

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Monday, 10 November 2014
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 9.11 pm
Members Present:	Councillors R Morgan (Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee) (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) G Chambers, K Chana, T Church, D Dorrell, L Girling, P Keska, Mrs J Lea, A Mitchell MBE, B Rolfe, Ms G Shiel, B Surtees, Mrs T Thomas and D Wixley		
Other Councillors:	Councillors Ms H Kane, A Lion, S Neville, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, G Waller and Mrs J H Whitehouse		
Apologies:	Councillors S Murray, Mrs M Sartin and A Watts		
Officers Present:	D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), I White (Forward Planning Manager), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) and G. Nicholas (National Management Trainee)		
By Invitation:	C Martin (Essex County Council)		

34. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

35. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor T Thomas was substituting for Councillor K Angold-Stephens.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

38. PRESENTATION ON CHILDREN SERVICES

The Chairman welcomed Chris Martin, the Integrated Commissioning Director (West) from Essex County Council. He was there as part of a follow up to last years successful presentation on Children Services, given by Jenny Boyd. Mr Martin noted that if the Committee were so minded he could come back again to update them on the other, wider aspects of Children Services he did not have time to cover at this meeting.

Mr Martin noted that it was important to support children and their families from birth right through to the early years of their life (2 to 5 years), to give them the best possible opportunity to succeed. They wanted to be challenging and have all the people working across the early years system to have a single vision of what needed to be changed, this would require big shifts in culture and practice. They would also look at how families and communities may be contributing through peer support and mentoring, thinking about the kind of support families need and not just how it was delivered. (A copy of Mr Martin's slides are attached).

They would be working towards building capacity and capability of parents to support themselves and to support one another; with professional workers starting from peoples strengths and finding ways to build on them to preventing problems occurring. This would involve thinking differently about the workforce, letting them do what needed to be done and make use of their diverse experience. If they get this right they would achieve better outcomes for children while at the same time saving money.

They have less money to spend than before and so would need to be more effective with what they do have. They spent too much time 'firefighting' and not enough on prevention or early intervention. They should make use of citizens and communities; they would have the insights, capabilities and energies which were as yet untapped; there was a collaborative potential to be unlocked.

The outcome for children in Essex had improved but, they needed to do better as there were still some children doing poorly. More needed to be done and improvement continued as resources diminished. There was a need for joined up strategies at the foundation of their work with their partners; a strategic review of the early year's workforce; investment in building community resilience and to address child poverty.

They were undertaking an ambitious, strategic, broad reaching review of early years in collaboration with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to identify innovation across the system, especially with families, removal of duplication of resources and roles, developing a common understanding and model of child development and skilling up the workforce to deliver new approaches.

They would innovate to generate new ideas and select the most promising ones, then test and develop them. They will be open to learning, and would honestly reflect on what they learnt, being open to failure; sharing and applying what they learn to improve the system.

They would also engage in ethnographic research with Essex parents and families, taking an in-depth look at the lives of eight families living across Essex combined with observational fieldwork at over 30 services. This type of research reveals behaviours and patterns that other methods would not pick up.

They learned that some parents were lonely, isolated and struggling to make friends and there were few places where young parents felt comfortable. There was a need for better friendship and support networks and activities that built confidence and skills that parents need. Parents should be told where and when they can get help from if they needed it. And they need to trust the professionals they connect with and know that their own skills and abilities were valued and being supported.

Insights gained so far was that they needed to focus on building the resilience of families and reducing their isolation; both professionals and families need to build their relational capability; no-one wants or needs more services, families were not getting the best value from the ones that already exist; and there was poor collaboration between public services.

Their new systems will look first at families' strengths, focus on preventing problems and build the resilience of parents. The professionals should work together across the whole system and base all they do on evidence about what was needed and what works, being brave enough to stop things that were not working. They would have clear criteria on outcomes to enable them to know if they had been successful.

They were looking to have consistency across the workforce around child development and to implement four big ideas – (1) transforming Children's Centres (owned and driven by families and communities, with support from professionals); (2) transforming the workforce (establishing a common core of understanding); (3) alternative approaches to commissioning for outcomes – (working with new providers (including communities)); and (4) – peer support and unleashing community capacity (working to parent's strengths and building their knowledge and resilience).

A copy of his presentation are attached.

The meeting was then opened to questions from the members present.

Councillor Surtees noted that intervention resulting in the removal of Children from home was always likely to engender stress that is most keenly felt by the children concerned in any allegation of abuse or neglect and their siblings. Not every intervention resulting in placement with foster parents, etc. is as a result of proven misconduct by a parent or carer. When a family is reunited after the authorities have determined that a referral was malicious or unfounded there may be continuing stress and after effects for the children in the family. These negative experiences are especially difficult for children who are disabled, of special educational need or from families with poor English language skills and limited knowledge of British culture. Can Mr Martin explain what steps are routinely taken to assist children and families who have experienced this kind of disruption? Mr Martin answered that it was unusual for a child to be removed on grounds of malicious or unfounded concerns. It would have to be done through the power of the Court. For longer term support, they would call upon a range of supports available through existing counselling services or the more targeted support of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and or Social Services. Councillor Surtees responded by saying that there were many reasons why children were removed temporally. You indicated that this would be unusual but I am aware of several cases. All I am asking is for a wake up call on this.

Councillor Girling noted that a consultation was held in the recent past on children centres and at the time we were told then that there would be a second wave of consultations about this. Also a lot of officers from the centres have left because their hours had been cut. Has there ever been a second consultation and how are you tackling the loss of staff over the last six months. Mr Martin replied that he was not aware of a second consultation or the loss of staff. They were currently asking that

the centres become more 'outreach' type of centres and include and strengthen their ties with their families using them to tell them what they need to do to be more effective. Councillor Girling noted that the first consultation had some concerns raised by some local parents, on some of the Outreach venues used that were not up to standard to cope with groups of very young children and staff having their workload doubled.

Since the meeting Mr Martin has sent in the following as a follow up to the above question from Councillor Girling:

'Context:

The Children's Centre Public Consultation undertaken last year set out changes to service delivery that focused on working smarter and focussing use of resources on actual services for children and less on buildings and other overheads, that ensured, making maximum use of buildings and the staff delivering services.

The proposals set out the intention to extend the contracts from April 2014 until March 2016 to ensure that children's centre services continue across the county for another two years; with no overall reduction in the level of services being delivered as a result of implementing a restructured model from 85 Main site Children's Centres to a combination of 37 Main Sites and 37 Delivery Sites. This meant that 37 children's centres would be re-designated from a Main Site to a Delivery Site with an overall reduction of 11 premises countywide from the current model. The proposed re-designations and closures were identified with the aim of delivering services where families most need them across the county.

