

COMMITTEE REPORT

14 October 2025

Public Health Initiatives in Three Rivers -
General Public Services & Community
Engagement Committee

GENERAL PUBLIC SERVICES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PART I

Public Health Initiatives in Three Rivers (ADCCC)

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of service delivery of Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health funded projects including the Placed Based Health Inequalities, which has now ended, and the Healthy Hub Project following a request from Councillors for this work to be highlighted at committee.
- 1.2 The report will also provide an overview of the Public Health Prevention Investment Programme application being submitted by Three Rivers District Council on a Healthy Food Environments project.
- 1.3 This report was requested by the Lead Member for Community Engagement, Public Safety & Housing.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - i) Members note the content of this report.

3 Details

3.1 Place Based Health Inequalities Programme.

- 3.1.1 Between 2022 and 2025 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) provided revenue funding to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) to address and tackle health inequalities in the district. The funding focussed on initiatives that addressed local needs and identified inequalities within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Appendix 1).
- 3.1.2 Analysis of health data showed life expectancy within South Oxhey Ward (Male 76.7; Female 80.6) was significantly lower than the district average (Male 81.4; Female 84.2). Deaths from causes considered preventable, under 75 years standardised mortality ratio was significantly higher in South Oxhey (158 per 100) compared to the district average (76.7 per 100). Higher preventable deaths were also found in Penn & Mill End (102 per 100) and Abbots Langley (92.9 per 100). Emergency Hospital Admissions were significantly higher in South Oxhey (135.2 per 100) and Mill End (115.5 per 100) than the district average (99.5 per 100).
- 3.1.3 During project development it was found that a strongly contributing factor to health inequality within Three Rivers was financial deprivation.
- 3.1.4 The funding was used to commission a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Health Inequalities (2022-23) in Three Rivers alongside the recruitment of an officer to begin building relationships, undertake research and project

development, oversee and deliver a variety of projects, as well as fund project delivery.

The following projects were delivered through this workstream:

- 3.1.4.1 Health and Wellbeing e-newsletter published monthly to provide information on a range of health and wellbeing topics and promote local health and wellbeing events to residents. As of March 2025, the newsletter had 4,768 subscribers.
- 3.1.4.2 The Three Rivers Health and Wellbeing Partnership (formed in 2022) alongside with a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to address local health inequalities through joined up working across the sectors key community partners. This Partnership was absorbed into the work of the Connecting Three Rivers Board and substructures following a reduction in officer resource in 2023-24.
- 3.1.4.3 Watford African and Caribbean Association (WACA) (2022-23) funding for WACA to deliver targeted health awareness initiatives on conditions disproportionately impacting on residents of African and Caribbean heritage. These include Type 2 diabetes, hypertension and prostate cancer.
- 3.1.4.4 Cancer awareness sessions (2023-24). A series of cancer awareness sessions held under the banner of "Time to Check" were delivered within the community. 483 residents were engaged across 6 community events raising awareness of Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Bowel Cancer and Cervical Cancer. Partner organisations were involved where possible to increase the resources available to residents at the events.
- 3.1.4.5 Breast Cancer Screening (2023-24). Breast cancer screening uptake was found to be lowest in South Oxhey Ward and was an identified targeted area for the North London (NL) Breast Cancer Screening Service. An officer in the Strategy and Partnerships team was seconded to the local GP surgery for half a day a week to contact residents due for a screening appointment to increase uptake of breast cancer screenings. An initial list received by NL Breast Cancer Screening Service had over 1000+ patients requiring to be contacted. However, due to delays in finalisation of the Memorandum of Understanding resulted in the service no longer targeting South Oxhey, and the cohort had moved to another area of South West Hertfordshire. In total 14 residents were contacted of which 10 residents were engaged, 50% requested advice on how to book. 50% of those contacted identified that transport was a barrier to attending screening. Following this the project was redeveloped to promote lung cancer prevention.
- 3.1.4.6 Lung Cancer Prevention (2023-24). Following the completion of the breast cancer screening calls, further analysis showed that South Oxhey had the highest prevalence of lung cancer within the district. This initiative aimed to support patients to quit smoking through smoking cessation sessions provided by Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service or Three Rivers Healthy Hub, with the secondary aim being to support patients on their health improvement journey, regardless of their decision to engage with smoking cessation. This was achieved by contacting patients flagged on the GP system as smokers to undertake a Health Survey that explored a host of health topics including smoking, physical activity, drugs and alcohol, social isolate and debt. Over 6 months, 595 patients were contacted, 169 took part in the survey. 36 (21%) of whom had either never smoked or had already quit smoking. Data showed that 77% of people completing the survey asked for either a referral into a support service or additional information on at least one service. Proportionately more people asked for referral/information following a phone call rather than text. In

total, 256 onward signposts were made for patients following completion of the survey.

