

## Whole Essex Community Budget Pilot – Briefing Note, December 2011

### National Context

In June 2011, CLG announced the second phase of Local Government Resource Review ([ToR](#)). This aims to use community budgets to progress a shift in power from Whitehall to local authorities, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

*“Community Budgets are not about any one local public service provider having a monopoly on power and resources, but about how partners come together to jointly transform local public services.”*

*HM Government Community Budgets Prospectus, October 2011.*

HM Government are keen to test how this can be achieved and issued a [prospectus](#) seeking expressions of interest for areas willing to pilot neighbourhood and/or whole place community budgets. The pilots will establish a high level team comprising Senior Whitehall staff and local partners to work from January to October 2012 and develop an operational plan for implementation:

*“By October 2012 each pilot area will have developed an operational plan which sets out what a single budget, or options for pooling and aligning resources, for the place would look like, the outcomes that would be delivered, governance arrangements, the redesign of services required to achieve the outcomes and how new financial approaches would work. It will identify what would need to happen locally to implement the options identified and what would need to be changed centrally.”*

*HM Government Community Budgets Prospectus, October 2011.*

### Essex Proposal

Essex partners have led the way in national thinking on ‘systems thinking’ in the public sector, for example through the delivery of ‘Total Place’ pilots in 2009 and more recently through the EssexFamily project, as one of 16 national pilots selected to focus specifically on families with multiple problems. The strength of partnership working in the county through our successful Local Area Agreement also puts us in a strong position to take on the piloting of community budgets.

Through our expression of interest, submitted in November, we were able to demonstrate the drive, ambition, capacity and partnership working necessary to deliver robust and credible community budget proposals. The EOI also gives a sense of the kind of improved outcomes that we would expect to see as a result of a whole-Essex community budget. See below.



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## Pilot Selection and Next Steps

Whitehall recognised the strength of our bid and, on 21<sup>st</sup> December, following several rounds of shortlisting, announced Essex as one of only 4 pilots nationwide. By fully embracing this, we have a unique opportunity to fundamentally think about how best to design, fund, commission and deliver outstanding public services, locally and nationally. As CLG has put it “nothing is off the table”, although the Prospectus makes it clear that the Community Budget pilots will work ‘with the grain’ of wider reforms in the public sector, such as the Work Programme, NHS reforms, and Police and Crime Commissioners for example.

HM Government will fund an integrated team, led locally, comprising about eight civil servants from the big spending Whitehall departments, working with a similar complement of staff from local partners (with funding to backfill positions), to lead on the engagement, analysis and innovation required to develop proposals bold enough to inform the operational plan.

Essex Chief Executives and Leaders will be exploring how we can get most value from the Whole Essex Community Budget pilot at their January meetings, and the expression of interest makes it quite clear that we will seek to utilise other existing governance mechanisms wherever possible. The Essex ‘shadow’ Health and Wellbeing Board discussed community budgets at its December meeting, for example.

If you have any questions or comments about community budgets, please contact Dan Gascoyne at ECC on 01245 437302 [dan.gascoyne@essex.gov.uk](mailto:dan.gascoyne@essex.gov.uk)

