with linked local delivery site venues too, so families can also choose to access support in local buildings.

Following a collaboration of working with partners across the Essex Early Years system to create an outcomes-based specification, a robust procurement process was undertaken, and the contract was awarded to Virgin Care (now known as HCRG Care Group) and the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, which includes the Family Hubs offer, commenced on 1 April 2017.

The contract was awarded for 7 years, with an option to extend for a further 3 years duration and is currently in year 6. During these 6 years, the provider has performed well against the commissioned outcomes and for that reason ECC officers are recommending continuation of the remaining 3 years of the contract from 2024 - 2027 with the same provider. ECC governance is underway to seek consent to implement this extension. The contract requires ECC to give 12 months' notice of its intentions and HCRG Care Group needs to be informed of these by 31 March 2023.

Through this paper, the contract is referred to as both HCRG Care Group, as the provider, and the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, as the service name.

### 2) HOW HAS THE SERVICE PERFORMED?

In summary, over the past 6 years the service has performed well, as follows:

- a) **Operationalising and delivering a new integrated model**, bringing together the health and family support workforce from each of the previously separately commissioned services to blend the full skills and experience into integrated teams for each district around each Family Hub. This has resulted in genuinely multidisciplinary teams, focused on service user outcomes across a geographical area, holistically supporting the whole family rather than previous organisational specific identities.

The effectiveness of this workforce model has been nationally independently validated through the Department for Education commissioned consultants, Ecorys, with the following extract from the published report:



*“One Local Authority (Essex via the Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service) had a mature hub model, an embedded measurement outcomes framework, shared case management data system, and importantly a dedicated data team to process, analyse and report on data. This LA takes a data-driven approach to identifying needs and measuring outcomes at the individual, area and systems levels”. Importantly HCRG have invested heavily in the brand of a single “Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service” to drive a shared workforce culture which transcends previous organisation specific identities in each of the constituent workforces and organisations which were combined under this contract.*

*A key component of the new integrated workforce is families themselves and harnessing the resources of families to support other families in Essex. In areas such as breastfeeding, support for children with disabilities, children with challenging behaviour and generic child and toddler groups, to name but a few the service has produced powerful examples that show that parents really value the support of other parents, in part to normalise their circumstances and feel that they are not alone. Another key learning point has been that social support for families is just as essential and useful as input from professionals, particularly where there is a perception amongst service users that a formal professionally led pathway is the only or main way to get help.”*

- b) **Strong consistent performance in the mandated health visitor checks compared with other Local Authorities** – this refers to the 5 checks that is a function mandated for all Local Authorities to commission by the Department of Health for children aged 0 to 5. These include ante natal and 2-year-old checks undertaken during the first 2-3 years of child’s life and are traditionally delivered by health visitors. However, in Essex, these are delivered via the multi-disciplinary teams ensuring the best blended health and family support skills mix to provide the service. In all mandated measures, Essex performs well compared with other England Local Authorities
- c) **Successfully delivering on Outcome Measures** – as set out above, all Local Authorities are mandated to deliver health visitor checks and are measured on the number of health visitor checks which happen. Essex is the only Local Authority in the country which contractually holds itself to account by measuring the impact of service delivery on children and their families through a number of agreed outcome measures, rather than just focusing on the number of visits that have been undertaken.

An integral part of this contract is the 22 Outcome Measures that have been identified to ensure that once a child or family’s needs have been identified, there is a clear framework to measure progress to improve their outcomes. Examples of the Outcome Measures include:

- all children and young people have strong attachment to at least one adult or other person in their life
- all parents have good mental health during the peri-natal period
- all children are ready for school.

Whilst the Council commissions the outcomes, ECC has designed an outcomes-based specification that allows the provider, HCRG Care Group, the flexibility to decide the most effective way to deliver against these. This has proved to be effective, as it enables collective working with other parts of the children & family system to work together to achieve outcomes across organisational boundaries, as well as allowing HCRG Care Group the flexibility to divert more resource to those at greater risk of not achieving outcomes, as needed.

This outcomes-based contact is unique to Essex, and as such there is no national benchmark against which to judge Essex’s outcomes performance. However, through the setting of targets for each outcome since the beginning of this contract, performance has been measured year on year and HCRG Care Group have consistently achieved these.

HCRG Care Group have also been proactive in proposing to ECC commissioners' refinements to these to ensure the most appropriate and sensitive measures of outcomes are focused on.

There is a shared expectation that all children and families who need support will be identified through the universal touch points that the service delivers, primarily using ante natal and new birth visits for early identification of need, with a priority to focus more resource on those who are at greatest risk of not achieving outcomes and relatively less resource on those who are likely to achieve outcomes themselves without support from other agencies.