In Epping this meant:-

- *Hazelwood Children's Centre remained as a Main site*
 - *Abbeywood became a delivery site for the Hazelwood Children's Centre*
 - *Little Buddies closed and the families within the catchment area were absorbed into Hazelwood's area*
- *Sunrise Children's Centre remained as a main site*
 - *Little Oaks became a delivery site for the Sunrise Children's Centre*
- *True Stars remained as a stand-alone main site*
- *Brambles remained as a main site*
 - *Little Stars became a delivery site for the Brambles Children's Centre.*

In response to the question:

Since April 2014 the main Children's Centre for this area is now Sunrise, with Little Oaks becoming a delivery site. There is a greater focus on targeted outreach provision with services being taken out into the community and homes to those families that have been identified as requiring support, with less being delivered within the centre buildings. This means that families that have been identified as needing support do not need to attend a centre to access services. Across Epping, only 1 centre was closed as a result of the changes, Little Buddies, and families from this area have been transferred to Hazelwood Children's Centre with Abbeywood as a delivery site.

A review of the data collected on children being seen by the Children's Centres for the first 2 quarters of this year, compared to the same period in the preceding year, does show a drop for Little Oaks but an increase for the main site Sunrise, which indicates that the number of families accessing services within the area as a whole

has remained the same. It should also be noted that due to increased focus on targeted support aimed at delivering services where families most need them will mean that universal services will generally be run from Sunrise and not Little Oaks.

Little Oaks is open for 15 hours per week, but the centre does have the flexibility to open more than this if local need requires it to and this is happening on a regular basis to meet the demand of the target number of families from Little Oaks merged with Sunrise numbers of 1850 (almost 1000 from an under 30% area). This is now more established and meeting local needs. Also, as part of the changes implemented Spurgeons a member of staff has left, some are working in different centres and one member of staff was on long term sick, which left the centre needing to employ agency staff on a temporary based whilst replacements were recruited. There was a recruitment drive in place over the summer months. This is now all concluded and Spurgeons feel the centre is effectively meeting the needs of local families.'

Councillor Chambers asked if they were inspected by Ofsted and was told that Ofsted were their regulators and had carried out an inspection in April and they had been judged as being "good". That process took the best part of a month and was very thorough. Part of this process was to look at the Children Centres.

The Chairman read a question sent in by Councillor Angold-Stephens "Having recently visited Little Oaks Children's Centre in Loughton I formed the impression that they were very professional and enthusiastic but I was also aware that they were heavily stretched and, as far as I could tell, their outreach services, which are now very important because of the closure of other centres, is not functioning as well as it might through lack of resources. As a result, young families are probably slipping through the net, particularly those living some way away. I would emphasise that the staff are doing their best but they seem to be under-resourced. Can you advise on what action you are taking to remedy this situation?" Mr Martin said he could supply specific answers later but noted that Children Centre staff would be brought together to help design a system fit for service.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse said that at the last presentation they had about Children Services talking about 'Homestart' and how families could use other centres. Did you know how many families in total have transferred and the reasons why others didn't. Mr Martin did not have the figures with him and indicated that he would get back to her with an answer.

Councillor Neville asked about the Children's Centre in Buckhurst Hill (Little Buddies), did he know how many families that used this now use outreach or the Sunrise centre. Mr Martin said she would find out and get back to him.

Councillor Lea asked if we were taking on the right type of people to look after the children, people who had the right life experience and who would stay the course. Mr Martin agreed that they needed the right type of people that had the right skill mix and capacity to handle the work and to help families build relationships. It was difficult in the West of the county as they were in competition with Hertfordshire and London.

Councillor Mitchell noted that from the presentation there were a lot of outside agencies affiliated to ECC. You were looking to streamline the service and make it more productive. Did he have regular meetings with them to get feedback to aid in your aims and objectives. Mr Martin replied that yes, they work on a contractual basis, working through contracts, with clear monitoring processes. Also, within the agreements are some contractual levers we can use. I and my team will be involved

in the commissioning of health visitors locally, the local community health provider for children and the local children centre provider. In the past this was a fragmented picture, but in the future there will be greater consolidation making the monitoring arrangements much more effective and simpler.

Councillor Girling noted that some stakeholders, such as the Youth Service used a few sites in Loughton, but they did not have any desk space at these venues. Could the County look at these to enable them to perhaps use some office space. Mr Martin noted that this seemed sensible to him and he would take this idea back.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse noted that one of his slides mentioned the movement of Health Visitors can he tell us from where to where? Mr Martin replied that currently Health Visitors are commissioned by NHS England. From October next year the responsibility for the commissioning arrangements would transfer to the local authority. Not the workforce, but just the responsibility was transferring. This is part of the shift from NHS to local authorities.

Councillor Surtees was aware of the concern about the closure of the Homestart scheme. What was the continuing role of the voluntary sector that was not part of a big organisation? He noted that when a project closed there had not been good liaison about providing alternative services. Mr Martin noted that their plan was to move from an annual bidding process to something a bit more sustainable, in accordance with what he had been told over the years by the voluntary sector, that yearly agreements really does not help anyone. In West Essex we have combined efforts so that this year we have a process for organisations to bid for one pot of money for one outcome. This has been met with a degree of positivity. The next stage would be to extend this agreement for three years. They were also lucky to have an external funding team to bring in outside money and help organisations access outside funding.

Councillor Lea wanted to know if all voluntary workers were CRB checked. She was told that they usually were but it depended on the type of work they were asked to do.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Mr Martin for his interesting presentation and useful answers to the questions raised.

39. CLG CONSULTATION ON PLANNING AND TRAVELLERS

The Forward Planning Manager, Ian White, introduced the report on the Communities and Local Government Consultation on 'Planning and Travellers', seeking views on proposed changes to planning policy and guidance for the travelling community. The consultation would end on 23 November 2014. The stated intentions of the proposed changes were to (i) ensure that the planning system applies fairly and equally to both the settled and traveller communities; (ii) further strengthen protection of "sensitive areas" and Green Belt; and (iii) address the negative impact of unauthorised occupation. The consultation also stated that the Government remained committed to increasing the level of authorised traveller site provision in appropriate locations to address historic undersupply as well as to meet current and future needs.

The consultation also included streamlined draft planning guidance aiming to support councils in robustly assessing their traveller site needs. Members were aware that the Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published in July 2014 and was included in the Local Plan Evidence Base at Cabinet on 8th September 2014.

The key suggestions in the consultation were:

- Travellers who have given up travelling permanently should be treated in the same way as the settled community, especially regarding sites in sensitive locations, such as the Green Belt – i.e. redefining “Gypsy” and “Traveller” to exclude those who no longer travel;
- Strengthening Green Belt protection by amending the current policy (paras 87 and 88 of the NPPF) so that unmet need and personal circumstances were unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. Ministerial statements earlier in the year had already emphasised that “unmet need, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the “very special circumstances” justifying inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Strengthening the current onus on authorities to “strictly limit new traveller development in open countryside” (para 23 of PPTS) to “very strictly” limit such developments;
- Downgrading the weight attributed to a lack of an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable traveller sites – para 25 of PPTS states that this should be a “significant material consideration” when considering applications for temporary permission. The consultation proposes that this would remain a “material consideration”, but its weight would be a matter for the decision taker;
- Addressing unauthorised occupation of land – the Government is concerned about those who intentionally ignore planning rules and occupy land without planning permission. Such actions, particularly in sensitive areas including the Green Belt, (where those who would apply through the proper channels would be unlikely to gain permission), are highly contentious at the local level and can fuel tensions between the site occupants and the adjacent community. The consultation proposes that national planning policy and PPTS should be amended to make it clear that intentional unauthorised occupation, whether by travellers or members of the settled community, should be regarded by decision takers as a material consideration that weighs against the grant of permission;
- More specifically, and perhaps with Basildon in mind, the consultation proposes that “where a local authority is burdened by a large-scale unauthorised site which has significantly increased its need (for pitch provision), and the area is subject to strict and special planning constraints, then there is no assumption that the local authority is required to meet its traveller site needs in full.”

