

SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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FOR: Discussion

TITLE OF PAPER: NHS Hospital as an Anchor Programme

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1. Purpose

This paper aims to inform Council members about the work being initiated by the Mid and South Essex University Hospitals Group through the ***NHS Hospital as an Anchor*** programme.

2. The NHS as an “Anchor” institution

The NHS has a key role in promoting, improving and supporting a culture of health, not least because it is where a sizeable proportion of public resource on is spent, and where a large number of our local population works or has regular contact.

NHS organisations such as hospitals are uniquely positioned to leverage public resources to address adverse social, economic and environmental factors that can widen inequalities. Given the effect that the broader economic conditions of a place have on the health of a community, it is important to consider how the role of the health and care system can be maximised to support its local communities in their role as ‘Anchors’ – large, place-based institutions.

The NHS Long Term Plan (from January 2019) notes that “as an employer of 1.4 million people, with an annual budget of £114 billion in 2018/19, the health service creates social value in local communities”. It describes NHS organisations intentionally committing to add social value through procurement, use of land and estate, environmental impact and also targeting employability and schools outreach offers to deprived communities. The Plan also commits NHS England to working with the think tank the Health Foundation and sites across the country to identify more good practice that can be adopted across England. This is a mandate for us to act locally, and we are in communication with NHS England about Essex being a test site.

The recent publication by the Health Foundation ***Building healthier communities: the role of the NHS as an anchor institution*** provides further information about this new area of policy, and case studies from around the country. It can be downloaded from: <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/building-healthier-communities-role-of-nhs-as-anchor-institution>

Examples of how the NHS might act include improving workforce policies to broaden access for local people; creating pre-employment programmes, work placements, apprenticeships and volunteer work experience. Other approaches might be shifting more spend on goods and services locally, building local capacity and supporting

local supply chains, embedding social value into purchasing decisions, and considering use of its land for housing or community activity.

3. Local NHS Hospital as an Anchor programme

The Mid and South Essex University Hospitals Group has a strategic objective to *improve health and wellbeing through excellent, financially sustainable services, provided by staff supported to develop, innovate and build rewarding careers*. By developing a commitment to look at our role in the wider economy, through the NHS Hospital as an Anchor approach, we can address our commitments to improving wellbeing and supporting staff in particular.

Following a seminar with our three Trust Boards in Common and our three authorities reviewing local Health and Wellbeing strategies on 13 March 2019, considering the role of the hospitals sites as a resource for reducing inequality and adding social value was an agreed action for the Group.

Since July 2019, the Mid and South Essex University Hospitals Group has committed to exploring their role as an Anchor institution at our Basildon site, looking at how we can add social value intentionally and consistently to support the local population. Working with the County and borough Councils, we aim to address employability, employee wellbeing and local skills specifically.

It is expected that Basildon acts as a first focus area, and the work will broaden beyond the borough in due course. Having this focused approach and measuring impact will be very important to ensure we co-produce actions that are relevant to, and effective in, our local communities. A partner workshop to co-design the programme and agree the skills and employability approach was held on 16 October 2019.

There are two main areas of work upcoming for us:

1. Our staff are a vital partner in this programme, so we will be undertaking significant engagement activity in late 2019/early 2020 with the Basildon workforce. This is aiming to understand their lives locally and where they feel the hospital can do more to add value as a partner in the community, for them and for others.
2. Driving forward existing proven schemes to improve chances to build skills and opportunity for local young people – including a learning disabilities access to employment programme.

We trust that you would support this new programme of activity, and though not local to Southend, we will gain insight to build upon across our wider area. We are of course aware that there are many initiatives aiming to improve social value in the region, but are very pleased that the hospital might be able to use its unique position to contribute to our shared aims in improving health and wellbeing for our local population.

Charlotte Williams, 25 November 2019