As part of the monthly contract management process, HCRG Care Group regularly produces reports for each quadrant highlighting the families that have been identified as most needing support setting out which outcomes are being focused on and what support is being given to them by the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service and other partners involved in their care. This has a real focus on those families that typically do not access services, and how these families have been identified via community mapping exercises and reached through outreach services. Commissioners also hear from service users' experiences via a Family Voice section of the contract meeting process. Examples of these will be shared to the PAF Scrutiny Committee as part of the presentation on the day.

Essex is seen as a national exemplar in this area of work and has received contact from around 25 other Local Authorities keen to learn from Essex's experience, some of whom Essex is now advising / supporting to implement a similar outcome based integrated system model in their area.

HCRG Care Group have worked hard to develop relationships with other parts of the children and family system to ensure that whilst they hold accountability for delivering outcomes, they use these relationships with a range of partners to provide a range of support to suit what service users' needs are.

The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service has also hosted visits from:

- Nadim Zahawi MP in his previous Children's Minister role
- Baroness Dido Harding, as previous Chairwoman of NHS Improvement, to see join up between LA and West Essex NHS services
- Justine Greening, previous MP and founder of National Social Mobility Pledge, to see social mobility examples of the ECFWS workforce,

On top of this Essex is a trusted national advisor to the national Family Hubs Network and regular speaker at national Family Hub National events. Essex is also in the process of arranging to host a National Family Hub Conference in March 2023.

- d) **Delivery of a joined-up care pathway with West Essex NHS** – to help achieve the join up across services that families told us they wanted, offers were made, prior to the initial procurement, to all the 5 Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in place at that time, to co-contract with ECC, in support of shared accountability for outcomes across a care pathway. At this point, only West Essex CCG felt able to commit to be part of this and commissioned their speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and allergy and dietetic services as part of this contract.

Evidence from both the data and service user feedback for West Essex highlights the benefits of the join up and shared accountability for outcomes to which both the ECC and West Essex CCG commissioners and HCRG Care Group remain committed to in discussions with other parts of the system. Some examples of the benefits are:

- An integrated care record across different organisations for information to be available / directly shared between services saving families from needing to re-tell their story and

- removing any duplication in service delivery
- Aligned communication and consistent messages for families from across the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service system
- Integrated multi-disciplinary teams working across a wider skill set providing an improved service to families
- Enhanced joint working supporting safeguarding process and practice.

A notable specific output of this approach has been the Journey of Autism Diagnosis and Early Support (JADES) integrated pathway. This pathway enables a holistic care plan maximising support available to families based on individual family need and circumstances to be offered pre-diagnosis, meaning support can be offered earlier as opposed to relying on clinical diagnosis as the gateway to other support for the child and their family.

A strong working relationship has been established with NHS staff in West Essex during the contract, and the reconfiguration of the NHS into Integrated Care Systems in the past 2 years has not impacted on the delivery of this integrated approach in West Essex.

e) **Strong performance and maintenance of activity during the covid pandemic, and other caseload pressures** – during the covid pandemic, the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service response was exemplary, both in:

- terms of being proactive in implementing a 4-stage phased plan of escalation, in line with national and local public health recommendations in place during this period, and
- maintaining support for families during a time when face to face contact was either prohibited or where families were worried about and disengaging with the face-to-face offer by creating virtual and telephone support offers
- the outcomes-based nature of the contract enabled HCRG Care Group to make rapid changes to their delivery model to respond quickly to the impact of the pandemic

It is worth noting that a number of ECFWS staff volunteered in their own time as Covid vaccinators and associated functions, on top of an already demanding day job.

The service has also responded quickly and efficiently to the urgent challenges and additional complex caseload requirements of families who are asylum seekers, refugees and complex families placed in Essex by other Local Authorities under Permitted Development Rights, whereby buildings not designed for residential dwelling can be converted to housing a number of potentially vulnerable residents.

In addition to the specific areas above, the following points describe only a few of many achievements in the transformation journey for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service:

- Consolidation of existing estates footprint giving better value for money– not just co-location but integration
- Technical system integration across organisations to single shared record for new outcomes-based model recorded and reported across multidisciplinary teams with shared outcome Considerable effort invested in building a culture of multidisciplinary team integration across previously separate teams – (ongoing effort for contract duration)
- Pilot test new outcome measures and benchmark results to establish targets. ECFWS has been performance-managed against these outcome measures since 1st April 2019.
- Essex Child and family Wellbeing Service rated “Good” by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in July 2019
- Flexible and dedicated response to COVID response. HCRG Care Group exceeded their KPI targets throughout the pandemic: for example, reaching 99% of Universal new birth checks conducted (target of 96%). Staff availability remained stable between 89% and

94%, which was higher than comparable workforces in other Local Authorities

- f) **How are children faring post pandemic?** - a real challenge for the whole children and family system is emotional wellbeing, partly as result of covid but also cost of living crisis and other adverse world events. HCRG Care Group are a part of this overall response and are being proactive in building capacity for emotional wellbeing support, which is not reliant purely on mental health professionals or school nurses (who are already stretched to capacity).

