

# Community Wellbeing Strategy Executive Summary

*To improve and enhance people's overall health and wellbeing throughout the county of Essex and reduce difference, so that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live and all are able to access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available.*

*To contribute to supporting Essex people to liberate their potential and enjoy the best quality of life in England.*

## **WHAT IS COMMUNITY WELLBEING?**

Community wellbeing means different things to different people. Perri's definition<sup>1</sup> is

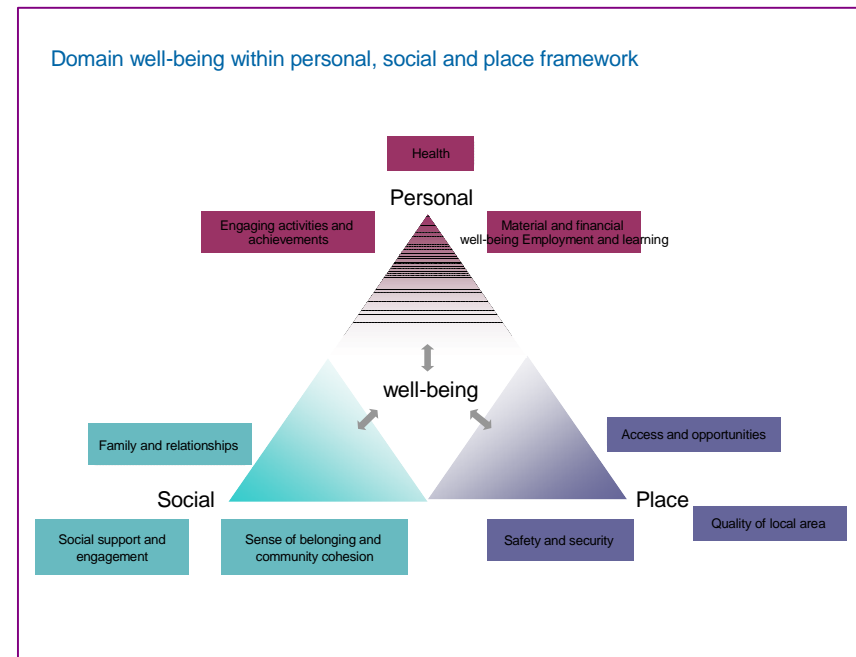
*'....a shared life well lived and worth living together....'*

A study on social exclusion carried out by English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) concluded that the following are important components of wellbeing:

- social relationships (contact with family and friends);
- cultural relationships (cinema, theatre etc);
- civic activities (voting, volunteering, local interest groups);
- access to basic services (health services and shops);
- neighbourhood quality (feeling safe in your local area);
- financial products (bank account, long-term savings); and
- material consumption (ability to afford household utilities and an annual holiday).

These different components of wellbeing are interlinked, as illustrated by the domain model adapted from the New Economics Foundation.