- 3.1.4.7 Health and wellbeing survey (2024 ongoing). This developed on from the Lung Cancer Prevention project but aimed to target a broader cohort of residents. Officers worked in partnership with four GP surgeries, based in Abbots Langley and South Oxhey whereby the surgeries text a cohort patients per month to invite them to complete the Healthy Survey. The survey was additionally promoted to key community partners. The work commenced in quarter 2 following the appointment of a new officer. Engagement with GP practices has been challenging, so in quarter 4 further promotion through partnership networks was undertaken. In total 67 Health Surveys were completed, resulting in 211 signposts and 41 referrals to community support organisations along with 4 referrals to Healthy Hub Three Rivers Stop Smoking Service.
- 3.1.4.8 South Oxhey Holiday Food Workshop (2023-24). Data showed that South Oxhey Ward had the highest number within the district of children with excessive weight/obese children at Year 6. A series of 2-hour cooking and physical activity sessions were delivered by Beezee Bodies targeting families with children aged 5-15 years olds in local community venue over the school holidays. The programme saw 72 attendances across 3 sessions. 80% of families participating were more likely to cook homecooked meals following the session. 100% of attendees were aware following the session that being physically active helps with mental wellbeing.
- 3.1.4.9 Ascend Outdoor Activities and Skills Programme (2023-24). 8 outdoor sessions at Dig Deep, South Oxhey, were delivered to address the negative impact of social isolation, to improve mental wellbeing and to counteract the increasing cases of suicide rates in men alongside providing information and support to other needs. The project additionally aimed to encourage active travel for the clients. The session saw over 72 attendances across the programme. Participants showed a slight overall improvement to self-rating of their wellbeing.
- 3.1.4.10 Man On (2023-ongoing). Weekly football sessions were delivered in Mill End by Watford Football Club Community Sports and Education Trust (WFC CSE Trust). The sessions were designed to support men aged 18+ with their mental health through physical activity and a conversation café. This programme aimed to counteract the increasing cases of suicide rates in men and the negative stigma and barriers around their mental health, alongside providing information and support to other needs. The project launched in March 2023. Participants have completed a WEMWEBS questionnaire at week 0, 6 & 12 – and continuing on a 6-weekly basis. By 31 March 2025 the programme had 510 attendances over the project. Evaluation Data for the project showed:

Outcomes	Pilot 2023	2023-25
Total number of attendances across	182	328
Average % of participants reporting improvement in mental wellbeing.	92%	73%
Average % of participants reporting greater awareness of support available.	42%	61%
Average % of participants reporting increased healthy behaviours.	57%	80%
Average % of participants reporting increased physical activity outside of sessions.	57%	63%

Average % of people self-reporting that they have had an increase in their confidence to engage in physical activities.	60%	63%
Average % of the number of people who are now engaging in other activities.	57%	65%

3.1.4.11 A Women's Health event in March 2025 focused on talks from a consultant gynaecologist on endometriosis, a cancer awareness talk from One Vision and a physical health and activities talk from WFC CSE Trust. A range of community organisations also held stalls including the Healthy Hub, Watford African and Caribbean Association, the Watford Women's Centre and Herts Beacon. The event was attended by 24 residents.

3.1.4.12 Men's Health Event (2024). An event was delivered in collaboration with WFC CSE Trust focused on men's mental and physical well-being, featuring guest speakers, informative stalls from local organizations, and free health checks. The Men's Health Event resulted in 53 attendee's and a range of health topics were presented to raise awareness on included Prostate Cancer, mental health and suicide prevention and physical activity.

3.2 Healthy Hub Three Rivers

3.2.1 The Healthy Hubs are a countywide initiative to provide a one stop shop that delivers and hosts a range of health improvement services within the community to improve the health and wellbeing in areas of identified need.