The consultation contained 13 questions with draft answers contained in the appendix to the report.

It was also noted that:

All the pitches/caravans are in the Green Belt and that our District was 92% Green Belt.

The Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) had identified a target of 112 additional pitches in this district in the period up to 2033, broken down into five year segments.

The extent of Green Belt in different Council areas varies very widely – e.g. East Herts is about 33% Green Belt while Uttlesford was significantly less – i.e. both these neighbouring districts have potentially significantly greater options for identifying

suitable locations. This proposal by the Government – a “one size fits all” approach seems too blunt and inflexible given the wide variation in Green Belt coverage of affected districts. It was particularly unfair to those districts which have a very high percentage of Green Belt, and where there is already a long-established and sizeable traveller community.

Members were aware that there was a significant concentration of traveller pitches in the parishes of Nazeing and Roydon – at present 91 (78%) of the 117 authorised permanent pitches. Intentional unauthorised occupation of land was similarly a more frequent occurrence in these parishes, to the extent that a Nazeing Councillor has sought, on a number of occasions, a meeting with the Planning Minister to try to explain the problems being experienced.

Officers could think of no immediate and practical solutions to the problems, other than to suggest a re-think at national level. The planning system as it currently operates is not making adequate provision for the needs of the travelling community. The problem is particularly acute in Green Belt areas, where there does seem to be a perception of favourable treatment for travellers, but the proposals in the consultation will only exacerbate the overall problem of meeting total needs, and make it very much harder to identify suitable sites in the Green Belt.

Councillor Surtees noting that no answer had been submitted for question 7 (“do you agree with the policy proposal that, subject to the best interests of the child, unmet need and personal circumstances are unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm so as to establish very special circumstances? If not why not?”) He thought that the needs of the child should be paramount and there was a need for it to be looked on a problem solving basis, and that the issue should not be passed between Councils almost as a political football. This was agreed by the committee as an appropriate response to this question.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted and agreed the draft answers to the CLG Consultation on Planning and Travellers including the agreed response to question 7.

40. SIX MONTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Mr Tautz, the Democratic Services Manager took the Committee through their current Work Programme reviewing the 6 months of work carried out so far, noting that we have had item 2 today, the presentation on Children Services and that item 5 should read January 2015 and not 2014 and also noted that the quarter 2 report on the key objectives will now go to the next meeting.

Councillor Girling noted that the JCC had recently received a presentation from the apprentices who had just completed their first year at the Council and suggested that it would be a good idea if they got to do their presentation to a wider audience and could they perhaps come to a future meeting of this Committee. The Chairman asked that a PICK form be submitted so that the Committee could consider this request formally.

Housing Scrutiny Panel

The Committee noted their current position on their work programme.

Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel

The Committee noted that this Panel had not met since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Their next meeting will be held on 27 November, when they would be looking at the Joint Consultative Committee and the Council procedure rules.

Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Lea noted that she had nothing further to add. It was noted that no officers from NEPP had yet been to one of this Panel's meeting and that Nick Alston the PCC would be going to a Local Council's Liaison Committee meeting.

Councillor Wixley noted that the Panel had not received any minutes from the SLM contract monitoring board for some time. He noted that there had been problems at the Loughton Leisure Centre which needed to be got to grips with. Mr Macnab noted that there was a constant push for improvement. He would also look at the availability of notes for the next meeting.

Councillor Chana noted that the Local Highways Panel was not a District but a County Panel. Councillor Church noted that this was in effect a liaison committee with the ECC. Councillor Surtees noted that concerns had been raised about public access to this Panel, could it be improved and made more open. Members on this Panel noted that they were always happy to feed through other councillor's comments to the Panel meetings.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse asked if the notes of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) should go to this Panel or should they go in the Council Bulletin for all members to see.

Planning Services Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Chambers noted that at the last meeting Councillor Angold-Stephens had a question on Building Control; a report on this should be going to their April meeting.

Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Church had noted that they had not met since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Councillor Stavrou asked that members attend the Finance Cabinet Committee meeting on 20 January 2015 and give their views.

Scrutiny Panel Review Task and Finish Panel

Mr Tautz informed the meeting that this was still ongoing but will be completed in time. The last meeting had the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Scrutiny Panels to give their views. He reminded members that there would be an O&S workshop on Saturday, 22 November and extended an invitation for all members to attend.

Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel

It was noted that this Panel was still short on Conservative Group nominations.

41. REVIEW OF CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted that Cabinet's Forward Plan for October 2014. They had no specific items that they wanted to consider.

42. SAFER CLEANER GREENER SCRUTINY PANEL - REPLACEMENT MEMBER

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A Mitchell replace Councillor Y Knight on the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny panel.

CHAIRMAN



**Outcome 1:
Children in Essex
get the best start
in life**

Chris Martin
Integrated Commissioning
Director (West)

Why is this important?

Supporting children and their families from conception through birth and the early years of their life will give all children the best possible opportunity to succeed.



Ultimately... We want children to thrive, have fun at school and be able to make a positive contribution throughout their lives.

We are...

**Setting our
sights high**

**Being
ambitious**

We want to transform the way support for families with young children happens - creating positive changes that are **widespread**, **high impact** and **long lasting**

We know this will be challenging - only possible if all those working across the early years system have a **single vision of what needs to change** and how it could happen

We need different parts of the system to work together - **aligning** their **resources** and **activity**

**This will
require big
shifts in...**

**Culture and
practice**

**Mindsets and
beliefs**

Starting with family capability and how to build it - thinking carefully about the contribution **families** and **communities** might be making, e.g through peer support, mentoring

Embedding the principle and practice of early intervention - **anticipating** what families need and supporting them **before they really struggle**

Thinking about the kinds of support families need, not just how it is delivered - not all families want to access or need formal 'services'; what else can we facilitate? Should there be a greater focus on the **support and skills parents need**?

We will be working differently with families

We know that parents are children's first and most enduring educators.

Everything we do should be about **building the capacity and capability** of parents to **support themselves** and to **support one another**

But professionals currently largely work on a deficit model - they see the presenting problems and step in when things go wrong, rather than **starting from people's strengths** and finding ways to **build on them** as a route to **preventing problems** occurring

We are thinking differently about the workforce

We know we need to create a system where professionals can **do what needs to be done**, rather than what is on their job description

In particular we want to;

bring about **more consistency, integration** and a **clear focus on shared outcomes** that are framed by a **clear vision**

take hold of and make better use of the **diverse experience** in our current workforce

create **rich personal and professional development**

Get it right and we will..

