

# Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

Issue No.: Two

Date: May 2008

## Your chance to attend your Locality Working Group to develop the Essex and Southend LINK!

You can influence issues such as the Structure and Governance arrangements, Policies and Protocols, Communication and Publicity, Mapping of existing Forums and Groups and other issues that will shape your Local Involvement Network (LINK) for Essex and Southend. Come along to the next round of meetings of the Locality Working Groups and have your say and meet the newly appointed Host organisation who will support the work of the LINK. All are welcome. These meetings are taking place as follows:

Mid Essex Locality	Room CG20 County Hall, Chelmsford	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
South West Locality	Basildon Centre, Civic Centre, Basildon	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
South East Locality	Southend Civic Centre, Southend	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
West Essex Locality	Latton Bush, Harlow	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2008

All these meetings will take place at 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm

North Essex Locality	Quaker Meeting House, Colchester	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
----------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

This meeting will take place at 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Don't forget, everyone is welcome to attend who has an interest in Health, Social Care and Well-being.

## Thurrock Borough Council

Thurrock Borough Council worked in partnership with Essex and Southend Councils in the procurement of a Host organisation for LINKs and within the public consultation and workshops that took place last year. However, when Thurrock's Health and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee looked at the issue of procurement for a Host organisation in January 2008,

they opted to recommend procurement of a Host dedicated to the Thurrock LINK only. This decision was later ratified by Thurrock Cabinet in February.

## Great News!

Essex and Southend Councils are pleased to be able to confirm that the Host organisation for LINKs is the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO). This organisation demonstrated that through their wide range of experience of working both at grass roots community level and also influenced policy at National level.

CEMVO will start their contract with immediate effect by putting in place a Project Manager whilst they recruit the necessary staff locally and identify local offices. CEMVO told us 'local people have local knowledge, so this is where we will recruit our staff from for this project.' CEMVO will be seeking the support of LINKs members to guide them within the process of recruiting and leasing offices.

## Tender Process

Two organisations responded to the opportunity to tender for the contract to become the Host organisation, although four organisations requested and received the tender documents.

The evaluation panel who assessed the tender documents, presentations and interviews, included officers from Essex County Council, Southend Borough Council, representatives from the Older Peoples Planning Group, Patient and Public

Involvement Forums and Mental Health. The evaluation panel recommended that the contract to be awarded to the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO), who scored significantly higher on quality aspects and will enable greater funding to be released for the LINKs.

This procurement was conducted in accordance with EU Procurement directives & UK Public contracts Regulations.



## Why the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act is important

This act makes provision to enhance and clarify section 242 of the National Health Act 2006 and places a duty on the Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts to report on their consultations. This new duty comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

Commissioning in the NHS and social care are increasingly locally driven, which means robust commissioning processes that are informed and influenced by the views and opinions of local people.

Commissioners act on behalf of the public, patients and service users. They are responsible for investing funds on behalf on their communities, and building local trust and legitimacy through the process of engagement with their local population. Both PCT's and Social Care Services will proactively seek and build continuous and meaningful engagement with public, patients and service users, to shape services and improve health and social care.

## LINK Duties and Powers

The main aim of the LINK is to enable local people (individuals, organisations and groups) to influence the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social care so as to obtain better outcomes.

The NHS and local government are increasingly working together to decide what health and social care services should be provided and how they should be run. Local people need to shape these services whether provided in hospital, the community or in peoples' homes. LINKs have the potential to:

- Provide a single approach to monitoring health and social care
- Provide a stronger, more independent voice
- Be more representative
- Make community involvement more convenient via internet, focus groups, events and other mechanisms
- Make recommendations to shape services to produce better outcomes for local people

