

City of Southend-on-Sea

Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan

June 2025 to May 2027

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Foreword

I am delighted to present this new Health and Well-being Strategic Plan for City of Southend. We have experienced an enthused collaboration between local partners, including the voluntary and community sector, following the exacerbation of existing inequalities in our vibrant city through the COVID-19 period. We have continued on our transformative journey with programmes in our hard-working system (despite all the financial constraints and pressures), to progress and reaffirm a focus on reducing health inequalities as well as improving community safety.

Through this refreshed Strategic Plan, we're reasserting our joined-up efforts to create the best conditions for physical and mental health and wellbeing. This includes addressing the wider determinants of health such as housing, the economy, and the environment. We remain focused on preventive health and wellbeing, reducing economic inactivity and working more effectively hand-in-hand with local communities.

We have arrived at a set of refreshed priorities and outcomes that all partners across Southend recognise and support. We remain committed to making a real change for the next generation, as we embark on some significant change with reorganisation of local government and the NHS.

We hope that this Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan for 2025-2027 will generate a genuine sense of ownership as part of our collaboration to achieve a healthier Southend, which will be crucial to our success in improving outcomes. Making the most of our strengthened system partnerships that have worked together so effectively during and post the pandemic, to support our communities that experience the poorest health.

Councillor Maxine Sadza

Chair of Southend Health and Wellbeing Board

1: Introduction

The Southend Health and Wellbeing board (HWB) has been a key mechanism for driving joined up working at place level since its establishment in 2013 and since 2022 alongside the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Partnership (MSE ICP).

The English Devolution White Paper (2024) confirmed the major local government reorganisation with the Government setting out plans to legislate to introduce strategic authorities and a statutory devolution framework which coincided with the announcement of the development of a new 10-year Health Plan for England, alongside a significant review of the NHS commissioning landscape by April 2026. Southend City within Greater Essex is included in the priority group of councils that are in line for local government reorganisation.

According to the document, strategic authorities would have a "*mandate to act strategically to drive growth as well as support the shaping of public services, where strategic level coordination adds value*" in the following areas of which all contribute to tackle the wider determinants of health:

- Transport and local infrastructure
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration
- Environment and climate change
- Health, wellbeing and public service reform
- Public safety

With these impending substantial shifts in the local landscape, the Southend HWB Board met in April 2025 and agreed to develop a 2-year Strategic Plan (June 2025-May 2027) to focus on key areas where we can collectively and positively impact on local health and wellbeing and to contribute further in reducing health inequalities.

2: Healthies Themes and Outcomes

In collaboration with MSE ICP, Essex County Council and Thurrock Council, we have developed a shared framework to focus our approach collectively, to improve life expectancy and enhance our endeavours to reduce health inequalities. We refer to this framework as the 'Healthies'.

The Healthies comprises of seven core themes, depicted below:



Whilst some topic areas will be best addressed at a wider geographic level, such as work to improve the uptake of adults health checks, others may require more local locality-based interventions, such as addressing air quality which impacts severely on respiratory illnesses.

Whilst this short-term strategic plan is aimed at yielding a positive impact on health and wellbeing outcomes, we are going to focus on a few key areas where we can collectively make a measurable difference in enacting this new Strategic Plan.

The proposed priorities are key areas of concern that have been highlighted primarily through our suite of JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) products and various strategies. These priorities are detailed in section 4 below, under the seven 'healthies' themes.

We aim to develop a set of targeted actions against these priorities to support the following outcomes:

- ✓ Providing the best start in life;
- ✓ Reducing premature mortality and preventable morbidity;
- ✓ Improving health literacy and reducing digital exclusion;
- ✓ Addressing key wider environmental and economic determinants (including housing and ill-health related unemployment).

