

Cabinet Issues

From the meeting of 30 October 2012

1. Whole Essex Community Budget

The Cabinet has approved a number of actions associated with the Whole Essex Community Budget Programme (WECB).

Partners across Greater Essex have worked together since January 2012 to prepare proposals for how to bring about sustained system-change in the County's public services and recast collective activity around the needs of local communities and citizens. Being selected as one of only four pilot areas nationally the eyes and ears of all public service providers have been firmly upon the 'Whole Essex Community Budget' (WECB) Programme.

The commitment associated with the pilot has been to prepare an operational plan, with composite business cases, by October 2012, to outline how the above aims would be achieved.

Initially, a range of key public service issues that would provide the focus for the WECB programme was identified and these were grouped under four principal work streams: Health and Wellbeing, Community Safety, Economic Opportunity, and Families with Complex Needs. A range of parallel 'enabling' projects were also established cutting across these work streams. These focused on issues such as financing, workforce, new investment models and data sharing.

Work was then undertaken within each work stream to pinpoint projects which would have the greatest impact in terms of savings and outcomes. The following six projects were identified:

- **Health and Wellbeing: Integrated Commissioning**
To develop a Greater Essex Integrated Commissioning Framework –integrating health and wellbeing commissioning across public services based on Clinical Commissioning Group boundaries.
- **Community Safety: Reducing Reoffending**
To develop integrated 'pathways' across public sector agencies to tackle the factors which address the likelihood of offending and change attitudes and behaviours. A commissioning group and overseeing governance body is proposed to facilitate and drive this.
- **Community Safety: Reducing Domestic Abuse**
To create a multi-agency service hub where victims can be identified at an earlier

stage before the abusive behaviour escalates, and where those victims can receive the help and support they need.

- **Economic Opportunity: Skills for Growth**

The virtual pooling of 16-24 vocational skills funding and devolving responsibility for funding decisions so that it can have greater direction by employers. In the short term this will use existing funding administration mechanisms with local geographic direction, working towards a fully devolved model from 2016.

- **Families with Complex Needs: Multi-Disciplinary Teams**

To establish a new approach to working holistically across Essex with disadvantaged families with multiple difficulties to enable them to make significant changes and improvements to their lives and thus reduce their dependence on high cost public services.

- **Strengthening Communities**

This business case is at an earlier stage than the other cases, but is emerging as an important cross-cutting theme: improved community resilience can help to reduce dependency on public services and focus on prevention rather than expensive, reactive interventions.

The Cabinet received the Final Business Cases associated with each project together with the Operational Plan, which included details of the changes to structure and service provision being proposed and the direct requests being made of the County Council.

Deal for Growth

As part of the Operational Plan for the WECB, and in support of its endeavour to promote sustainable economic growth, local authorities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock are submitting proposals which, together, form a 'Deal for Growth' for the area. The Government has made it clear that the WECB offers a unique opportunity to pursue this.

The initial Deal proposition is based on the key areas of infrastructure development and skills provision. Within that, the initial Deal proposition addresses housing, innovation and fit-for purpose governance arrangements that respect current levels of sovereignty. Detailed proposals will be developed in due course, at which point further Cabinet agreement will be sought as necessary.

The Cabinet has endorsed the direction of travel outlined in the Operational Plan and authorised the Leader of the Council to approve the final version, given that further changes are likely. It has also endorsed the 'Deal for Growth (essentially an expression of interest in order to open a negotiation with the Government) and approved its submission as part of the Operational Plan. The initial approaches set out in the Executive Summaries of the Business Cases have been endorsed, with a view to these being further developed and designed over the forthcoming months. Finally, the

Cabinet has also approved further funding of £0.215m to develop the Full Business Cases and prepare for implementation. In total, the Programme requires £1.949m of which it is estimated that £0.815m will be costs that will be funded by the County Council. Based on previous funding made available to the Whole Essex Communities Budgets programme there is a project underspend of £0.6m leaving the above requirement of £0.215m. It was agreed that this should be funded by way of a withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve.

2. 2012-13 Financial Review as at the Half Year Stage

The Cabinet has received an updated assessment of the financial position of the Council in 2012/12, based upon the position at the half year stage. It was noted that the current revenue outturn forecast was a projected underspend for the year of £11.750m, with a projected underspend of £41.423m against the approved capital payments guideline. In addition, although projections assumed that the Emergency Contingency of £8m would be fully spent, no usage of that sum has as yet been proposed or agreed. Any revenue underspends remaining at the end of the Financial Year would be used to mitigate likely budget pressures in 2013/14.

Approval was given to the various actions proposed to deal with variances arising.

3. Corporate Plan Progress Report as at the Second Quarter Stage

The Cabinet has considered an updated assessment of the progress made in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan priorities in 2012/13, based upon the position at the second quarter stage (up to July 2012). This included progress against specific performance measures within the 2012/13 Corporate Plan.

