

Caring Communities Commission

The demand picture in Essex

- Essex very much fits the national picture with **rising demand** across health and care services.
- The [Essex Trends report](#) provides a valuable evidence base to understand the key drivers of rising demand. Key trends include:
 - **Expanding population** The population of Greater Essex (including Southend and Thurrock) is rising rapidly and could reach 2 million in ten years, an average growth rate of 0.5% a year.
 - **Ageing population** with the fastest population growth being amongst those aged 65+. The 65+ group accounts for 20% of the population now and is growing at 2% a year compared to the growth of the working age population of 0.3% a year.
 - **Rising levels of disability** Around 309,000 people across Greater Essex identify as having a physical or mental health condition or illness, one third of whom are aged 70+.
 - **Rising inequality** According to the 2019 IMD data, 188,000 people in Greater Essex live in the 20% most deprived communities in the country, of whom 49,000 are children. These figures have grown substantially since 2007. Deprivation is concentrated in specific areas.
 - **Weak community capacity** We have some of the least resilient communities in the country.

A couple of key takeaways:

- 1) Essex is very diverse, and demographics and levels of inequality vary across the county – so the Commission will need to understand the opportunities/challenges in different places.
- 2) There is often an inverse relationship between community need and capacity – with the communities with the highest needs having the least capacity to respond. Hence community capacity building is a key part of the Commission's work.

The mandate of the Caring Communities Commission

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Leader of Essex County Council (Full Council May 2024)

“The ambition of the Commission is to radically transform outcomes for our residents while addressing the demand on public services. The Commission will determine which dimensions to focus on to support its work - but we want it to both influence government thinking while effecting change here in Essex. We want to take the future of care and shape it - with the voice of the front line and the experience of the resident.”

- The Leader’s statement indicates that the Commission’s work should be **transformative rather than just incremental**, and that it should address both **outcomes for residents and demand pressures on public services**.
- It should focus on solutions that are grounded in **resilient and empowered communities** (i.e. this is public service reform through the communities’ lens, rather than through other dimensions of public service reform)
- The Commission’s work should be **influential** – shaping the future of care within Essex and influencing the national debate amongst Government, think tanks, and practitioners.
- The Commission’s work should reflect the **voice of residents, partners, and frontline staff** – this is essential to learn from those most involved and affected. We are also keen to hear from a **range of national experts**, so the Commission’s work reflects a range of thinking and best practice and has wider credibility in the sector.
- The Commission is sponsored and supported by Essex County Council, but it has **operational independence** in its work and its recommendations are to be addressed to the Essex system as a whole and (where appropriate) to national government, not just to Essex County Council.
- The Commission is being set up for two years but is expected to make an **initial report by March 2025**, setting out what it has heard, its initial conclusions, and initial recommendations.

Translating the mandate into practice

The mandate of the Commission is relatively broad and the timeframe for the initial report relatively short – so we need to ensure that the mandate is reflected in **clear objectives and areas of enquiry** to frame the Commission’s work.

Objectives:

- To identify and explore areas of enquiry around how we can involve and empower communities to address demand challenges
- To lead on engagement with partners, providers and communities to agree challenges and possible further areas of exploration
- To produce initial recommendations ahead of year 2
- To collaborate and work together to support system change and to support a cross-cutting commission which considers the whole public sector

Areas of Enquiry

How do we promote **healthy, resilient** communities?

e.g. good access to services, keeping people healthy – physically and emotionally

How do we have socially **connected** communities?

e.g. how can we reduce social isolation? how does everyone feel safe and part of something?





How do we foster **inclusive** communities?

e.g. how do we ensure all are represented and supported in communities?

How do we **empower our** communities?

e.g. how can we enable communities to make more decisions for themselves

How does it fit together?

 Commission Meetings	Meeting 1: 16/09 <i>Intro and Scene Setting</i>	Meeting 2: 16/10 <i>Evidence Hearing on Enquiry areas</i>	Meeting 3: 21/11 <i>Evidence Hearing on Enquiry areas</i>	Meeting 4: 11/12 <i>Discussion and Recommendation Setting</i>	Meeting 5: 14/1 <i>Recommendation agreement and report agreement</i>	Meeting 6: 17/2 <i>Report finalisation and Comms and Engagement</i>	Meeting 7: 5/3 <i>Report Launch and Next Steps</i>
 System Partners & Communities		Day in Communities Spending time talking to residents and communities with support of ECC Officers	2 World Café: Mid-Nov Understand context, challenges and what is already happening				
 Direct Engagement with Org/Groups		<i>Individual 1:1s or using existing meetings to talk to key stakeholders and groups.</i>					
 Resident Engagement	<i>Web-page and inbox has been created as well as an associated communication plan which will raise awareness of work and give opportunities for others to feed in through the website.</i>						

Questions?

Please email:

CaringCommunities.Commission@essex.gov.uk