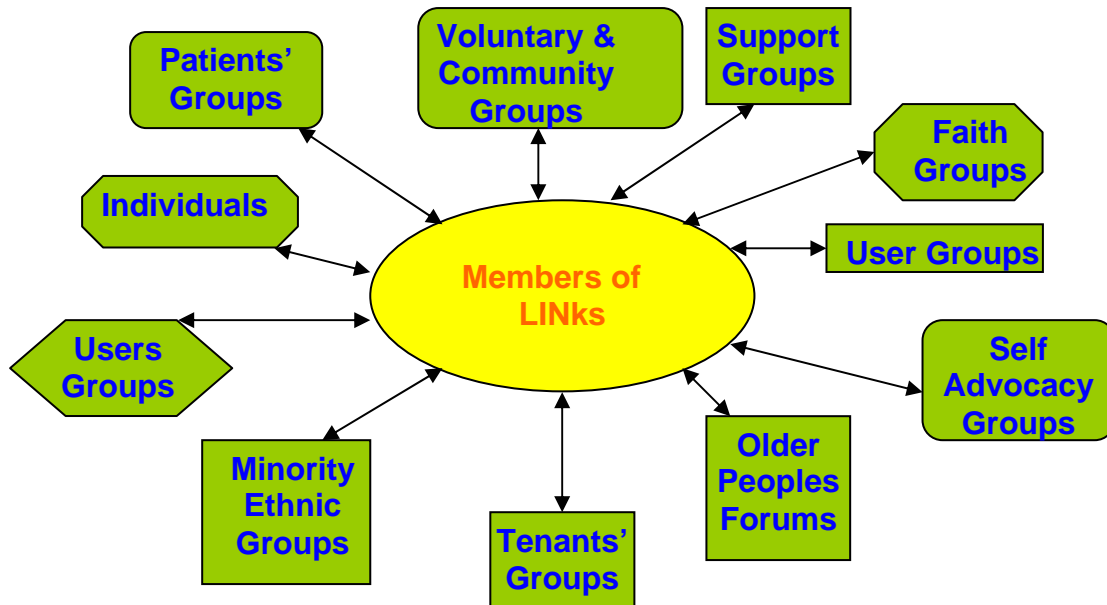
## What is the duty of a LINK?

- Encourage and support more people to get involved in shaping local care services; from helping to decide what services should be commissioned, to influencing the way they are run
- Actively canvas every section of the community for their views and experiences of local care services
- Provide the community with a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing local care services and the ability to hold them to account
- Tell those who commission, run and scrutinise local care services, what local people have recommended to help improve services



## Who makes up a LINK?

- People from existing local community and voluntary organisations, carer groups and those who already campaign on behalf of the people who use care services
- People from different sections of the community including 'hard to reach' groups
- Interested individuals who want to get involved in different ways, from those who have the time to help lead a LINK, to those who just want to regularly contribute to views.



What are the Powers of a LINK?

- Enter and view specific types of premises where services and care are provided
- Ask for information and expect a response within a specific timescale
- Make recommendations and expect a response within a specific timescale
- Refer matters to the local Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



## Exclusions from being a Host of a LINK

The contractual arrangements must be made with a person (called 'H' in the Act) commonly referred to as a 'Host'. Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, NHS foundation Trusts, PCTs or Strategic Health Authorities cannot be Hosts (this is to create independence between councils, the NHS and LINKs). The Host, Local Authorities,

NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts, PCTs and SHAs cannot be Local Involvement Networks. These statutory organisations cannot carry out the LINK activities themselves; the Host must reach out to local communities to engage local people and groups in carrying out the activities of LINKs.

## Local Councillors and LINKs

The Government has not regulated against the possibility of councillors or local government officers being members of LINKs because each LINK needs to determine its own structure, membership and governance.

However, one of the reasons for having a Host organisation is to ensure the

independence of LINKs. There are many reasons for this, not least because in many cases a LINK will be scrutinising services commissioned by the Local Authority. The Host approach also separates LINKs' activities from local and central political interests.

## Stakeholder Event on 1<sup>st</sup> March

This one day conference was organised by Essex County Council and was supported on the day by Southend Borough Council. The programme included three key note speakers and was chaired by Duncan Wood, Senior Strategy and Public Engagement Manager, Essex County Council. The second half of the day was set aside for facilitated breakout discussion workshops.



