

Health and Wellbeing Board Paper

1. Reference information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	Empowering Communities
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Sponsor:	Mr Tim Oliver - HWB Chairman and Leader of Surrey County Council (SCC)
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Related papers	n/a

2. Executive summary

In developing the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2019 we identified the vital role that community engagement and development would play in delivering on our 10-year goals to improve health and wellbeing through a more preventive approach and addressing wider determinants. A range of fantastic community focused initiatives and approaches have since been progressed across our partnership, most notably in the form of the ongoing response to Covid-19. This has given extra energy to our shared ambition to engage with and empower communities, and a number of key opportunities have been identified to build on progress to date. Work is already underway across the partnership to make the most of these opportunities and through the spring and summer we will also create a roadmap for embedding the empowerment of communities into our longer-term efforts to improve health and wellbeing and address health inequalities.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board:

1. Endorse the renewed ambition to empower communities (see section 5.2).
2. Confirm support for the ongoing work on key opportunities, and highlight any additional suggested areas of focus (see section 5.3).
3. Agree that the Executive Director Communities & Transformation (Surrey County Council) leads and coordinates, on behalf of the wider system, the development of a longer-term roadmap to embed the empowerment of communities at the heart of our efforts to improve health and wellbeing and address health inequalities (see section 5.4).

4. Reason for Recommendations

Work to deepen our engagement with communities and empower them is essential to deliver the long-term goals in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. There is an important opportunity to build on the closer working between communities and organisations in response to Covid-19 and embed this into our next phase of recovery and transformation.

5. Detail

5.1 Background

In developing the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2019 we identified the vital role that community engagement and development would play in delivering our 10-year goals to improve health and wellbeing.

A range of fantastic community focused initiatives and programmes have since been progressed right across our partnership – these include, but are not restricted to, the examples listed below in figure 1.

Over the last year we have also seen the incredible power of the community response to Covid-19, with thousands of colleagues and volunteers from across our partnership working with and alongside communities to help people be safe, healthy, and well. And we have seen the benefit of using approaches such as the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) to get closer to residents and understand priorities in our local communities.

Figure 1: Examples of community focused initiatives and programmes

- Strength-based practice models in children's and adult social care
- Population Health Management
- Social Prescribing through Primary Care Networks (PCNs)
- The Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) significantly growing the number of active volunteers and connecting them to vital work across all Surrey's communities
- Well North West Surrey initiative
- Community conversations in East Surrey, expanding out from the Healthy Horley initiative
- Work on building health partnerships in Guildford and Waverley
- The Epsom Health & Care @Home service in Surrey Downs
- The Community Deal Programme in Surrey Health and Farnham
- Policing Your Community engagement events by Surrey Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Your Fund Surrey, a £100m community projects fund from Surrey County Council
- Practices to deepen understanding and amplify community voices (e.g. Surrey Heartlands Citizen Panel, Healthwatch programmes, engagement by district and borough councils)

5.2 Ambition

The ongoing Covid-19 response and planning for recovery has given extra energy to our shared ambition to empower communities. It has brought into even sharper focus the significant potential for us, as a partnership, to:

- deepen community engagement and involvement, making sure we connect with and hear those in our communities we have sometimes struggled to; and
- empower and support individuals, families, and communities to be stronger, more resilient, and more independent - with organisations and services *working alongside*, not *doing to*.

This ambition is informed by our own local experiences in Surrey, and well-established national and international research that demonstrate how community life, social connections and having a voice in local decisions contribute positively to people's health and wellbeing¹, and how empowerment, self-efficacy and resilience act as protective factors². It positions citizens and communities at the centre, with our organisations facilitating and supporting them to lead a good life and be happy and well in communities where social capital is built and social cohesion is strong.

We also know that the cohesion and the safety of communities are closely interrelated and with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Board coming together there is a fantastic opportunity to collaborate on this agenda.

