

Meeting: People Scrutiny Committee
Date: 14 February 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements – Terms of Reference

Executive Director: Claire Shuter, Executive Director of Strategy and Change
Report Author: Stephanie Cox, Designated Scrutiny Officer
Executive Councillor: Councillor James Moyies, Cabinet Member of Public Health, Adult Social Care and Constitutional Affairs

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The report sets out the framework for the working relationship between the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is proposed to be established by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council (JHOSC) and the health scrutiny committees at each of those three local authorities (the local HOSCs) or a combination of these.
- 1.2. Please note that the establishment of a Joint HOSC and its Terms of Reference is subject to agreement by each of the three respective local authorities.
- 1.3. In the event that one local authority decides not to endorse the proposal to form a Joint HOSC, the other two parties may wish to continue to work together under a joint arrangement, with the basis for this set out in the same Terms of Reference, minus the non-participating authority.

2. Recommendations

That the Terms of Reference of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee has been in a number of discussions with colleagues at Mid and South Essex ICB and counterparts at Essex and Thurrock with a view to looking at strengthening the process for scrutinising health matters and ensuring the process is more efficient. It was felt that in some circumstances, where health matters crossed local authority boundaries and significantly affected local populations of Southend, Essex and Thurrock that a joint scrutiny arrangement may be beneficial.

- 3.2. On 22 December 2023 the Executive Director of Strategy and Corporate Services at Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board contacted Councillor Cowdrey as Chair of People Scrutiny Committee and requested support in working with Essex and Thurrock to make appropriate arrangements under section 30 (5) of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 for the relevant scrutiny functions to be exercised by a joint scrutiny panel.
- 3.3. This request was in relation the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board review of intermediate care and stroke rehabilitation inpatient services in community hospitals in MSE; freestanding midwife-led birthing services and ambulatory services provided at St Peter's Hospital in Maldon.
- 3.4. Discussions with HOSC Councillors at Thurrock and Essex have taken place as to how the three authorities can come together to scrutinise health matters which significantly affect all three local populations.
- 3.5. A meeting was held on 12 January 2024 with officer and Elected Member colleagues at Essex and Thurrock to discuss how ways of working may be strengthened by coming together to scrutinise health topics that cross local authority boundaries. The relevant Portfolio Holder, Chair and Vice-Chair of People Scrutiny and Designated Scrutiny Officer were present at this meeting.
- 3.6. Subsequently a Joint Terms of Reference was developed to act as a blueprint for any future joint panel meeting. The JHOSC is, therefore, not just for the purposes of the public consultation relating to community hospitals in MSE; but to form a basis on which to undertake any future joint scrutiny as and when is appropriate and required and set out the working arrangements for this.
- 3.7. Thurrock and Essex are currently considering their responses to the consultation and the proposal to form a Joint HOSC through their own respective governance processes.
- 3.8. If at any time one of the three proposed authorities chooses not to participate under a joint arrangement, it is suggested that the other two parties may want to continue to work together using the same Terms of Reference, minus the non-participating local authority.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. To establish a framework for a joint committee to scrutinise health matters and proposals which may impact upon services provided across the Essex, Southend and Thurrock footprint.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. The health scrutiny role is within the remit of the People Scrutiny Committee. There is existing provision with the Councils Constitution at Part 3 Schedule 2 for a Joint HOSC.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. The proposal to form a JHOSC will be managed within existing resources.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. The establishment of a joint HOSC and its Terms of Reference should be read in conjunction with Southend's own constitutional arrangements at Part 3 Schedule 2, section 5.3 – the Terms of Reference of the People Scrutiny Committee.

7.2. The proposal to form a joint committee is in accordance with section 30 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

8. Policy Context

8.1 N/A

9. Carbon Impact

9.1. Minimal impact, however Councillors nominated to the Joint HOSC may be required to travel to offices outside of the Southend City area to attend Joint HOSC meetings.

10. Equalities

10.1. N/A

11. Consultation

11.1. Counterparts at Essex County and Thurrock have been consulted alongside colleagues at Mid and South Essex ICB.

12. Appendices

12.1. **Appendix 1:** Essex, Southend and Thurrock Joint Health Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference.

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	06/02/24
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	05/02/24
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	05/02/24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor James Moyies	05/02/24