Graham Heaney, Expert Advisor with the Centre for Public Scrutiny, based his presentation on, 'Introduction to Local Involvement Networks'. Graham mentioned the Our Health, Our Care, Our Say – Health and Social Care White Paper 2006 in which people should have a, 'greater choice and a louder voice' about the services they get. Graham went on to discuss how a LINK will enable local people to influence local care services by representing the views and ideas of a wide range of people. Graham explained that the LINK will be a network of people, groups and organisations.

David Levy, Head of Procurement, Southend Borough Council was the next speaker. David discussed the process of the procurement for a Host organisation, including the role of the evaluation panel, time constraints and EU Regulations. David said that the expected timescale was for the decision on who would be offered the contract which should be made by the end of March, with the contract starting early April 2008.

Joyce Sweeney, Public Engagement Manager, Essex County Council, presentation was on 'Proposed Structure for Essex and Southend LINK' which was developed from an idea of Reg McKenna and Friends. Joyce discussed the challenges of setting up a Central LINK as well as five Local Hubs, the issues that need to be considered and also who can participate. Joyce went on to talk on the influence that LINKs will have in terms of the Local Strategic Partnerships and the Local Area Agreements.



The Breakout Workshops discussed the following issues:

- The best structure for LINKs
- Membership of core/steering group
- What the Host organisation will do for LINKs
- Collection of views from the whole community
- Involvement in LINKs
- Support LINKs need to be effective
- How health and social care issues are looked at by LINKs

For more information please see the full 'Establishing a Local Involvement Network (LINKs)' Stakeholder Event Report.

Copies can be obtained from Natalie Struka, Essex County Council at telephone: 01245 437758, email: [Natalie.struka@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Natalie.struka@essex.gov.uk)

## Ministerial Regulations

These Regulations set out certain requirements to be included in the governance arrangements of LINK, impose a duty on service providers, including some NHS bodies and local authorities, to respond to reports and recommendations from a LINK and sets out certain requirements about the transitional to be made by local authorities.

The Regulations imposes a duty on local authorities to include certain governance provisions which include:

- Have a procedure about how decisions are made
- Including activities undertaken, actions that the LINK chooses to take

- about making reports, recommendations, referring matters to other bodies, entering and viewing premises and the spending of money
  - The procedures must be published as soon as practicable
  - All decisions and the reasons for them must be made in public
  - Service providers and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSC) must respond to reports and recommendations within 20 working days
  - Entering and viewing of premises only by authorised representatives
- that have been fully trained and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checked
  - Service providers must allow individuals to enter and view, and observe the carrying out of activities 'reasonably and proportionately'
  - Excluded from these arrangements (as well as children's social care) are non communal areas of care homes, premises used as a person's own home under tenancy or licence

## Five Working Groups and One Task Group

Following the Stakeholder Event on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, five Working Groups that will function coterminous to the localities in South East, South West, West, Mid and North Essex have been set up to start considering the LINK initial tasks. However, in order for Essex and Southend Councils to comply with the legislation and the Ministerial Regulation, they are bound to establish one LINK for Essex and Southend. Therefore an Essex and Southend Task Group have also been established with similar tasks to the locality Links. These tasks are:

- Governance and accountability – agreeing roles and responsibilities within the LINK and across Hubs – governance common across all Hubs
- Getting a broad membership – balanced between health and social care interests
- Developing procedures for how the LINK will operate – decision making, powers of entry, code of conduct, expenses, etc.
- Clear aims – a shared vision for health and social care
- Agreeing first priorities – issued to be addressed; build up a work plan
- Be clear about what is already happening locally
- Develop an engagement plan: awareness raising, community engagement, relations with voluntary organisations, commissioners, providers, HOSC



All the Working Groups met between Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March to Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 and the Task Group met on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

All Groups were given a Framework Document for comment, a summary of the Joint Needs Assessment, Report from the Stakeholder Event and followed the same agenda.