Achieve better outcomes for children whilst also saving money. As professionals become better informed they will feel more confident to step in early and prevent problems from developing.

CHARLIE, BASILDON



As we begin to align our work more closely with what families really need, we will enable and facilitate highly effective peer-support approaches.

The case for change in Essex

Financial imperative:

- We have less money to spend than before
- We spend money on some things that are not effective
- We spend too much on firefighting, to detriment of prevention/early intervention

Outcomes imperative:

- Results are not as good as they need to be
- Public expectations continue to rise
- Some problems are 'wicked' and need solving systemically

Opportunities imperative:

- Citizens and communities have insights, capabilities and energies as yet untapped
- New collaborative potential to unlock around integration of health and social care
- Proper outcomes based commissioning opens the door to radically different solutions

The case for change in Early Years

Evidence from research:

what happens in the first two years of a child's life has a significant bearing on their future

Our current performance:

outcomes for young children in Essex have improved and most children are well-prepared for school, but we need to do more and different to continue improving as resources diminish

MATT & GEMMA, HARLOW



Families tell us that:

despite everyone's best efforts, they don't always get the right help at the right time

Policy and strategic context

Raising aspirations and attainment in

Early Years: supporting the delivery of the strategic aspirations included within the Essex Children, Young People and Families Partnership Plan (CYPFPP) 2013-2016 and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex 2013-2018

Joined up strategies: sets the foundations for our work with partners to describe and address Child Poverty through the Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017

Strategic Review of Early Years: grasping the opportunity that exists to re-define the Early Years Workforce [across Essex]

Family Centred policy: seeking to deliver an approach to working with families that is 'strengths based' and builds upon existing skills and resilience

Investment in building community

resilience: has the potential to develop and extend far beyond Early Years and Childcare to enable the type of community mobilisation described in the 'Who Will Care' report (2013)

Addressing child poverty: an issue that cuts across commissioning for People and Place and will enable ECC to explore opportunities to counter the destabilising impact that temporary accommodation [and worklessness] have on families

Key facts and figures

School Readiness: In 2012/2013 Essex exceeded the national average across all three Prime Areas of Learning and Development

Finance: Spend on Early Years services in 2014/15 is £72

Good Level of Development (GLD): 53% in Essex compared to 52% for England and 41% in the National Pilot (2012)

Foundation Stage Profile (FSP): Move from the bottom quartile in 2011/2012 to the top quartile in 2012/2013

Performance of boys: the gap between boys and girls is 17% overall and 18% when measured against writing

Government targets: Central government will increase the target for Free Early Education Entitlement for two year olds from 20% to 40% under Phase 2

Worklessness: Increased in Essex in 2012, but declined in other East of England authorities. The proportion (and number) of workless households with dependent children decreased between 2008 and 2011

Temporary accommodation - in 2013 the number of households living in temporary accommodation in Essex was 1,017. This has reduced since 2008, but is still an issue. Estimates are that temporary housing costs the taxpayer over £500 million each year

What action are we taking?

An ambitious, strategic, broad-reaching review of early years.

A collaboration between the local authority and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

The review will identify opportunities for:

- **innovation across the system, especially co-production with families**
- **removal of duplication of resources and roles**
- **determining what a common understanding and model of child development should be**
- **skilling up the workforce to deliver new approaches**

Through the early years review we will...



- **Enhance the quality of engagement with families**
- **Use meaningful understandings of everyday family life in Essex to help design the future offer**
- **Commit to co-production with both families and staff**
- **Adopt a 'bottom across' approach, seeking the contribution and engagement of front line workers in response to the stories of Essex families**
- **Ensure that there is a significant up scaling of peer and network support in order to fully realise the potential of parents and carers to support each other as volunteers.**

Early years review

In scope but not end product

Children's Centres

Family Info Service

Health Visitor
Transfer

FNP & MESCH
(links to school
nursing/midwife)

Foundation Stage
School Readiness

FiF 3rd Sector

Sufficiency and
Sustainability
(Early Years
Childminding)

Money

Engagement

Workforce

Research &
horizon
scanning

What sort of support do parents feel they want/need in early years?

How do parents most want to access this support?

How does that citizen vision fit (or not) with formal 'services' as currently conceived/experienced?

What capacity/energy/aspiration do parents and communities have that we need to be more conscious of? How could it be encouraged/harnessed?

What do parents feel about being supported to be more independent, and supported to support each other? Is this possible? What would it need to look/feel like?

**We are also are testing an
approach to innovation...**

Principles that will define our success and the way we work

Focus

We stay relentlessly focused on citizens' outcomes and experiences as the only measures of success

Believe

We strongly believe that most citizens want and are able to own their own outcomes and be masters of their own destinies, and that we should promote and support independence wherever possible and appropriate

Commit

We are deeply committed to listening to citizens and communities, and to involving them directly in understanding problems, designing and testing solutions, co-producing outcomes