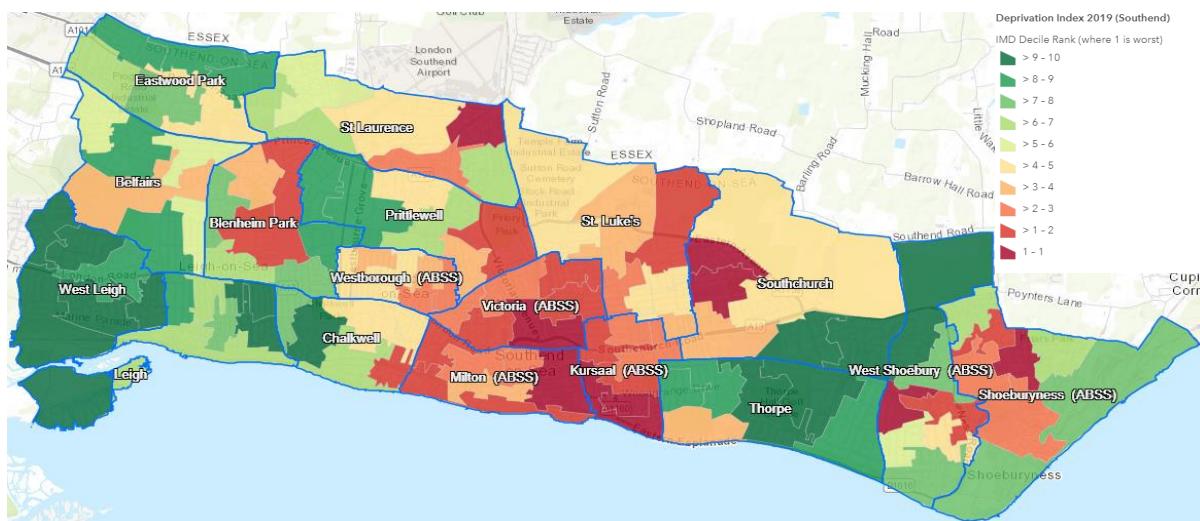
We will ensure that any emerging issues, not reflected in the finalised Strategic Plan, are addressed through the annualised Public Health report.

3: The Challenges & Inequalities

Health inequalities

There are marked social and inequalities between different wards in the borough, which will be exacerbated by the unexpected coronavirus pandemic. Life expectancy is 10.5 years lower for men and 9.4 years lower for women in the most disadvantaged areas of Southend-on-Sea than in the least disadvantaged areas. This is significantly worse than the England average.

Areas marked in dark red are amongst the most 10% disadvantaged areas in Southend.



Maintaining an effective and sustainable health and social care system

NHS organisations working together, with their local partners, as an Integrated Care Partnership, will plan and deliver services which meet the needs of their communities - person-centred, integrated and with a focus on prevention and addressing health inequalities.¹ There is a significant financial shortfall in local NHS funding and to a lesser extent with the social care funding.

¹ Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership (2020) 5 Year Plan for Improving Health and Care <https://www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mid-and-South-Essex-Health-and-Care-Partnership-5-Year-Strategy.pdf>

Meeting the needs of a growing population

The City's population in 2024 was around 187,000. This is projected to grow to 203,000, by 2030. This will place significant additional demand on services and infrastructure.

Meeting the needs of both an ageing population, and a high proportion of young people

As well as the increase in the borough's population, the age profile of Southend is changing, with a growing number of older people, and a significant proportion of population aged 0 -19 years. The proportion of the population who are of working age is projected to decrease by 3% by 2030 while the over 65 population is projected to increase by 4%.

Addressing digital inequalities

Digital inequalities are an increasing priority locally and nationally, as the NHS, wider health and care system and other public services are committed to deliver information and services digitally where appropriate. However, many people who could benefit from digital services lack basic digital skills or do not use digital technology.²

Tackling harmful behaviours

Southend's residents will be assisted in reaching their potential, free from addiction to harmful behaviours. Those affected by gambling, drug, or alcohol issues can see their relationships, professional lives, and mental health issues deteriorate, impacting their ability to live successful and fulfilling lives.

Meeting the needs of an increasing number of people living with long-term chronic health conditions and multiple long-term conditions

Personalised, proactive, and holistic planned care and services can help people with long term conditions manage their condition, improve their independence, health and wellbeing, and quality of life, as well as slowing progression of disease and preventing emergency admissions.

Meeting the needs of adults with a learning disability

Many adults with a learning disability are dying prematurely. Supporting them to access the annual health check and other preventative services such as screening and immunisation.