Everyone is welcome to attend the next round of Locality Working Group Meetings. The dates and venues of these are:

Mid Essex Locality	Room CG20 County Hall, Chelmsford	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
South West Locality	Basildon Centre, Civic Centre, Basildon	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
South East Locality	Southend Civic Centre, Southend	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
West Essex Locality	Latton Bush, Harlow	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2008

All these meetings will take place at 6.30 to 8.30 pm

North Essex Locality	Quaker Meeting House, Colchester	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
----------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

This meeting will take place 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

#### Task Group

The Task Group membership was by invitation only to ensure that the balance between Social Care and Health is achieved as is required under the legislation, guidance and ministerial regulations. There is at least one representative from each of the five working Groups, and also representatives from a range of social care forums, voluntary organisations as well ex PPI Forum chairs. Three sub groups have been set up to consider, Structure and Governance,

Policies, and, Publicity and Public Engagement. Following a further meeting of the Task Group which will reflect upon the work of all three sub groups, the Working Groups will meet again to take this work forward.

The plan is to have an inaugural meeting in the form of a conference on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008 to be held at Anglia Ruskin University Business School. Put this date into your diary so you can have your say. There will be more news on this event to follow.

This conference will have the legitimate powers to approve the governance arrangements, policies and publicity, as a subsequence of all the work that is being undertaken by the Locality Working Groups and the Essex and Southend Task Group. Following this conference the Essex and Southend Task Group will become the LINK for Essex and Southend. All Locality Working Groups will have their locality inaugural meetings the following week and will become the Locality Hub.

## CEMVO

CEMVO's key value is in 'bringing minorities from the margins to the mainstream.'

CEMVO recognise that there is a need for community organisation to influence policy makers at all levels and to ensure that their voice is heard. Large organisations can achieve this through campaigns and lobbying – this is more difficult for small groups. CEMVO provides a voice for these communities nationwide in the following ways:

- By gathering views and responding to consultations
- By running conferences, workshops and networks
- Through membership of strategic groups and boards

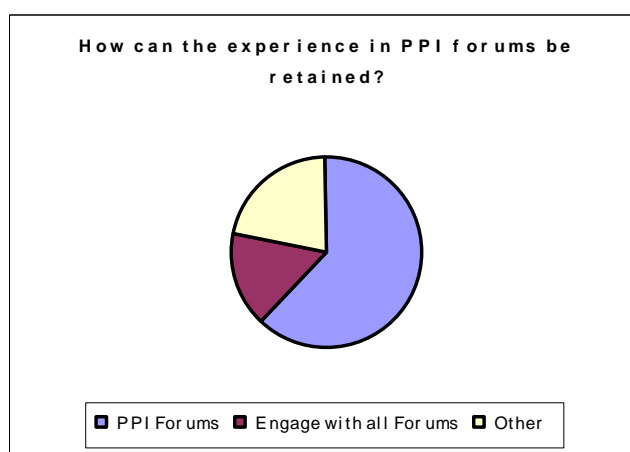
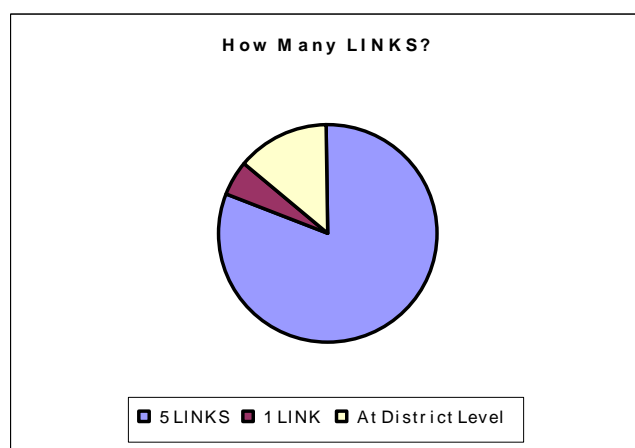
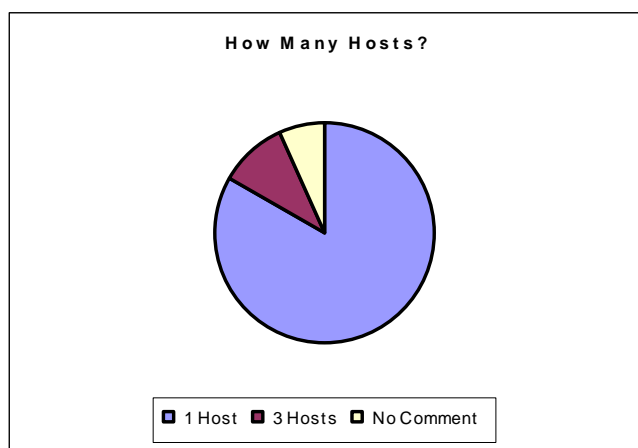