Options being looked at include recruiting volunteers with mental health first aid training who can provide first line emotional support and escalate to more specialist services if necessary. Implications of this, including safeguarding are being considered through the multi-agency Emotional Wellbeing Board chaired by ECCs Director of Education.

Other impacts include some children struggling with early language delays, lack of social interactions and poor independence. The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service are working with early years settings and schools to provide support to these children and their families.

- g) **What is the support offer to schools?** - the role of the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service is to support schools in developing a healthy school plan, focusing on areas which each individual school needs, and using a range of different providers of services to support these needs. There are numerous services available to schools, from Central Government as well as the local health and care system, but the overall offer is not consistent across Essex, and the offer is, in the words of one Essex head teacher, "bewildering". HCRG Care Group, as a provider held to account for outcomes for children and young people in the Essex system, helps schools to navigate this total system offer through the mechanism of the Healthy Schools programme.

- h) **HCRG Care Group Relationship with Integrated Care Systems and Boards** - having three Integrated Care Systems and Boards in Essex creates challenges, but HCRG Care Group have Heads of Service in each of the North, West, Mid and South quadrants across Essex who are well linked into operational pathways which cross Local Authority and NHS commissioning responsibilities. From the start of the formation of Integrated Care Systems these staff have been influencing discussion about how to collectively commission services to ensure the same type of service and pathway join up can be achieved as is already achieved in West Essex, where NHS children's services have been co-contracted between the NHS and ECC since day 1 of this contract. The outcomes focus of this contract has been instrumental in driving discussion with the Integrated Care Boards on which outcomes do we want, which children and families are at greatest risk of not achieving those outcomes and who is best placed to do what to support outcomes for those families. It is still early days, but HCRG Care Group will continue to be involved in these discussions and developments.

- 3) **AREAS OF CHALLENGE** - the areas of challenge described below are issues everywhere in England, but Essex is working proactively with HCRG Care Group to address these, including working with Central Government for Essex to be a potential pilot site to deliver the mandated checks differently, given Essex's national reputation as a leader in the field of outcomes and integrated working:

- a) **Staff recruitment** – health visitors and school nurses in particular are in very high demand nationally and similar to general practice, it will be difficult to replace the considerable number of staff who are towards the end of their professional careers. However, under the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, HCRG Care Group have been able to take the opportunity to review the whole skill mix and competencies available across the workforce and used this to develop new roles to complement and support the

existing health visitors and school nurses to bring capacity to the system

The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service are also working directly with Anglia Ruskin University to develop a pipeline of new practitioners who can gain employment with HCRG Care Group following the necessary course of academic study.

- b) **National mandation of health visitor checks** - there is a national mandate by the Department for Health that every child and family should receive 5 health visitor checks between the ante natal period and when the child is 2.5 to 3 years old. There is growing opinion amongst children and family professionals nationally that these 5 universal checks are too blunt an instrument. Essex is in discussion with Central Government about the potential to be a pilot site where this mandation is relaxed, to allow better strategic alignment to allow more resource to be prioritised where it is needed and less to where it is not. Essex is well placed to have this discussion with Central Government because of its focus on measuring outcomes, particularly those at risk of not achieving them, and the 6 years of experience in more systemically about who needs more or less support based on measurement and surveillance of outcomes across a whole service population.
- c) **Getting outcomes shared across the wider system not just the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service contract** – across Essex people and organisations are increasingly aware that achieving outcomes is not down to anyone person or organisation, but highly dependent upon a number of circumstances which require alignment of effort across organisational boundaries. For example, giving children the best start in life is as dependent upon parents having good jobs, the state of the house, income, and the quality of family and friends' relationships, as it is about checking that children are growing correctly and are free from health problems. The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service are playing their part in this. The challenge now is to get the rest of the child and family system to commit to outcomes and identify target people and places where concerted effort across a range of different areas of work is essential to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- d) **Caseload complexity challenges post pandemic** – whilst Covid is currently at manageable levels and we are out of pandemic response, there continues to be growing complexity of caseload for front line services such as the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service. This is being caused in part by the cost-of-living crisis and increasing numbers of families seeking refuge from abroad being accommodated across Essex. The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Services are a first line of response service, along with other organisations, schools and early years settings, but there is insufficient capacity for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service alone, or any other organisation on their own, to, deliver a supportive response at the scale needed to achieve an improvement in circumstances which have become much more of a problem in the past four years, such as emotional wellbeing. There is a need for the whole commissioning and delivery system, of which the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service is a part, to develop more support than is available through referral to traditional services, for example by harnessing the supportive assets within communities to help each other. This needs to be a continued focus for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service the remaining contract years.

