

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 April 2011
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Centre for Public Scrutiny pilot project – Health Inequalities

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) pilot project in which Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Council participated to contribute to a Scrutiny Toolkit on Health Inequalities.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the work undertaken to date be noted and used to inform future scrutiny work, where relevant.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Bucklow and Knutsford Wards

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Not known at this stage

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Not known at this stage

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 In January 2010 Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council successfully bid to take part in the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Health Inequality Scrutiny programme aimed at raising the profile of overview and scrutiny as a tool to promote community well-being and help councils and their partners in addressing health inequalities within their local community. This was to be achieved by various methods including:

- Developing a resource kit designed to provide Councils with help, support and advice to encourage them to undertake scrutiny reviews of Health Inequalities;
- Identifying and working with “Scrutiny Development Areas” who will have a key role in making the kit a comprehensive resource for local councils and partners, testing existing models of scrutiny and developing and defining new ones.

10.2 A small sum of money to support the project was allocated, along with an Expert Advisor to assist Members and Officers.

10.3 The Cheshire project focused on identifying health inequalities in rural areas which may exist in small hidden “pockets” and therefore be more difficult to find. In order to test out methodologies, two rural areas were identified, one in Cheshire East and one in Cheshire West and Chester. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) were used to identify rural areas in Cheshire with high levels of deprivation as this is a known measure - deprivation is usually nationally defined using Lower Super Output Areas as the geographical measure, and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007 as the measure of deprivation. The IMD combines a range of deprivation indicators into a single score - the indicators used are: Income; Employment; Health deprivation and disability; Education, skills and training; Barriers to housing and services; Crime; and Living environment.

10.4 The area chosen in Cheshire East to test methodologies was identified as Knutsford Rural, part of the Bucklow Ward comprising an area south of Knutsford including Plumley, Marthall, Ollerton and Peover; this was a rural area that was close to an urban area. The area chosen in Cheshire West and Chester was part of the Broxton Ward including Malpas, Tilston and Farndon, which differed from the Cheshire East area in that it was further away from any urban conurbation.

10.5 A Joint Scrutiny Panel was established comprising:

- Cheshire East Councillors C Andrew, D Flude, S Jones, B Livesley and A Moran (appointed as Chairman of the Panel);
- Cheshire West and Chester Councillors E Johnson, P Merrick, G Smith and A Wright.

10.6 The Panel met on 5 occasions, including undertaking a tour of the two pilot areas; information was sought from a variety of stakeholders; and Councillors and

officers went out into the two areas on a number of occasions to undertake face to face interviews.

10.7 In addition, the Panel held a mini scrutiny review which focused on a specific topic in a two hour session; the Panel carried out its mini review on “Access to mental health services in rural areas” and heard evidence from NHS professionals, a representative of the Local Involvement Network and the Head of Rural Affairs from Cheshire Community Action.

10.8 The findings from the project were presented at a Centre for Public Scrutiny event in London on 17 November which the Chairman of the Panel, together with the Scrutiny Officer from CWAC, attended. Subsequently, the findings were written up by the Panel’s Expert Advisor into a Case Study (attached) and will form part of the Toolkit chapter on Local Understanding. The Toolkit is to be launched shortly.

10.9 A major purpose of this project was to help develop a Scrutiny toolkit though investigating and piloting various methodologies. It is hoped that the findings from the project as well as the experience gained will be useful in any future work to investigate health inequalities or indeed Scrutiny work looking at other areas which may want to utilise the use of the mini scrutiny review, Information Grid etc.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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