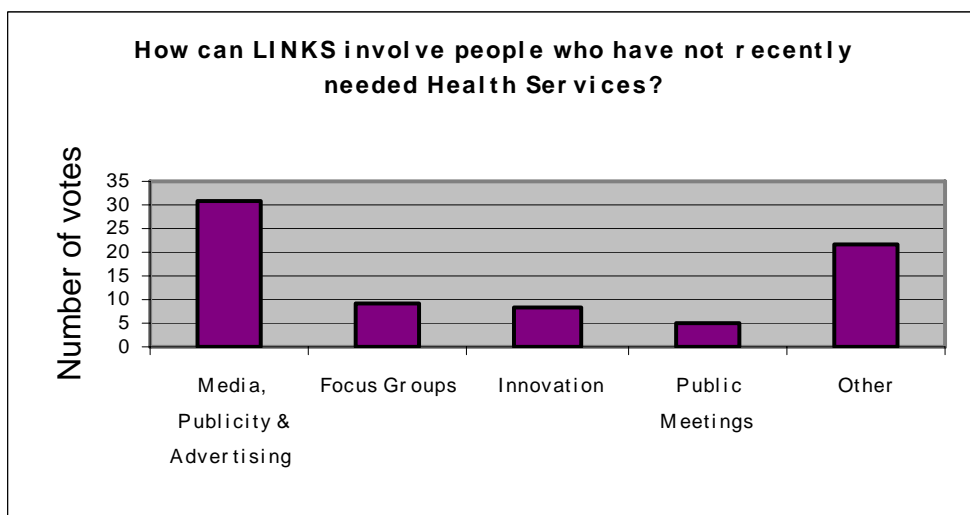
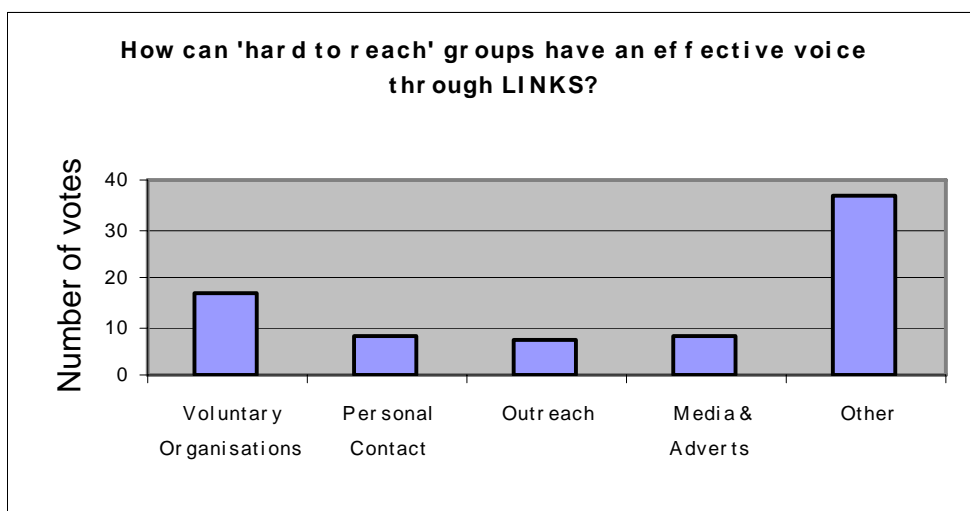
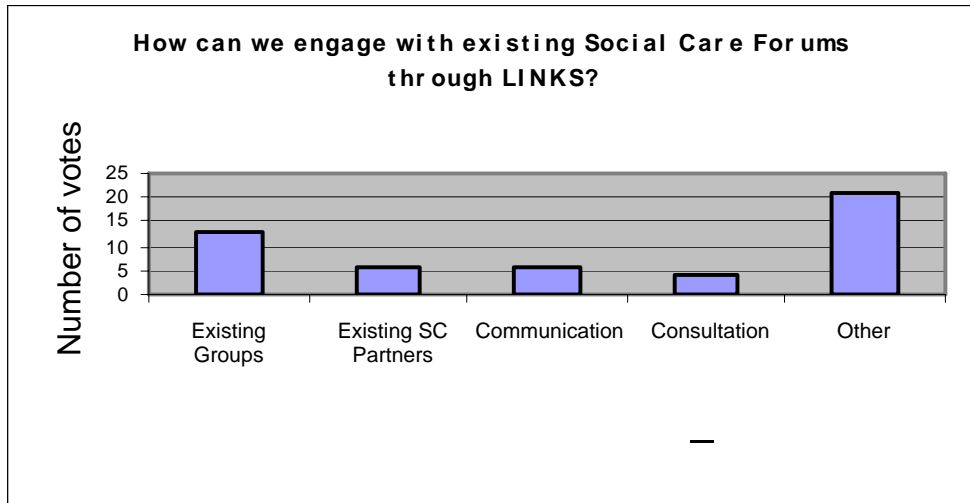
## More on last years Consultation