<b>Report title:</b> Work Programme	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 11 January 2023	<b>For:</b> Discussion and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme for the Committee continues to be developed and the current position is outlined below and overleaf.

### 2. Action required

The Committee is asked to consider this report and issues under consideration in the Appendix and any further development or amendments.

### 3. Background

Work has continued to identify priorities and future agenda items. This has included discussions with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Officers. This work has reflected the adoption of the Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025 strategy at Council on 12 October 2021.

### 4. Everyone's Essex

The Committee should take account of the Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025 strategy when considering the work programme and future items. Particular attention should be paid to the strategic ambitions (and associated commitments and performance measures) most relevant to the work of the Committee: 'Health Wellbeing and Independence for All Ages', and 'A Good Place for Children and Families to Grow'. A link to the Strategy is here - [Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025: Foreword from Kevin Bentley - Essex County Council](#)

### 5. Update and Next Steps

- 5.1 See Appendix.

### 6. Appendix

- 6.1 Current work programme.

**People and Families Policy and Scrutiny - Work Programme as at 11 January 2023**

<b>Provisional Date</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Lead Contact</b>	<b>Purpose and Target Outcomes</b>	<b>Everyone's Essex Commitment</b>	<b>Cross-Committee</b>
11 January 2022	Libraries Strategy	Deputy Leader & Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance/Head of Libraries	Follow up on discussion and agreed actions at March 2022 meeting	Education Outcomes/ Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Joint session with PSEG Scrutiny Committee
11 January 2022	HCRG (formerly Virgin Care) contract	Cabinet Member, Children's Services and Early Years/ Head of Strategic Commissioning & Policy	Performance update and considerations underway for contract extension/renewal.	Family Resilience and Stability, Education	TBC
TBC	Young Carers	Cabinet Member, Children's Services and Early Years/ Head of Specialist Education Services	To follow up on specific issues relating to young carers raised in November discussion on All-Age Carers strategy	Carers' commitment/ Family Resilience and Stability	Not applicable
TBC	Adult Community Learning	Cabinet Member, Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning & Employability /ACL Principal	To consider work plans for implementation of new strategy, and new curriculum planning.	Education Outcomes	
TBC	Home Education/Children Missing Education	Cabinet Member Education Excellence, Skills and Training	To consider update and links with County Lines and drug gangs	Education Outcomes	Not applicable
TBC	Education	Cabinet Member Education Excellence, Skills and Training	(i) Portfolio priorities (ii) Attainment	Education Outcomes	Not applicable

<b>Provisional Date</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Lead Contact</b>	<b>Purpose and Target Outcomes</b>	<b>Everyone's Essex Commitments</b>	<b>Cross-Committee</b>
April 2023	Preparation for Care Quality Commission inspection of Adult Social Care	Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care and Health/Head of Strategy and Innovation	To consider preparations for a future inspection.	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
TBC	County Lines and Drug Gangs	TBC	Use of funds and the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Unit	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
TBC	Houses for Life	Director Strategy Policy & Integration (People)	See Matters Arising report	Promoting Independence, Healthy Lifestyles	TBC
TBC	Essex Children's Safeguarding Board – follow up	Independent Chairman, statutory partners and the Board Manager	To consider actions arising from discussion in April 2022	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
TBC	Essex Adults Safeguarding Board – follow up	Independent Chairman, statutory partners and the Board Manager	To consider actions arising from discussion in September 2022	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
TBC	SEND Strategy update	Cabinet Member, Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability/Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation	Support available and reflect on launch of new strategy	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
	Childcare and Early Years' Strategy	Cabinet Member, Children's Services and Early Years/ EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager	Support available and reflect on launch of new strategy	Family Resilience and Stability, Education	Not applicable



### **Private briefings**

A schedule of private briefings is also being arranged to give background to issues and subjects ahead of formal items coming before the Committee in 2023. At the time of writing this report, the first three of these have been held on Further Understanding Social Care and Social Care Charging and an initial session on the Care Quality Commission inspection regime. Further sessions are planned on safeguarding, Funding Reforms, and further consideration of the Care Quality Commission inspection regime.

### **Further issues not scoped or currently being scheduled**

Children in care being placed outside Essex

Backlog in Courts and Justice System

Education - academisation

Short Breaks/Respite strategy

### **Possible Task and Finish Group reviews – not scoped or currently being scheduled**

Impact of the pandemic on Essex County Council

Suicides in Essex