

Appendix A

Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy

Positioning Statement - October 2021

A new consensus about building a healthy community post-lockdown

The Council's role as a community leader, raising awareness and working with health and care professionals to support the delivery of better health outcomes, is crucial as the town moves forward in earnest to rebuild post-lockdown.

This Council will make sure there is a focused approach towards promoting health and wellbeing. Although it is still early days for the Council to predict the long-term impact of Covid-19, there are health inequalities that already exist in our community that require a renewed focus on an evidence-led approach.

It is my intention that this positioning statement works to enhance collaboration with health and care professionals in the town to build a new action plan that aims to identify future need and take steps to resolve challenges by supporting early intervention.

There is an opportunity to build a new consensus, working to join-up provision to address physical and wider wellbeing needs, which recognises primary and acute provision will need to adapt to meet the demands of our ageing population, address obesity challenges and mental ill-health as key examples.

Once the most up-to-date Essex joint strategic needs assessment data is available next year, this positioning statement will be updated and targets set in collaboration with health and care professionals. There will be a relentless focus on delivering the ambitions set out in this strategic vision statement for the betterment of the town.

My commitment is to work with community leaders, to consult and build a delivery plan that attempts to balance the Council's community leadership role with a need to be more proactive in terms of local interventions, to confront health and general wellbeing inequalities impacting people of all ages and abilities.

Joel Charles

Deputy Leader of Harlow Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience

Background

Harlow Council currently has a ten year Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy in place for the period of 2018 – 2028. This strategy was developed in collaboration with two other West Essex District Councils (Epping Forest and Uttlesford) and aimed to set out the commitment and approach to reducing health inequalities in Harlow and achieve better health outcomes for residents of all ages by working collaboratively with partners from statutory, private, community and voluntary sector agencies. This strategy was developed before our town and indeed the rest of the world was hit by Covid-19 and does not reflect the extraordinary times we have all faced during the pandemic or the impact it has had on our residents and businesses. In particular it does not reflect the devastating and disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on our most vulnerable residents including older people, those categorised as Critically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), people with a disability, children and young people, people from marginalised groups such as black and minority ethnic

groups (BAME) and those on low incomes. It is important that the Council works with health and care leaders in the town to prevent any emerging health inequalities from manifesting into wider public health challenges that put a strain on existing local healthcare provision.

Whilst relevant at the time, the data used to produce the current strategy will almost certainly have changed significantly and does not reflect the health and social challenges our residents are facing as a result of Covid-19. The current strategy also does not reflect how the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board is currently working with trusted partners to identify health and wellbeing priorities; understand better what and where current health inequalities are in order to be able to work together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all or how we will build better community cohesion and resilience to ensure a happy health and safe future for our residents.

In its role as community leader, the Council leads the work of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board through the establishment of three multi-agency priority sub-groups that are headed up by a Chairperson and supported by Lead Officers from Harlow Council. Each priority subgroup sets its own priorities based on available local data and the identification of current need through robust partnership working as well as the insight of a range of agencies that share the common aim of improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Harlow residents. Subgroup priorities are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure available resources are targeted appropriately and will achieve maximum benefit for Harlow residents and all three subgroups have fluid action plans that can pivot to meet changing local need and emerging trends as a result of Covid-19 or otherwise.

The three priority subgroups and their respective current priorities are set out below. More information about the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board can be found on the Council's website: <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/community/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-board>

Early Help and Start Well

- Tackle **Childhood Obesity** by promoting healthy eating, diet and lifestyle
- Promote **Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health** and ensure young people know where to go for help and support if they have concerns about themselves or others
- Promote positive **Mental Health and Wellbeing** and provide signposting or referrals to help and support for children and young people with ill mental health
- Raise awareness of the benefits **Physical Exercise** in living a healthy, happy life and promote opportunities to access physical activity in a range of different ways

Be Well, Stay Well, Work Well

- Build **community resilience** and assist recovery from Covid-19.
- Increase participation in **physical activity**.
- Promote **mental health**, wellbeing, and recovery.
- **Champion Healthy Workplaces** by promoting 'Healthy Lifestyles' and 'Behaviour Change'.
- Provide information and advice on how to '**live well**'.
- Improve access to **open spaces and natural environments**.

Age Well

- Promote **Active Living** for older people to support healthy, independent living for as long as possible.
- Tackle **Social Isolation and Loneliness** by creating opportunities for social connection.
- Promote better **Dementia** awareness and understanding; enable signposting to support services and delivery of direct activities.
- Support, encourage and enable older people to be **Safe and Independent** in their own home.

The work of the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board and the three priority subgroups is supported by a Public Health Grant allocated to District and Borough Councils in Essex by the County Council (ECC). This funding enables the delivery of local projects, new initiatives and awareness raising campaigns to help address identified priorities and achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for Harlow residents from pre-birth right through to end of life.