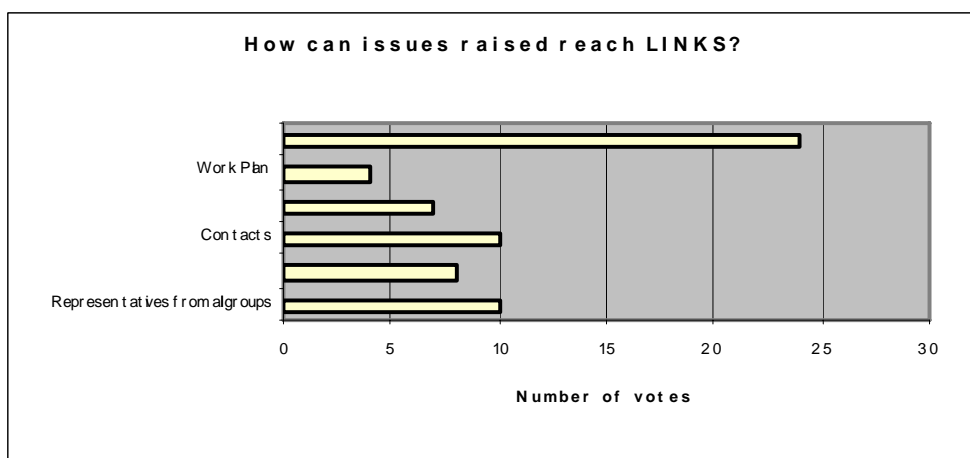
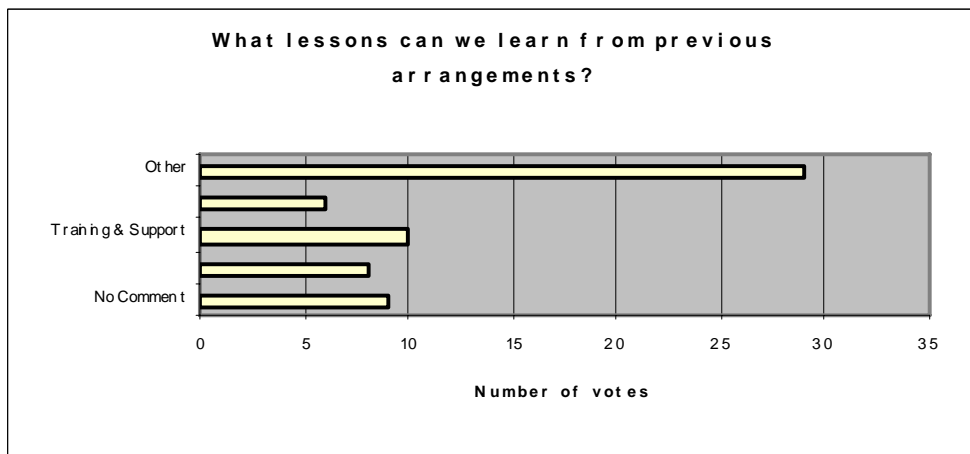
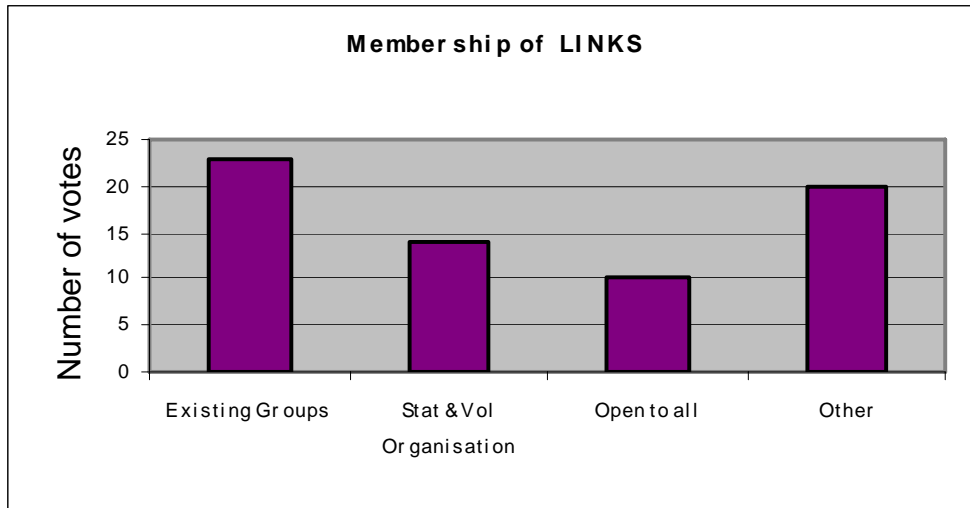
A consultation leaflet 'A Voice on Health and Social Care in Essex' was widely distributed by email and post to individuals and organisations requesting their views on key issues regarding LINKs. Within the distribution was also a request that the questionnaire would be cascaded out to as many people as possible.