5.3 Key opportunities

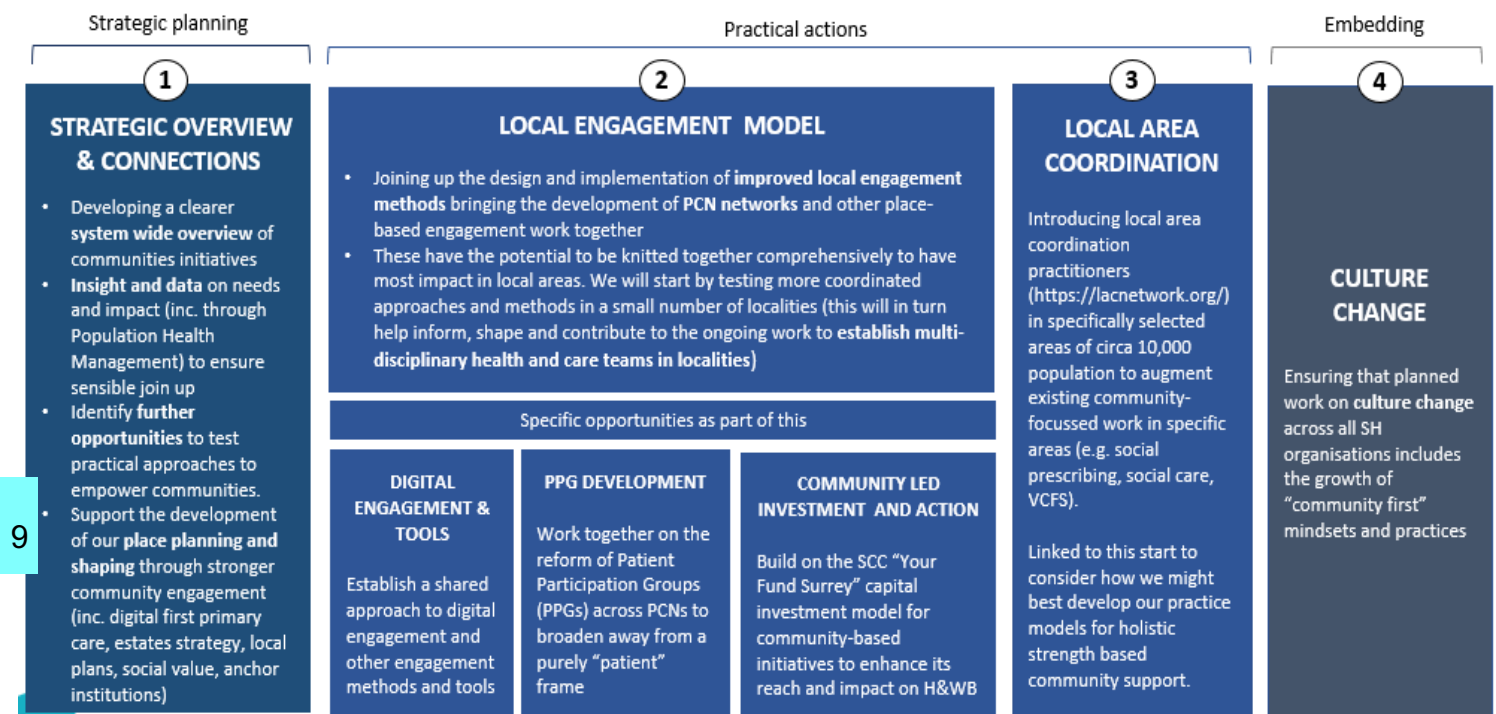
Discussions across the partnership in recent months have identified some key opportunities that can help build on our progress to date (see figure 2 below).

A number of these emerged from the purposeful joining together of the plans to grow Thriving Community Networks developed through the Surrey Heartlands PCNs and Surrey County Council's new strategic commitment to empower communities. This list it is not exclusive and will continue to be developed through partnership discussions.

¹ [A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing](#), Public Health England (2015)

² [Psychosocial pathways and health outcomes](#), Public Health England (2017)

Figure 2: Key opportunities to support engaged and empowered communities



Taken together these opportunities seek to strike a balance that:

- joins up and adds extra partnership drive to work already underway – for example, bringing additional skills and resources around the Healthy Horley local engagement work led by Dr Gill Orrow;
- introduces some new innovative approaches - for example, the introduction of the [local area co-ordination](#) model in specific neighbourhoods to augment existing community and preventive work;
- strengthens our approaches across the full spectrum of participation, from information sharing and consultation through to community-led activity; and
- embeds the mindset, principles, and practices of empowering communities across our wider system, through our strategic planning, major transformation programmes and culture change work.

The current activity underway is resourced primarily through the assignment of existing team members from our organisations, in some cases working together in matrixed project teams. Where additional investments for schemes or initiatives have been required these have been agreed through specific business cases for transformation funding and approved through the appropriate governance routes.

5.4 Longer-term road map

Our ambition to empower communities presents exciting potential implications for the design of our local public services and how we transform to recover from Covid-19, narrow existing and emerging health inequalities, and achieve long lasting improvements in health and wellbeing in Surrey.

We need to plot a course that enables us to genuinely tackle these fundamental challenges through practical action and learning - making a difference on the ground and generating the insight to inform future strategic direction and choices.

Recognising that this is a medium to long term endeavour we plan to develop a longer-term roadmap for empowering communities over the spring and summer. This will also enable us to locate the current work and opportunities more firmly alongside other longer-term system developments. This will be shaped through further joint thinking and planning with system-wide stakeholders, research, and insight from existing engagement work with local communities.

6. Challenges

A key challenge is ensuring we join up efforts to engage with and empower communities across our partnership – and that we are consistently responsive to what we learn. Activities will often be led by specific organisations, but we need to take every opportunity to co-ordinate, make connections and share insights about our communities and places.

Given the broad nature of our goal to empower communities there are multiple connections and interdependencies with other programmes and services across the system. Key programme related interdependencies will be managed through the Surrey Heartlands architecture and appropriate connections will be made within the Frimley Health and Care Partnership through the Community Deal Programme.

7. Timescale and delivery plan

The opportunities and activities underway are running to a variety of timescales but we are currently working to the following broad phases:

- Confirm the renewed ambition and key opportunities (March 2021).
- Progress the key opportunities, ensuring that where we start any new initiatives/programmes delivery plans are in place (April 2021 onwards).
- Develop the longer-term system roadmap for empowering communities (May 2021 - Sept 2021).

8. How is this being communicated?

The ambition and opportunities set out have been developed through a range of partnership conversations to date, including at the following governance groups:

- Surrey Heartlands Primary Care Transformation Board
- Surrey Heartlands Recovery Workstream 8
- Surrey Chief Executives
- Surrey Charities Forum

Further discussions will take place with other key partners and stakeholders as part of developing the longer-term roadmap. We will also complete some specific targeted research to better understand resident and community views on our engagement methods and approaches.

9. Next steps

- Continue to progress the key opportunities to engage and empower communities through partnership conversations and action.
 - Complete further engagement with partners and stakeholders to develop a longer-term roadmap for empowering communities and present this to the Health and Wellbeing Board in early Autumn 2021.
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