Since March 2020 the allocation of Harlow's Public Health Grant has been focussed mainly on the delivery of projects, activities and new initiatives that recognise and understand the impact of Covid-19 and aim to support individuals, families, communities and businesses that have been most affected to recover and build future resilience. Details of this work and the positive outcomes that have been achieved for our town are set out in the Health and

Wellbeing Partnership Board Annual Report which will be published on the Council's website in 2022.

Our current position

In light of early indicative data and anecdotal evidence from partners it is clear that the current Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board Strategy no longer accurately reflects the health and wellbeing needs of our residents and communities nor is it aspirational in terms of strengthening engagement with residents in order to better understand their health needs. In order to increase community resilience we need to build on what is already strong in our communities so that people are better able to support themselves and this needs to be reflected in our new strategy.

Anecdotally, the Council is aware that we have an ageing population, but it is important to not view this challenge from the prism of a negative narrative. Longevity should be celebrated and the aim should be to support our ageing community to live more independently in later life. This is one area of focus the Council will work with health and care professionals to build a set of new strategic priorities to deliver on as a community leader.

The data most likely to inform development of a new relevant, robust and aspirational Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board Strategy for Harlow include the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) 'One Health and Care 10 Year Strategy'. However this data will not be available in its entirety until Summer 2022.

Essex County Council is in the process of reviewing its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a number of District and Borough Councils in Essex, including neighbouring councils Epping Forest and Uttlesford, are currently reviewing their Health and Wellbeing Strategies with the intention of either refreshing them or developing brand new strategies based on the new data that will be available in 2022.

Harlow Council is keen to ensure residents continue to have access to useful health and wellbeing information through a range of media so they can feel involved and enabled to achieve good health and wellbeing for themselves and others. We continue to support the Essex wide 'Livewell' campaign which is currently being reviewed by Essex County Council and will reflect any changes to the campaign in our new Strategy. Meanwhile you can find out more about the Livewell campaign here <https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk>

In addition, the council has been able to utilise government 'Contain Outbreak Management Funding' allocated to us via Essex County Council to commission a Community Hub service for a six month period from 1 October 2021. This service will aim to meet the needs of those most affected by the pandemic by promoting public health messages and signposting and referring residents to relevant support services and community networks. The service will also provide direct support to the town's most vulnerable residents in emergency situations. Monitoring data from the Community Hub service will be extremely valuable to the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy to ensure we can effectively meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents, but this data will not be available to us in its entirety until June 2022.

Our vision for a healthy Harlow

We want Harlow to be a place where residents from all backgrounds and abilities can lead long, healthy, independent, happy and safe lives. A place where people feel heard, empowered, included and supported to identify and manage their own health and wellbeing and have equal access to the right services and support at the right time in the right place. Delivering greater parity between physical and mental health provision locally is viewed by the Council as a priority to identify and prevent future challenges.

We want our residents to live in a town where health inequalities are identified and tackled head on. We are committed to help level up communities by identifying the health needs of our most vulnerable residents and working with trusted partners to target available resources where they will ensure maximum benefit for our residents.

Our commitment is to work in collaboration with Essex County Council, community leaders, local charities and health and care professionals to support the piloting of new approaches to enhance wellbeing and encourage a range of methods, including social prescribing, to deliver better outcomes by adopting an evidence-led approach.

To help achieve this vision, development of our new Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board Strategy will include the following areas of work:

- Continue to lead on the work of the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board and work with health and social care partners to identify, challenge and tackle health inequalities.
- Ensure available resources are targeted where they will have maximum benefit for all Harlow residents.
- Embrace a more focused evidence-led approach to delivering better public health outcomes by working with a range of partners in a community leadership role.
- Recognising the challenges and opportunities presented by our ageing population. The Council will celebrate longevity and work with local health leaders to promote ways to live more independently in later life.
- Work with health and care professionals to commence a review into the long-term impacts of Covid-19 to assess how primary and acute care can begin to understand how local provision must adapt and respond.
- Promote mental health services and initiatives, support suicide prevention activity and safeguard children and adults most at risk.
- Promote and deliver opportunities to increase physical activity, including supporting and promoting the Active Essex 'Find Your Active' campaign.
- Continue to work with partners to provide a new Health and Wellbeing Community Hub at Osler House for the benefit of all Harlow residents.

- Tackle issues of loneliness and social isolation that affect people's mental and physical health by helping people from all communities feel connected, involved and supported.
- Develop a new health inequalities action plan to address obesity and other health challenges, including diabetes, across all age groups and abilities to understand the Council's leadership role in the future to raise awareness of unhealthy lifestyles.
- Support targeted work with minority groups such as BAME (Black And Minority Ethnic), LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender and Questioning), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), Armed Forces Veterans and people with a physical disability.
- Understand the future use of assistive technology to help support the health and care needs of all age groups and abilities in the town. Work with partners to promote the use of technology and data to improve public health outcomes.
- Support delivery of the Council's new Community Resilience and Community Safety strategies to ensure the wider determinants of health and wellbeing are being identified and addressed for the benefit of all Harlow residents.

We will keep residents updated on the work we are undertaking to develop and deliver a Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board Strategy for 2022 – 2025 on the Council's website at <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/community/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-board>