Members were pleased to learn of areas where success could be celebrated, and also noted the actions being taken to focus on areas where improvement was needed.

4. Information Systems Modernisation Programme Procurement – Next Generation Network

Essex County Council is in the process of implementing an Information Services Modernisation Programme (ISMP), one component of which is the delivery of Next Generation Network (NGN) services. These will offer a number of financial and business benefits to the Council as well as enabling other public sector bodies to take advantage of the services available in order to realise cost savings and facilitate greater collaborative working.

Following a procurement exercise, the Cabinet has agreed to award a 10-year contract for the delivery of NGN services, with potential break points at years 4, 6 and 8, together with a potential extension of up to a further 2 years. There will be a period of due diligence between contract award in November 2012 and the start of the contract on 1 January 2013.

5. Award of Contract for Multi-Systemic Therapy via Social Investment

Following a procurement exercise, the Cabinet has agreed to award a contract for the provision of Multi-Systemic Therapy via social investment to the preferred supplier, Children's Support Services Ltd and Social Finance Ltd, for a period of eight years.

The Council is committed to addressing the comparatively high numbers of children in care in Essex by means of a preventative strategy, implementing services to divert cases away from the care system. Central to this is the support and maintenance of children in their own or an alternative family setting.

As part of the overall Children in Care strategy, an Invest to Save programme was developed to provide targeted and intensive support to those families on the 'Edge of Care'. The feasibility work resulted in a proposal for a 'social investment model' to facilitate the provision of specialist intervention services to vulnerable children and their families via an intervention methodology known as 'multi-systemic therapy' (MST). MST delivers an intensive programme of intervention for a period ranging from 3-5 months with assigned therapists on call 24/7. Therapists work individually with parents, the young person and whole extended family systems. Goals are set and the programme combines parenting support with practical assistance and a therapeutic approach to rebuilding relationships between the young person, their family and other networks around them. The benefits of MST in terms of the lasting impact on families are well-evidenced.

The planned date for contract completion was 7 November 2012. The Essex social impact bond for children's services was formally launched by the Leader of the Council at the Cabinet Office alongside Ministers on 23 November.

6. Essex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

The Cabinet has received the Annual Report of the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board which provided an update on the Board's work and developments during 2011/12.

The year had seen substantial change for the Board, with Simon Hart being appointed to the role of Chair for a three-year period. A review of governance had been completed, involving the introduction of a revised sub-committee structure, with sub-committees chaired by senior members of their organisations to ensure that each work stream is accorded a high priority. With regard to the forthcoming year, preparations were in hand for the anticipated multi-agency inspection of the Local Safeguarding Board, to be carried out under Ofsted's revised inspection framework.

7. Healthwatch Essex

The Cabinet has approved the creation of an independent social enterprise that will become Healthwatch Essex and agreed to Council grant funding of that enterprise in the sum of £480,000.

In April 2013, local Healthwatch organisations will be set up across the country, being created by local authorities to ensure that the public and service users have a voice that influences health and social care services. Local authorities will be under a statutory duty to establish, by incorporation or through commissioning, an effective replacement for the existing Local Involvement Networks (LINks) from April 2013.

The Department of Health (DH) describes Healthwatch as being a 'consumer champion', reflecting the Department's vision for Healthwatch

- to provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and exercising choice in relation to aspects of those services;
- to make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping it to carry out its role as national champion;
- to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with their recommendations, for example if urgent action were required by the CQC);
- to promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services;
- to obtain the views of people about their needs for and experience of local health and social care services and make those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of those services, and;
- to produce reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.

Healthwatch will play an important role in ensuring that the public has a strong voice in shaping the provision of health and social care services in Essex, especially as the health and social care system undergoes significant change, creating greater choice and control for individuals.

In considering the establishment of Healthwatch Essex, the Cabinet noted:

- the Healthwatch Essex Pathfinder should set up a company limited by guarantee, which will be dedicated to providing Local Healthwatch services;
- this company should have charitable status;
- Essex County Council will be neither the owner nor a member of that company, but will grant fund it under a service level agreement and will manage its performance through that agreement;
- the company will have a core group of 24 strategic members, appointed by an independent panel for three-year terms on a staggered basis on the strength of their skills, experience and community networks, who will be responsible for setting strategy and the budget;
- the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the strategic members;

- anyone who lives or works in Essex or who uses health or social care services in Essex will be able to join the company as a general member;
- the company will be directed by a board of directors comprising its Chair, Vice Chair, two other strategic members and two general members;
- the company will make arrangements for task and finish groups and locality working and for liaising with existing service user groups as part of its network of networks; and
- the Healthwatch Essex company should take over LINK functions on an appropriate date in the autumn so that it can operate in shadow form before going live in April 2013.

Peter Martin
Leader of the Council