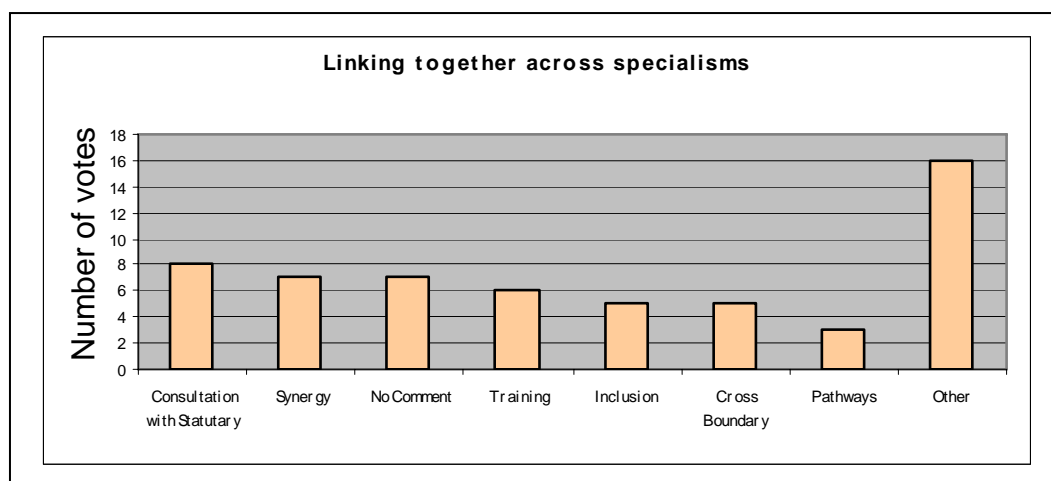
The consultation took place from early October 2007 until officially 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007, although responses received after this date has been included in the final analysis.