3.2.2 The Healthy Hubs are required to:

- Provide a physical front door to public health, wellbeing and wider determinants of health services.
- Build trust with residents, assessing their needs and delivering, referring or signposting them into services that meet these needs.
- Embed partner organisations in the wider health and care system.
- Build a partnership network of Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise, NHS and Local Authority teams to increase awareness of available services, encourage cross referrals and signposting to support residents across the wider determinants of health.

3.2.3 The Healthy Hub supports the objectives of the Community Strategy and Corporate Framework by addressing health inequalities within the district. Internal Council departments including Customer Service Centre and Housing offer regular outreach from the Healthy Hub.

3.2.4 The Hubs provide a space for multiple organisations to undertake outreach work to target communities or locations under the Healthy Hub umbrella.

3.2.5 Healthy Hub Three Rivers has 10 partner services providing regular outreach support from the Hubs. These include Herts Mind Network, Change Grow Live, Turning Point, Hertfordshire Constabulary, NHS Health Checks, Rennie Grove Peace Hospice, Carers In Herts, Grand Union Community Energy, Thrive Homes and the Citizens Advice Service.

- 3.2.6 Healthy Hub Three Rivers also previously provided outreach access to ECO4 Advisors to provide engagement in the Eco4shcmes targeted areas of South Oxhey and Maple Cross to help residents access funding for energy efficient measures to reduce their energy bills and lower their carbon footprints.
- 3.2.7 The most common reasons residents come to the Healthy Hub is for digital support skills, benefits, cost of living, and to gain information on hobbies and activities in the community.
- 3.2.8 The first phase of the project ran from October 2019 to March 2022. Healthy Hub Three Rivers first launched in January 2020, the council funded Ascend to deliver Healthy Hub services based at Step Up in South Oxhey. In April Herts Mind Network were funded to provide Healthy Hub services at Rickmansworth Foodbank and deliver at Healthy Hub pop up locations throughout the district as the need arises. A further Hub was opened in September 2021 at Hillside Community hub in Abbots Langley which was operated by both organisations.
- 3.2.9 The Healthy Hub project was extended by HCC for the period of April 2022 – March 2025. The council brought the Healthy Hub inhouse and utilised the funding to employ an officer to staff the Hubs within the district.
- 3.2.10 The table below summarises the number of clients supported, engaged and referred/signposted to support by the Healthy Hubs.

Timescale	Number of Clients supported	Healthy Hub Engagements (including attendance on Healthy Hub events and engagement with our Hub Partner Services)	Number of Referrals and Signposts
2019 - 2022	395	521	792
2022 – 2025	509	3,068	1,608
April – June 2025	83	296	390

- 3.2.11 In 2024 Three Rivers was chosen to pilot a Stop Smoking Service which required the Healthy Hub Officer to be trained as a Stop Smoking practitioner. The Healthy Hub has supported 40 residents to quit smoking with 6 achieving quit status so far. The Hub also provides access to sexual health testing kits and condom wallets.
- 3.2.12 80 people accessed NHS health checks through the Healthy Hubs. Future collaborations with the Better Health Bus enables the health check offer to be expanded into wider communities.
- 3.2.13 Three Rivers deliver an average of 12 hub sessions per month, meeting the requirements set by HCC. Most of these sessions take place at our physical Healthy Hub spaces located at:
- Rickmansworth Foodbank (Mill End), The Mill Cafe, Methodist Church, Berry Lane, Mill End, WD3 7HJ. Fortnightly Tuesdays 12-4pm

- The Old Stables (behind St Lawrence Church), St Lawrences Vicarage, High Street, Abbots Langley, WD5 0AS. Open Wednesdays 10am to 4pm
- Oxhey Library, Bridlington Road, South Oxhey, WD19 7AG, open Thursdays 9:30am to 5pm

3.2.14 Alongside the regular Hubs, a number of pop-up events in the community are held to engage with residents who may not have access to the physical spaces. Pop ups are delivered where there are identified inequalities or low engagement with Health Services. Over 41 Healthy Hub pop ups have been delivered in the local community engaging with 662 residents.

3.3 Future Public Health Work

3.3.1 HCC have confirmed funding for the Healthy Hub until 31 March 2027.

3.3.2 Three Rivers District Council is leading a joint application to the Public Health Prevention Investment Programme. This application aims to deliver a Three Rivers, Watford, Broxbourne and Stevenage wide project to create Healthy Food Environments.