## **WHY DO WE NEED A COMMUNITY WELLBEING STRATEGY?**



<sup>1</sup> Taken from Hird (2003) NHS Health Scotland

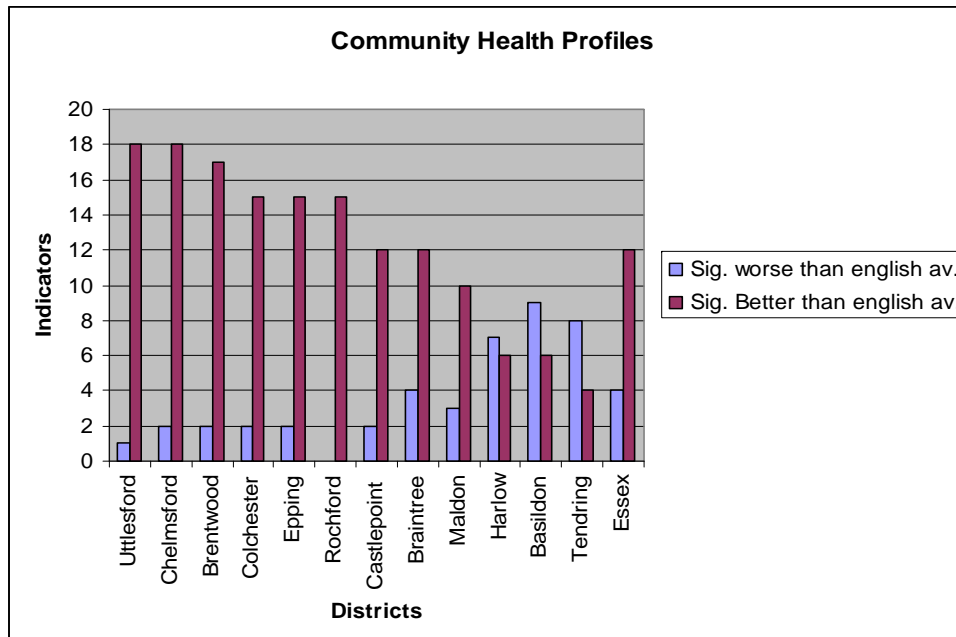
## National Drivers

The Local Government Act 2000 explicitly states that no-one should be disadvantaged by where they live and that every local authority has the power to do anything they consider will achieve one or more of the following:

- the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
- the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area; and
- the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

The white paper *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier* sets out how our environment, where we live, our social networks, facilities and socio-economic circumstances can affect our experience of health. It is within these areas that local government is expected to make a real difference and reduce the widening inequalities in health that are so prevalent across the country. The white paper *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* also emphasised the importance of PCTs working in partnership with local authorities.

Over the last year, we have undertaken our largest ever consultation to understand what our public service priorities for Essex should be. This has informed the development of our sustainable community strategy *The Essex Strategy*, our new Local Area Agreement *Liberating Potential*, and our vision *Essex Works*. Together these define our ambition to deliver the best quality of life in Britain and to support people to achieve their potential. Alongside these, we have developed the Essex Community Wellbeing Strategy, which articulates how we will improve quality of life and community wellbeing.



## Local Drivers

The 2007 Community Health Profiles measure district performance against a number of health indicators. This chart shows the number of indicators in each district where performance is significantly better or worse compared to the England average. It suggests that there are significant health inequalities across the county.

The Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) brings together information from a broad range of sources to consider the health and wellbeing of our local communities. Again, it highlights significant inequalities across the

County and has provided the basis for determining the shared priorities which have shaped the development of the Essex Strategy and our second Local Area Agreement (LAA2).

The Essex Strategy sets out the key goals for improving quality of life in the County and is the work of the Essex Partnership – bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors. It aims to steer partnership action across the geographical tiers. It is in the Essex Strategy that the County Council, the Essex Police, the Essex Fire and Rescue Service, the Learning and Skills Council and other countywide bodies sign up to a complex and varied pattern of priorities that they share with local strategic partnerships at the district level. The Essex Strategy is an agenda for change. It is not a delivery document. It sets out what we want to do. How we will do it is articulated through the Local Area Agreement and other county-wide plans such as the Children and Young People's Plan. The Community Wellbeing Strategy focuses on the key wellbeing priorities set out in the Essex Strategy and acts as the delivery mechanism for these to make a valued difference to people's wellbeing.

The strategy seeks to raise the profile of community wellbeing in Essex, to challenge all partners and ECC departments to consider the impact of wellbeing in all they do and to maximise collaborative working and the development of joined-up responses. It will tackle inequalities to ensure geographical boundaries and / or group characteristics do not act as obstacles to wellbeing. Rather than attempt to deal with all aspects of wellbeing at once, this strategy builds on the work undertaken in the JSNA and Essex Strategy and identifies priorities for improvement.

The strategy will be of interest to anyone who has a role to play in contributing to wellbeing in Essex and is specifically relevant to all agencies and organisations that have responsibility to develop and deliver public services.

### **WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING COMMUNITY WELLBEING?**

The four priority outcomes for the Community Wellbeing strategy are

1. Help jobless people and disadvantaged groups (including those with a learning disability) to enter the workforce through skills training for employment.
2. Provide greater access to universal services and information that will promote wellbeing for all members of the community
3. Increase levels of neighbourly helpfulness
4. Ensure public spaces are friendly, clean, attractive and useable

As alluded to above, these priorities have been identified through robust needs assessment (principally the JSNA) and community engagement (undertaken in the development of the Essex Strategy and LAA2).