The views expressed within this consultation influenced the questions within the tender documents within the procurement for a Host organisation.









## CEMVO's Research Experience

CEMVO has conducted research programmes representing views of both the general public and minority groups and individuals, which have influenced policy and added to knowledge, and most recently, for the NHS Choice Agenda.

CEMVO staff use both qualitative and quantitative studies together with market research techniques to discover inequalities and the needs of minority ethnic and excluded communities in their effort to bring these communities into the mainstream of society.

Examples of the research undertaken on a locality basis are:

- A survey on stroke services for a PCT
- A survey on the usage and closure of a residential care home – results used by the OSC
- Involving mental health service users forum members in the design of services
- Observation visits to ambulance stations across the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

As part of their ethos, CEMVO believe that influencing and generating policy needs to be based on sound facts and scientifically collected opinion.

## Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The JSNA is an assessment of 'relevant needs' and must be prepared in relation to the area of a responsible for social care Local Authority by this Local Authority and its partner Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). The authority must publish the assessment of relevant needs. In preparing the assessment, the authority and the PCTs must cooperate and County Councils must

consult District Councils. The JSNA for Essex includes information from Southend and Thurrock Borough Councils.

The findings of this assessment will be invaluable to the LINKs in defining where inequalities exist and by providing a robust evidence base. The factors that are affecting health and well-being are:

- Poverty and low wages
- Unemployment and occupational stress
- Poor housing
- Environmental pollution
- Poor education
- Limited access to transport and shops
- Crime and disorder
- Lack of recreational facilities
- Discrimination and inequality



## What is Happening Next?

Essex County Council and Southend Borough have agreed to make joint arrangements for setting up a LINK; therefore in order to comply with legislation and the Ministerial Regulations, we are bound to establish one LINK for Essex and Southend. Following a series of consultations, it has been decided there will be an Essex and Southend LINK and five Locality Hubs.

An inaugural countywide conference of all interested residents should take place on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at the Anglia Ruskin University. This conference will make decision on:

- Protocols and Policies, such as expenses
- A draft constitution for all Locality Hubs and the Essex and Southend LINK which also lays out the relationship between the LINK and the Locality Hubs
- Decision-making processes for all Locality Hubs and Essex and Southend LINK

The countywide Task Group will co-ordinate the preparation of this conference. In accordance with the Ministerial Regulations they will ensure that the details of the conference are published well in advance of the conference taking place. The Task Group will make active efforts to draw the attention of residents and relevant groups to the conference.

Subsequently, possibly the first week in July, the five Working Groups will hold their inaugural meetings. The Working Groups will be co-ordinating the preparation for these meetings. Again, in accordance with the Ministerial Regulations the Working Groups will ensure that the details of all meetings are published well in advance of any meetings taking place. The Working Groups will make every effort to draw the attention of residents and relevant groups to the times and venues of meetings.

Natalie Struka Administrator Tel: 01245 437758 [Natalie.struka@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Natalie.struka@essex.gov.uk)  
Joyce Sweeney for Essex at: Tel: 01245 436328 [Joyce.sweeney@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Joyce.sweeney@essex.gov.uk)  
Sharon Wheeler for Southend at: Tel: 01702 215498 [sharonwheeler@southend.gov.uk](mailto:sharonwheeler@southend.gov.uk)  
Natalie Noble Procurement Lead Tel: 01702 215470 [natalienoble@southend.gov.uk](mailto:natalienoble@southend.gov.uk)

The information contained in this booklet can be made available in alternative formats:  
Large print, Braille, audio tape or disk.