

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ROLE OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To give new members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee an overview of public health and how their roles as committee members can positively influence the health of the residents of East Herts.

RECOMMENDATION FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY

That:

(A)	the contents of the report be noted.
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1.0 Background

1.1 Following the local elections which took place on the 7 May 2015, the membership of the newly promoted Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has been revised. This report is to act as an introduction for new members into the role of the council in relation to public health and the role of members on the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 Since April 2012 County Councils have had statutory responsibility for public health in two-tier areas and have to employ a Director of Public Health. As district councils run many statutory services that have a direct bearing on the success of public health in two-tier areas it is important that both district and county councils, together with other stakeholders, work in partnership to make public health a success.

2.0 What is Public Health?

- 2.1 There are many definitions of public health; while some vary, the core theme is to help people stay healthy, promote their wellbeing and protect them from harm.
- 2.2 Public health is about supporting people in the environment they live in to follow a healthy lifestyle. In this way the preventative and protective factors derived from a healthier environment and living a healthier lifestyle will build up health resilience and a life that is less affected by ill health. Addressing the factors that contribute to health inequalities is a vital part of public health prevention.

3.0 The Role of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee Members are there to consider matters relating to health in East Herts and act as public health champions by promoting public health in all areas of their work.
- 3.2 The role of this committee is not to scrutinise NHS provision directly as this is undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Committee at Hertfordshire County Council where the Council is already represented.
- 3.3 Members are also unable to directly scrutinise social care as this has its own inspectorate.

4.0 The Role of the Council in Public Health

- 4.1 The Council has an important role to play with regards to public health. **Essential reference papers C and D** set out this role in more detail.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

- 5.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper A**.

Background Papers

- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/scrutinyannualreports>
- East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=9326>

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