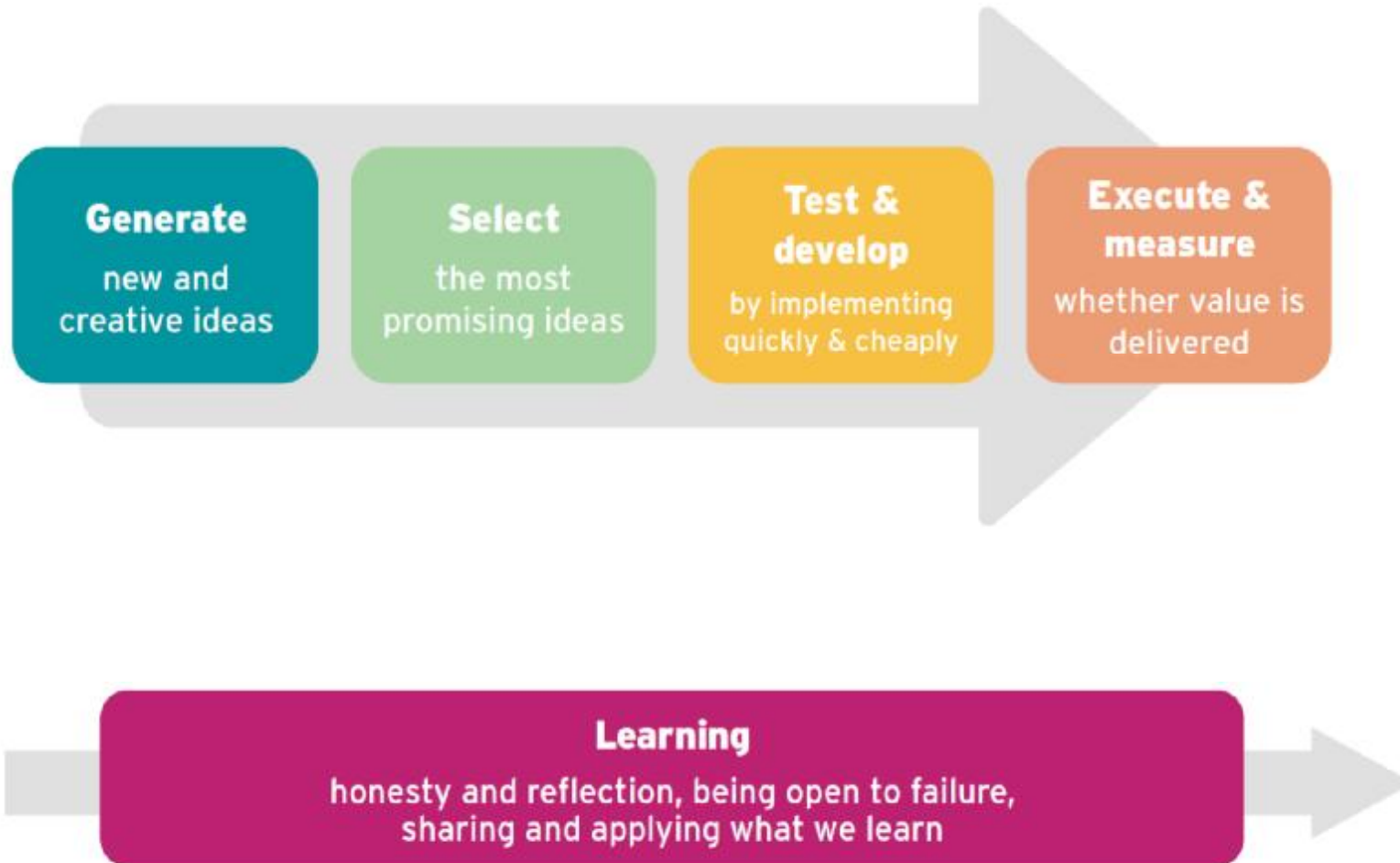
Innovate

We intentionally seek out opportunities to innovate as a core part of what we do

Collaborate

We respect and care about each other's work, and take every opportunity to solve problems together - even when this feels like it adds complexity

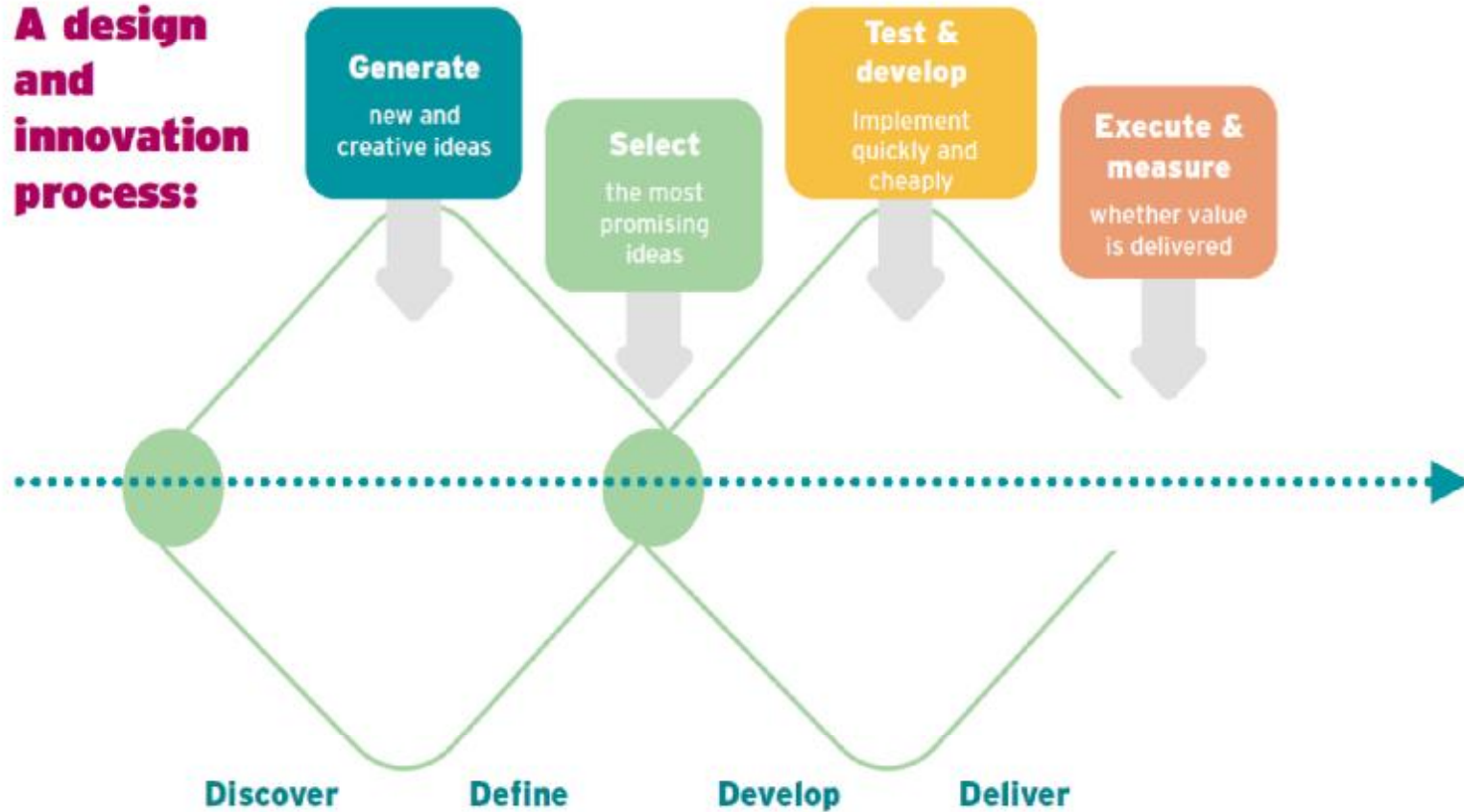
What does it mean to 'innovate'?