No individual body can successfully deliver against these priorities in isolation. Strong partnerships, clear shared priorities and effective implementation and monitoring of action plans will be crucial to achieving the improvements identified. The Community Wellbeing Strategy has been developed through the Community Wellbeing Strategy Group, a multi-agency partnership reporting to the Community Wellbeing and Older People's Board (one of the thematic partnerships under the new LAA2 governance arrangements).

## **HOW WILL WE DELIVER IMPROVEMENTS?**

### **1. Help jobless people and disadvantaged groups (including those with a learning disability) to enter the workforce through skills training for employment.**

*Providing opportunities and tailoring services to match individual needs*

Supports national indicators: 116, 119, 151, 152, 153, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165 and 174

Proposed actions to be led by the Greater Essex Prosperity Forum

- Promote volunteering as a route back into employment, ensuring public / private / voluntary sector volunteers are supported and aware of programmes available to them
- Promotion of Information, Advice and Guidance Services (including the '50 not out' initiative) with early identification and support to those who may become disadvantaged
- Work with employers and community groups, responding to levels of demand and tailor services to match their needs
- With partners, undertake a skills gap audit (or training needs analysis) of the workforce and develop plans fill any identified gaps
- In partnership with Job Centre Plus and others, provide both technical and practical support for jobless people to enter the workforce
- Consider the needs of older people when planning programmes and ensure these needs are met

'Skills for Life' is a constant theme embedded through all of these actions

## **2. Providing greater access to universal services and information that will promote wellbeing for all members of the community**

*Ensuring all Essex residents are informed particularly to improve their wellbeing*

Supports national indicators: 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 21, 55, 56, 110, 119, 175 and 176

Proposed action to be led by the Community Wellbeing and Older People Board

- Explore the concept of a universal 'one-stop shop' access to information and services interactive map developed and maintained in partnership
- Support the libraries 'information prescription scheme' across the county
- Provide a feedback mechanism to those who participated in consultations on the resulting outcomes
- Ensure the needs of different groups in Essex have equal access to information and equal, easy and dignified access across Essex's buildings; places and spaces
- Tailor low-level marketing to target specific areas of concern within localities as identified by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Pilot the concept of community wellbeing centres in conjunction with the third sector

## **3. Increasing the levels of neighbourly helpfulness**

*Neighbourliness involves non-obligatory willingness to share some social and practical responsibility for others who live in the same locality. The term refers to the attributes of the behaviour that guides neighbouring – usually comprising friendliness, helpfulness, and respect for privacy. Therefore neighbourly helpfulness is as much about restraint as it is about socialising, and caution must be taken so as to not risk excluding or dividing people.*

Supports national indicators: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 22, 23, 119 and 138

Proposed actions to be led by the Sustainable Communities Partnership

- Develop a strategic plan for neighbourhood events
- Develop time banks
- Initiate Community Hours where voluntarily a specific issue identified by local people is tackled by those living in the area with the aid of countywide and / or local organisations (Making My Community Work)
- Investigate the potential of volunteer 'mavens' who can dispense particular kinds of information in their neighbourhoods to those who are most disadvantaged

#### **4. Ensuring public spaces are friendly, clean, attractive and useable**

*Improving atmospherics and practicalities of our areas*

Supports national indicators: 3, 5, 17, 55, 56, 119, 170, 195 and 196

Proposed action to be led by the Sustainable Communities Partnership

- Ensure safe public access to parks, playing fields and open spaces.
- 'Walkable neighbourhoods' – easy to move around, places linked with short direct public routes with easy access to local facilities, reducing the need to travel by car.
- Identify priorities for improving inadequate paths to improve the network.
- Find funds to improve inadequate paths to improve accessibility for all and create a better environment
- Safe attractive environment which people choose as a place to live in
- Identify funds for improving maintenance, cleaning, lighting and siting of paths to benefit users of all abilities
- Each area of Essex to have citizens 'day in the life' reporting issues for improvement then act upon in action plans.
- Produce minimum standard guidance for all planning signed up to by all local authorities in Essex
- Review the use of indoor community spaces and ensure they are accessible and well utilised.

#### **Next Steps**

LAA2 is currently being consulted on and detailed action plans are being developed at a district/borough level. If the focus of the Community Wellbeing Strategy is supported then detailed action plans will be developed and monitored by the Community Wellbeing Strategy Group which is linked to the baseline data and targets set by the LSPs. The Community Wellbeing and Older Peoples (CWOP) Board will retain the overall accountability for delivering this strategy.