3.3.3 The project will involve the development of a cross border partnership, bringing together key organisations across the four districts and boroughs to develop and deliver a Food Plan. This workstream will create a toolkit for future Hertfordshire Unitary Authorities to implement successful initiatives to deliver long term and sustainable healthier food environments.

3.3.4 The application will be submitted in September 2025, with successful organisations notified in October/November 2025. Project delivery will aim to begin in 2026.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 To note the content of this report.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

5.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators.

5.2.1 SP03 Number of Customers supported by the Healthy Hub

Environmental, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

None specific.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The Public Health Programme is funded from externally secured funds from Hertfordshire Public Health, UK Shared Prosperity Funding and supported by internal budgeted council resources and officer time through funding and staff management. The projects also previously received funding through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

- 6.2 Table showing funding received from Hertfordshire Public Health for the delivery of the public health programmes.

Period	Funding Received
2019-20	£30,000
2020-21	£30,000
2021-22	£30,000
2022-23	£75,000
2023-24	£75,000
2024-25	£81,000
2025-27	£77,000

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Hertfordshire County Council to deliver the Healthy Hub project in Three Rivers until March 2027. Legal input will be sought for the Public Health Prevention Investment application.

8 Staffing

- 8.1 Delivery of the Healthy Hub Project requires officer resource, partially funded by the Public Health funding.
- 8.2 Health Engagement Officer post is funded through the Healthy Hub grant. Additional staffing resources is required to support to cover leave and training of the Health Engagement Officer.
- 8.3 Additional support to cover for staff leave and training is provided by the Partnerships Support Officer, who is also trained to deliver Stop Smoking sessions.

9 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for Hertfordshire County Council in the developmental stages of the Place Based Health Inequalities work.
- 9.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be developed as part of the Public Health Prevention Investment Programme application.

10 Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 The Community Safety Team hold quarterly outreach sessions at the Healthy Hub, this improves access for residents to provide the opportunity to speak to a member of the Community Safety team to raise issues of anti-social behaviour within the district. This is delivered by existing resource.

11 Public Health implications

- 11.1 The programme and projects work to tackle health inequalities as well as improve the health and wellbeing of residents through increasing access to public health services and other community support services.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 12.1 Customer Service Team may be required to take enquiries for the Healthy Hub or direct residents to support available on the website.
- 12.2 Outreach sessions are held at the Healthy Hub by the Customer Services Centre. This improves access for residents to access council services and make enquiries with the customer service team. This is delivered by existing resource.

13 Communications and Website Implications

- 13.1 The Communications Team publicise the Healthy Hub Services and impact on council channels to illustrate TRDC's partnership working and ongoing support to local residents.
- 13.2 Virtual Support Hub hosted on Council website under support in the Community. This is delivered by existing resource


14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Strategy and Partnerships service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
Insufficient staff (illness or resignation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced ability to provide service and support to clients• Difficulty in meeting operational targets• Disruption of scheduled timetable and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple staff trained to provide cover to the Healthy Hub service.• Staff wellbeing monitored and support in place to reduce	Tolerate	12

	services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overworking Virtual Hub remains available for residents. 		
Loss of Healthy Hub Venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to continue delivering services in current locations. Potential disruption of client support and Hub timetable Loss of reputation if clients are inconvenienced by venue changes. Financial implications if replacement venues are less cost-effective. Difficulty in meeting operational targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in partnership with already established community infrastructure. Virtual Hub remains available 	Tolerate	9
Loss of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to cover staffing costs Potential closure or reduction in Healthy Hub services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding agreed by MOU until 2027 Continue to meet the targets set by HCC Revenue generating services such as Stop Smoking Pursue additional sources of grant funding 	Tolerate	12

- 14.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely  Likelihood Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
Impact Low Unacceptable				

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)
3 (Critical)
2 (Significant)
1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Remote (≤5%))

- 14.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

Data Quality

Data sources:

Project Evaluation Reports

Data checked by:

Freddy Chester, Partnerships Officer

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

Report prepared by: Freddy Chester, Partnerships Officer

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Three Rivers Health Inequalities JSNA (2023)