Learning

honesty and reflection, being open to failure, sharing and applying what we learn

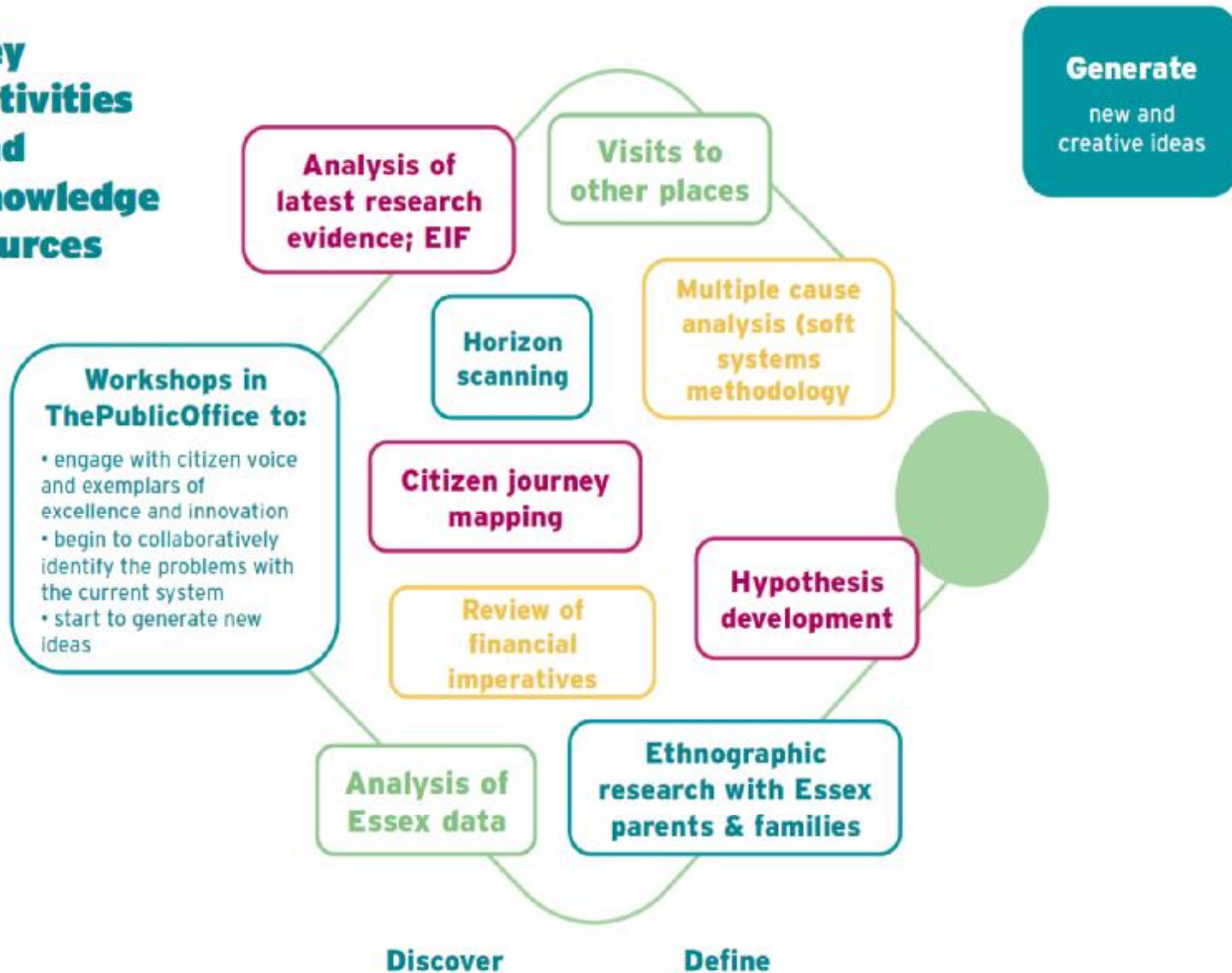
A design and innovation process:

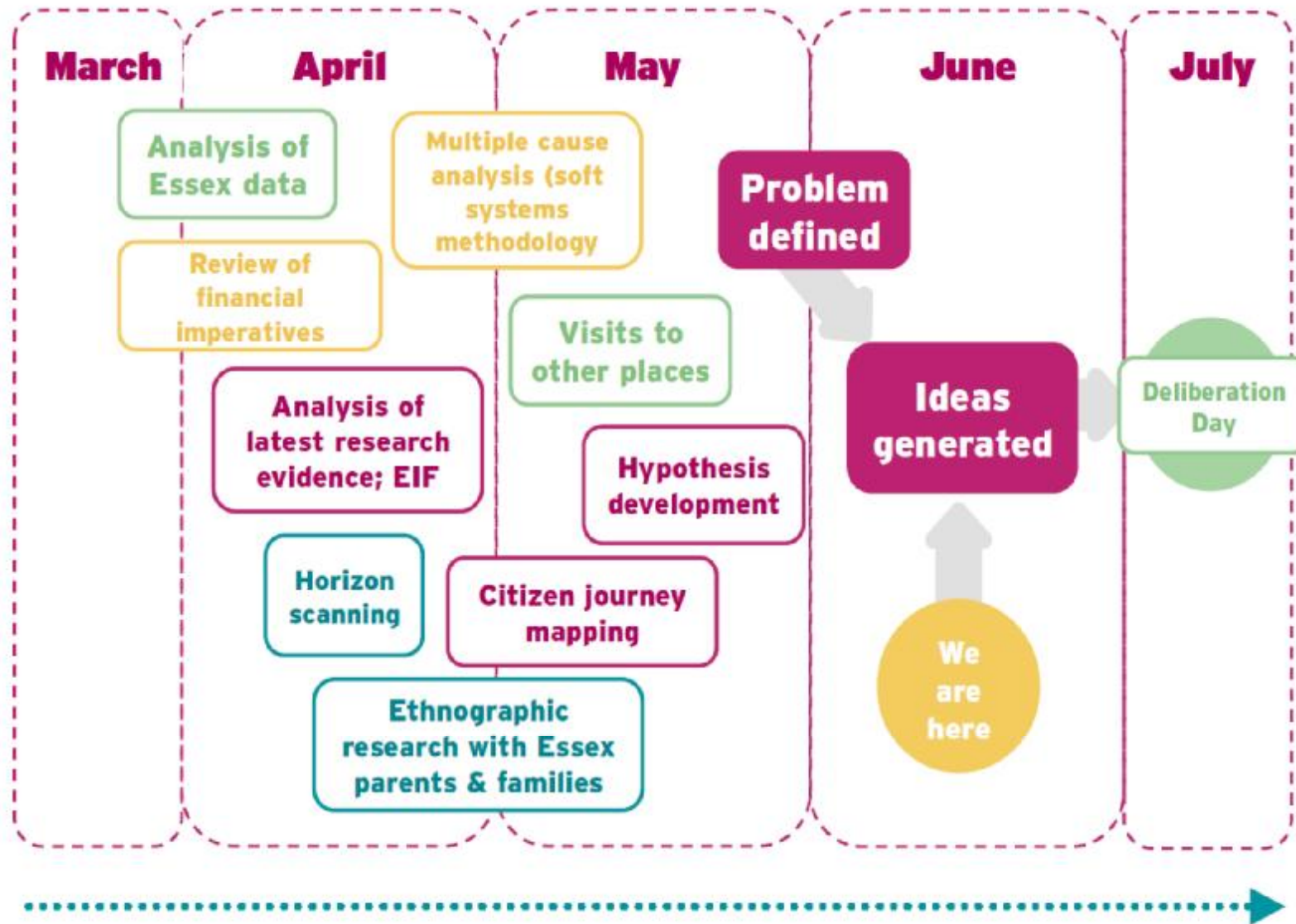


Capacity building

build organisational capacity to think, do and lead differently

Key activities and knowledge sources





AMY & GREG, CLACTON

Focus on...
**Ethnographic research in
early years**



Why ethnographic research?