Meeting the needs of an increasing number of people living with dementia and supporting their families and carers

Dementia is a long term, progressive condition associated with complex needs and, especially in the later stages, high levels of dependency and morbidity. The recorded dementia prevalence amongst people aged 65+ registered in Southend is higher than England average. The number of people with dementia is expected to grow rapidly over the next several decades.

4: Themed Priorities for 2025-2027

A number of core priorities with targeted actions have been agreed under each of the seven 'Healthies' theme. The targeted list of actions is detailed in the attached Strategic Action Plan in **Appendix 1**.

4.1 Healthy Start

What happens in pregnancy and early childhood impacts on physical and emotional health all the way through to adulthood. Supporting good maternal health is important for safe

² NHS Digital (2019) Digital inclusion guide for health and social care
<https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/digital-inclusion>

delivery and good birth weight to give babies the best start. The prevention of adverse factors in children and young people's lives is vital in preventing poorer outcomes.

- A. Ensuring good maternal mental wellbeing and early help**
- B. Improving uptake of childhood immunisation**
- C. Improving school readiness, including oral health**
- D. Improving support with parenting needs**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.2 Healthy Weight

Excess weight is affected by environmental, societal and individual factors. The scale of the problem and its relationship to a number of diseases is well documented and it is a leading cause of ill-health in England. We need to continue tackling this challenge from reshaping the obesogenic environment and to better supporting people to have a healthier approach.

- A. Introduce policies to support healthier food environment**
- B. Improved dietary and recreational offers across different settings**
- C. Upscale Wellbeing service referral and promotion**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.3 Healthy Living

By supporting people to adopt improved healthier lifestyles and making the best choices, this will help them to live longer, healthier lives, prevent injuries/harm, reduce premature mortality and reduce the demand for and delays in treatment and care. Some areas where we need to further progress include:

- A. Reduction in harm from substance misuse and gambling**
- B. Improve the uptake of adult immunisation and screening programmes**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.4 Healthy Heart

Poor cardiovascular health can cause heart attacks, strokes, heart failure, chronic kidney disease, peripheral arterial disease and the onset of vascular dementia. It disproportionately affects people from the poorest communities and some ethnic groups.

- A. Targeted early identification, treatment and support to improve lifestyle**
- B. Improving health promotion and access to smoking cessation**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.5 Healthy Minds

By Healthy Minds we mean a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with life's stresses and challenges, to realise one's abilities and contributing to the community. Being resilient, enjoying life, connecting with others and maintain productivity. From maternal health, children and young people emotional wellbeing and to mental wellbeing in old age. Many younger men continue to suffer from poor mental wellbeing and more recently, we have received local insight into how this challenges may extend to older men.

- A. Ensuring good maternal mental wellbeing and community support**
- B. Ensuring adequate early interventions, assessment and support are in place for Children and Young**
- C. Improving access and support for men's mental health and wellbeing**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.6 Healthy Housing

Healthy housing is shelter that supports a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. In older age, environmental factors such as safe streets and appropriate housing can impact positively on mobility which, in turn, supports functional ability.

- A. Improving access to good quality housing and meeting the decent home standard**
- B. Collaboration to reduce homelessness, rough sleeping and providing secure tenure**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

4.7 Healthy Work

Being in work has shown to improve the wellbeing of individuals, their families, and their communities from both an economic and a quality of life standpoint. We have more awareness around the potential detrimental effects of long-term worklessness, on both physical and mental health and how we can redress these by helping people into work/or back to work. Key drivers of increases in long term sickness are mental health (younger people) and musculoskeletal disorders. The workplace is also evolving fast leaving some people 'less skilled' and unprepared for the challenge.

- A. Explore new opportunities for greater integration to reduce ill health-related economic inactivity**
- B. Reformulate the Workplace Health offer to improve the health and wellbeing of employees, with a focus on organisational culture**
- C. Actively upskills people so they can future-proof themselves against workforce disruptions**

List of Actions: Please see attached plan in Appendix 1.

Appendix

The following appendix is attached, as part of this strategy.

- Appendix 1 – Health and Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan