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| Committee: | Scrutiny | Agenda Item |
| Date: | 9 December 2008 | 8 |
| Title: | Joint PCT Scrutiny in West Essex | |
| Author: | Simon Martin, Head of Customer Support & Revenue Services, 01799 510422 | Item for decision |

Summary

- 1 West Essex PCT covers the administrative area of Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest district councils. Harlow Members have expressed an interest in undertaking a piece of service level health scrutiny with Uttlesford and Epping Forest. This report seeks to confirm that Members of this committee wish to pursue the idea, seek suggestions on topics for the review and to appoint Members to attend associated meetings.

Recommendations

- 2 Committee Members consider participation in a pilot joint scrutiny arrangement for West Essex PCT on the following basis:
- i) The Council having an equal stake in the membership of the group;
 - ii) The topic and objectives of any scrutiny being agreed by all three district councils and the PCT;
 - iii) Essex County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) being informed of the proposed scrutiny, scoping document and objectives of any review.

That subject to recommendations i) to iii) above:

- iv) The committee put forward ideas for areas of review to be considered further by the Joint Group;
- v) The Committee appoint three Members to the Group.

Background Papers

- 3 None.

Impact

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| Communication/Consultation | The topic and objectives of any scrutiny be agreed by all three district councils and the PCT. |
| Community Safety | None. |
| Equalities | None. |
| Finance | None. |
| Human Rights | None. |

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| Legal implications | None. |
| Sustainability | None. |
| Ward-specific impacts | All indirectly. |
| Workforce/Workplace | Officer time will be very limited. |

Situation

- 4 At a County level the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) have the statutory duty for health scrutiny. The work of the HOSC tends to have a wider strategic remit across Essex rather than having a specific focus on West Essex. Recently HOSC has set up a Task and Finish Review which proposes to review the way in which the West Essex PCT plans for and commissions services to meet projected changes in demands and the impact of reconfiguration or change in provision. Its thrust is to look at the strategic commissioning of primary care services, particularly in light of housing growth, development and capacity to ensure robust plans and infrastructure are in place.
- 5 Harlow Members have expressed an interest in undertaking a piece of health scrutiny jointly with Uttlesford and Epping Forest on a service level basis. This links with the recent PCT report into their proposed Strategy for Healthcare for 2008-2012, which indicates that people in West Essex suffer from poor access to health care in comparison to most parts of the county. Additionally, the PCT area is reported as being affluent and there are reported deprived areas which can have adverse health and quality of life issues. The population age profile also indicates a higher than national average figure.
- 6 Officers and Members from Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest have recently met to discuss how such a review might take place. The issues for such a joint group are:
 - i) How to ensure that the participation of the PCT in a worthwhile review can be secured and be mutually beneficial;
 - ii) Making sure that any review does not duplicate either work undertaken by or on behalf of HOSC;
 - (iii) That the structure does not eventually fall foul of any changes envisaged by the Government on joint scrutiny committees following recent consultation which are scheduled for April 2009; and
 - (iv) That there is capacity to complete the review within a reasonable timeframe.
- 7 It was agreed by those that met that this report should be made to each of the three council's scrutiny committees. This is to confirm that they would wish to pursue the joint group idea and seek ideas for topics for the review, appoint members to attend meetings and on the basis of an equal share. Ideally topics suggested for the review should be relevant to all three districts.
- 8 A further meeting of the authorities will be held early in the New Year to discuss the topics and method of review with the PCT. A scoping document

will be produced and sent to Essex HOSC to ensure that they are aware of the proposed review.

Risk Analysis

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|--|---|--|--|
| The topic and objective of any joint scrutiny is not agreed. | 1 Members at all three Councils are enthusiastic about the proposal. | 3 Joint scrutiny would be unlikely to proceed. | All three councils have an equal stake in the membership of any group. |
| This Council does not have sufficient officer capacity. | 3 Officer time is very limited. Harlow and Epping Forest have dedicated scrutiny resource. | 3 This Council may not be able to contribute equally. | Implications will be monitored during pilot. |

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.