- Deeply immersive and exploratory
- Meets people on their own turf
- Reveals behaviours and patterns that other methods won't pick up

Our ethnographic commission

We commissioned ethnographic researchers to:

Explore the lives and experiences of young families

Understand experiences of existing support, needs and preferences (including use of public, private and third sector provision)

Understand the hopes and aspirations of families, and perceived enablers and blockers to achieving goals

What did we learn?

Some disruptive insights

MATT & GEMMA, HARLOW



**Parents
are
isolated,
lonely and
struggling
to make
friends**

WINDMILL CHILDREN'S CENTRE



**Sessions
for
parents
are well-
attended
...
but not
by
parents**



There are few places where young parents feel comfortable

**“The boys don’t have many friends.
They don’t get invited to parties like
other children.”**

Amy & Greg

**"The person I have felt closest to is
the health visitor.**

**As the boys grew up I missed that
contact... I don't have that many
people I can talk to."**

Suze

We are asking ourselves...

How could we help to facilitate:

Better friendship and support networks?

Activities that build the confidence and skills that parents need to nurture and stimulate their children?

Local environments that are welcoming for mums and dads?

More parent entrepreneurialism?

What will success look like?

Parents will feel...

They know where and when to get help if they need it

They trust the professionals they connect with

Their own skills and abilities are valued and being supported

Interventions and services are high quality

They have easy access to trusted and valuable support from other parents if they need it

Professionals will know...

Where our children and families are, what they need and how we can best support them

They are able to build trusted relationships with families

They are supported to do their job and to work well with others in the best interests of children and families

Children have good levels of development in key areas and are ready for school

Children develop and achieve well by the time they are five

**Success
from a
parent
perspective
Early years**

I have people to talk to openly about my child who listen and understand

It's important to me that my child does well at school and enjoys the opportunities it brings

I can go on parenting training with my friends and it helps my confidence

We took up the free daycare offer and my child loves nursery

My Health Visitor, staff at the nursery, the Children's Centre & school all say the same things

There are people who will support me and I know where to go when things get tough

Other parents support me with advice and I like it when I can support new mums or dads

I know where to access help and advice on how best to support my child's development

We play together at home and read stories. I feel close to my baby

I have a really kind and supportive group of friends

My school and nursery work together to make sure they know my child

Professionals are interested in what I think about services and my experiences



We need to focus on building the resilience of families and reducing their isolation

No-one wants or needs *more* services - families aren't getting the best value from the ones that already exist

Top insights
(things we learned that we ignore at our peril)

It's all about relationships - professionals and families need to build their relational capability

There is poor collaboration and connection between public services - this doesn't make sense for families and limits the impact of what professionals do

Our new early years system

Our new system must... Work with and for families across Essex

We will...



Look first at families' strengths
especially those of parents (both Mums and Dads) and take time to understand their needs fully



Focus on preventing problems
before they occur and offer flexible, responsive support when and where it's required



Build the resilience of parents
and communities to support each other



Work together across the whole system
– aligning our resources so we can best support families and 'do what needs to be done when it needs to be done' (not necessarily what is on our job description)



Base all we do on evidence
of both what is needed and of what works, and be brave enough to stop things that aren't working



Be clear and consistent about the outcomes
we expect, and judge what we do against them

We will know our system is successful if it delivers these outcomes:



Children...

- Are physically and emotionally healthy
- Are resilient and able to learn well
- Are supported by their families, their community, and – when necessary – professionals to thrive and be successful
- Live in environments that are safe and support their learning and development



Parents...

- Are supporting one another in their communities
- Know where to get help if they need it
- Have trusted relationships with practitioners, neighbours and other parents
- Are well informed about how best to help their child develop, and motivated to make great choices



Communities...

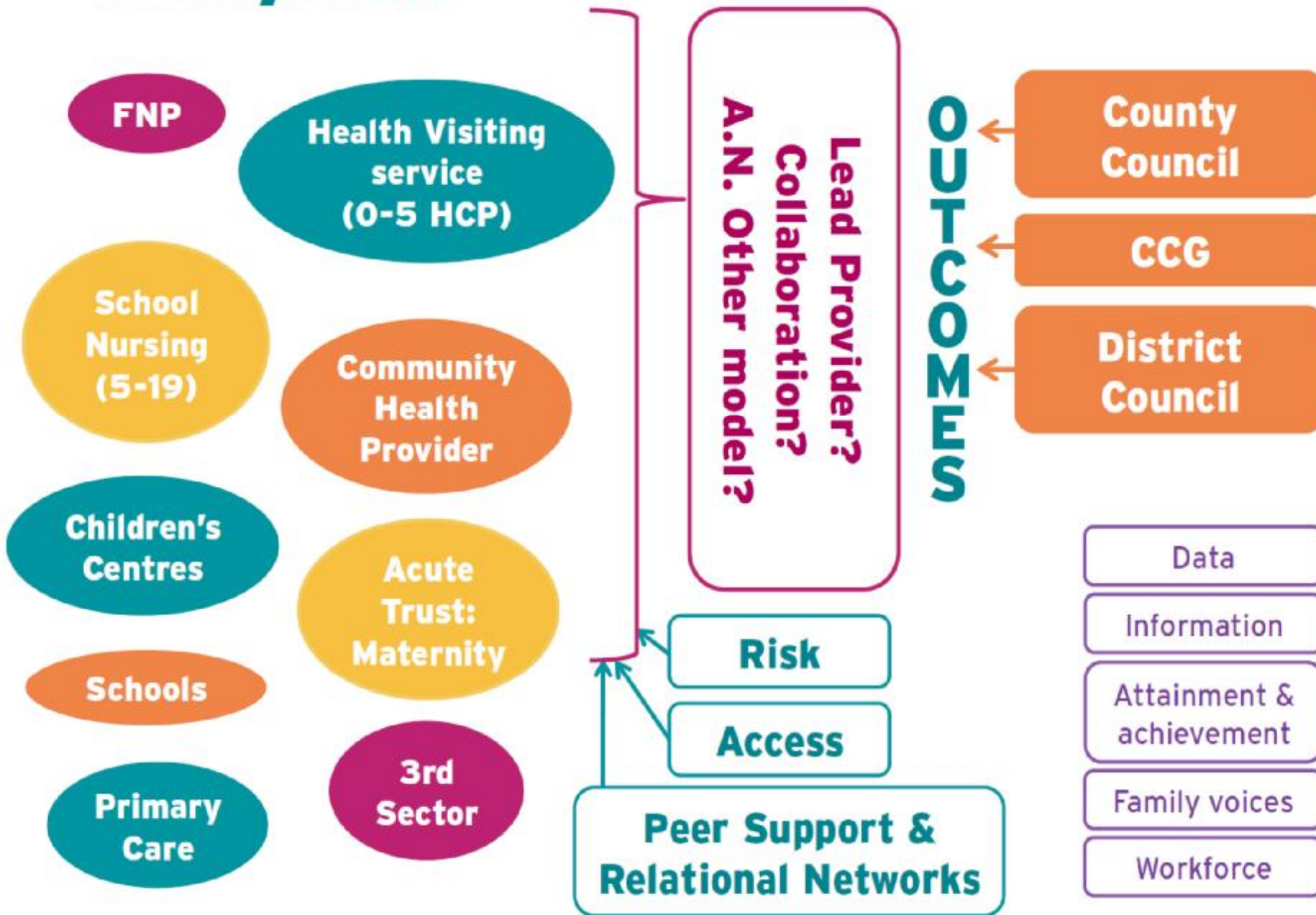
- See it as their collective responsibility to support parents and young children
- Are providing sustainable support through individuals, community groups, businesses and voluntary organisations
- Are seen, understood and valued by practitioners as being 'part of the solution'



Practitioners...

- Focus first on families and their strengths
- Work closely with families to understand what they need, and build trusting relationships
- Have a shared vision and understanding of outcomes and success
- Are skilled, knowledgeable and are co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work

The system?



The four big ideas

Transforming Children's Centres

- becoming less about buildings and more about people
- responding to evidenced need and targeted
- owned and driven by families and communities, with support from professionals

Transforming the workforce

- building a strengths based approach
- building relational capability
- establishing a common core of understanding
- working towards a shared vision

Alternative approaches to commissioning for outcomes

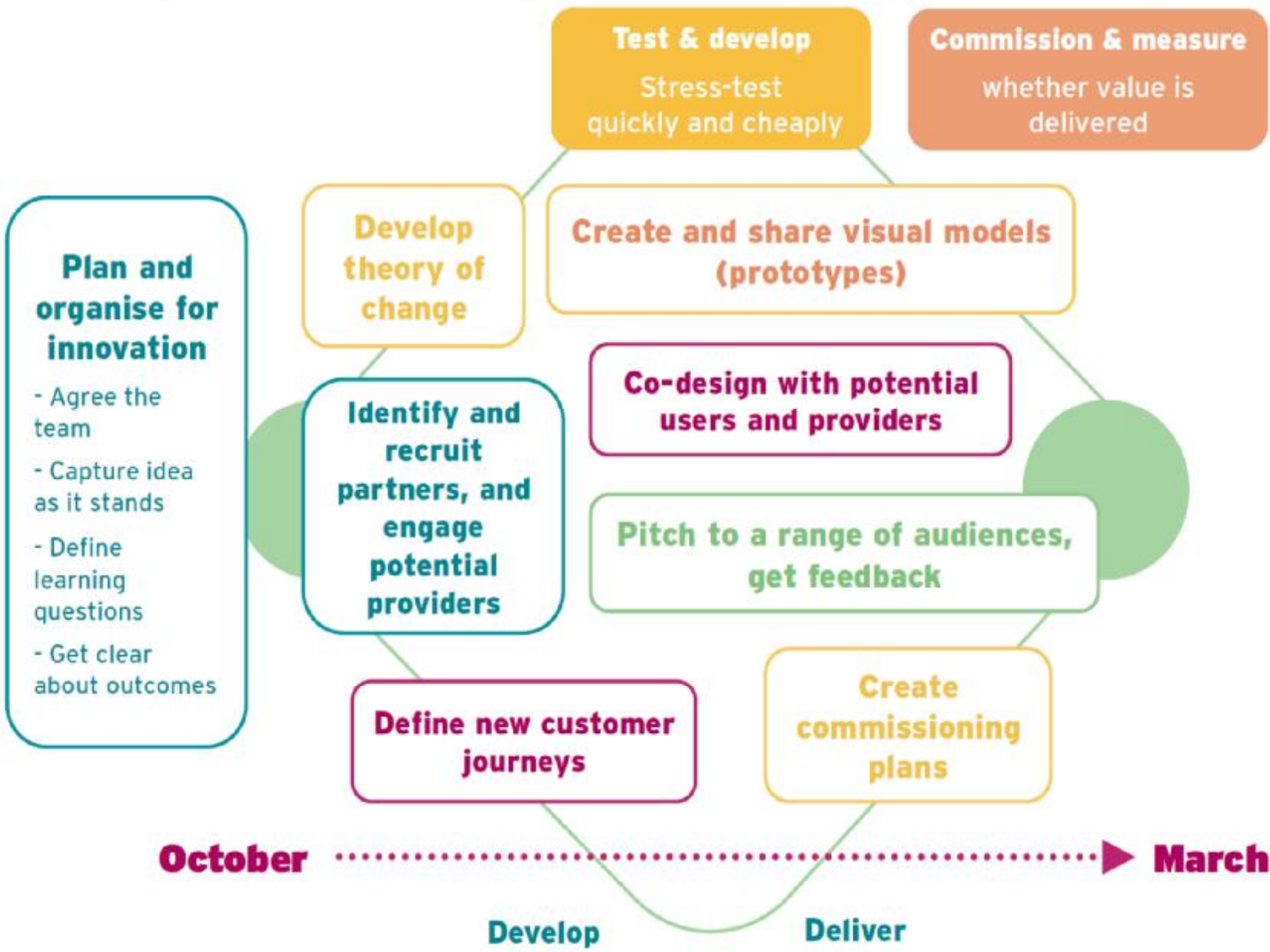
- based on a deep understanding of families' needs, current performance and evidence of what works
- building community capacity
- working with new providers (including communities)

Peer support and unleashing community capacity

- working to parents' strengths and building their knowledge and resilience
- working to
- co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work

Learn, assess, refine, adapt

honesty and reflection, being open to failure, sharing and applying what we learn



What will we do and how will we work?

We mustn't be tempted to take the ideas into a dark room and work out plans to deliver them - to get sucked into the current way of thinking, working and doing.

We need to maintain a learning mindset and approach. Diamond 2 is about developing, adapting and refining the ideas in preparation for commissioning. We will measure our success in this phase by what we learn, not by what we 'do'.

Learning happens by;

- setting out the idea clearly
- testing assumptions about the idea (how and why it will achieve the outcomes we are expecting)
- identifying what we don't yet know
- deliberately setting out to find the answers (taking the idea out to and co-designing with potential users, providers, partners, experts)
- applying new knowledge and insights

A core team of 'innovation sponsors' will:

- ensure quality and levels of ambition
- advocate and make connections
- provide coaching support to 'innovation leads' attached to each of the four 'big ideas'

ThePublicOffice team will provide support by:

- facilitating and enabling the leads in each area to get the right stuff done
- offering coaching, guidance, tools and guidance on the overall process

Things that need to happen next

- 1. Actively engage and secure commitment from all innovation leads and sponsors**
- 2. Clarify the current 'state of play' with each idea - what progress has been made since Deliberation Day?**
- 3. Create an up to date/stake in the ground articulation of each idea that focuses on key features and intended outcomes (as per 'our system must' poster) and becomes a tool for communication and engagement**
- 4. Bring all innovation leads and sponsors together ASAP for a 2-3 hour intensive learning and planning session**

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