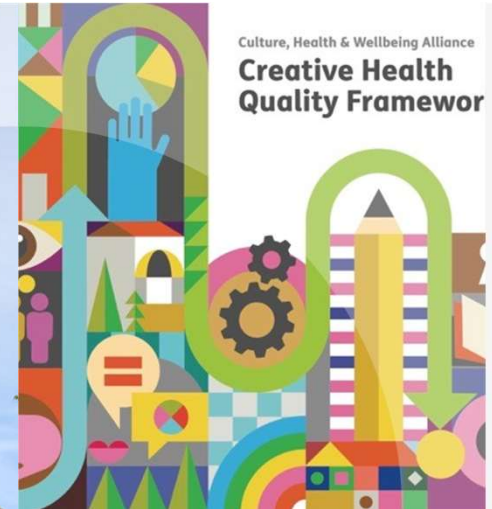


Creative Health and Neighbourhood Health Event

Maldon District

13th March 2026



Some framing thoughts for today

- Why is this relevant to you and/or your organisation?
- In order to consider the opportunities for the community, voluntary, cultural, heritage and environmental sectors to contribute to good public health outcomes and prevention of poor health – helpful to understand the direction of travel for NHS and Public Health policy
- Of most relevance to today is the concept of ‘Neighbourhood Health’ – although neighbourhoods will mean different things to different people – and a formal designation of a ‘neighbourhood’ in terms of health policy has not yet been decided
- A neighbourhood model appears to include a recognition that core public health services need to be integrated with wider services and other sectors across the voluntary sector in particular - so although early in policy terms it is worth us collectively thinking about this and engaging as the policies develop
- A major focus on ‘prevention’ runs through the NHS 10 Year Plan and Neighbourhood Health
- This isn’t all new as concepts such as Integrated Neighbourhood Teams have been around for some time – but the current policies appear to go further
- Key issue for today is **Creative Health** – but this is interrelated to other concepts including engagement with the environment, social prescribing, community services and projects delivered by the VCS

Culture & Heritage Strategy – Maldon District

- Look at the strengths and challenges relating to the cultural and heritage sectors across the District
- Issues include funding, capacity, volunteering, cultural and heritage space, collaboration (within and beyond the sectors), regenerative tourism
- One issue that is coming up the agenda across the country – and in Essex in particular – is the concept of **Creative Health**
- A lot of evidence relating to the positive impact on individuals from participating in cultural activities (and heritage and environment)
- How to progress this agenda across the Maldon District? Important to embed this within a Culture and Heritage Strategy – but needs to be included in health strategies, as well supporting pilot projects (and relevant evaluation)
- Work through the local partnerships – like One Maldon District Partnership.....



Creative Health and Wellbeing – Arts Council England

Place
Practitioners
Partnerships
People

- *‘We believe that creative health and wellbeing has a role to play at every level of public health in this country’*
- Opportunity to embed collaboration with creative sectors working through ICBs
- Integrated Care Systems or public health as members on local cultural partnerships
- Creative and cultural representatives on Integrated Care Systems' boards
- Increased investment opportunities for the sector in local settings and skills development for creative practitioners
- Arts Council can fund pilots and some initiatives – but they can't fund it all



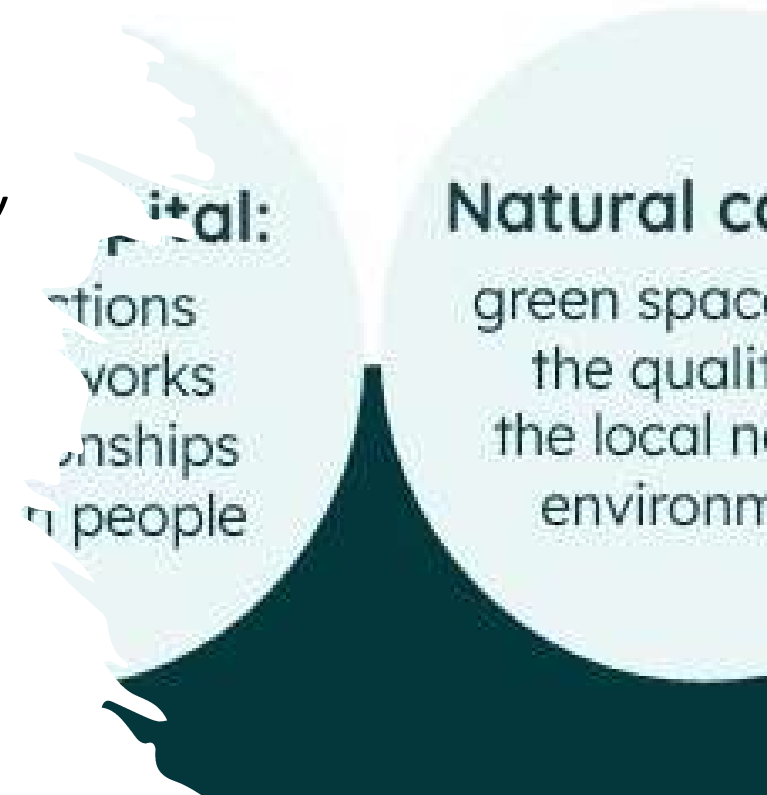
Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Core Public Health Spending Isn't Enough

- In 2026-27 local government will receive £4.4bn for its public health activity in cash-terms, rising to £4.5bn in 2027-28 (Kings Fund)
- This is still behind the real value of the grant back in 2016-17
- The figures sound large – but the government is committing just over £70 per head for local government's public health spending over a year, the cost of four to five packets of cigarettes (never mind the large corporate advertising budgets for unhealthy food/drink)
- The 'wider determinants of health' spending through local government is also important – Housing, Environment, Transport, Economic Development and Culture
- Taking key concepts such as a 'neighbourhood' approach, 'prevention' and 'caring communities' – there is much to be gained by VCS, culture, heritage and environmental sectors representing their work in these terms – becoming the all important 'system partners' to support good public health outcomes
- Need strategies and projects that open up the opportunity for regular community participation – culture, heritage and environmental sectors are well placed to deliver

Essex Caring Communities Commission 2025

- *We need to shift from hierarchical methods of working to establishing a shared purpose with **communities and collaboratively designing solutions** with them. Communities need to feel a real sense of empowerment over decisions that affect them.*
- *Commit to renewing our places as thriving communities by dismantling the barriers to wellbeing and opportunity*
- *Commit to **reshaping decision making** by ensuring that communities have an active role in decisions that affect them*
- *Commit to prioritising **prevention** by putting in place a new “prevention first” approach across public services*



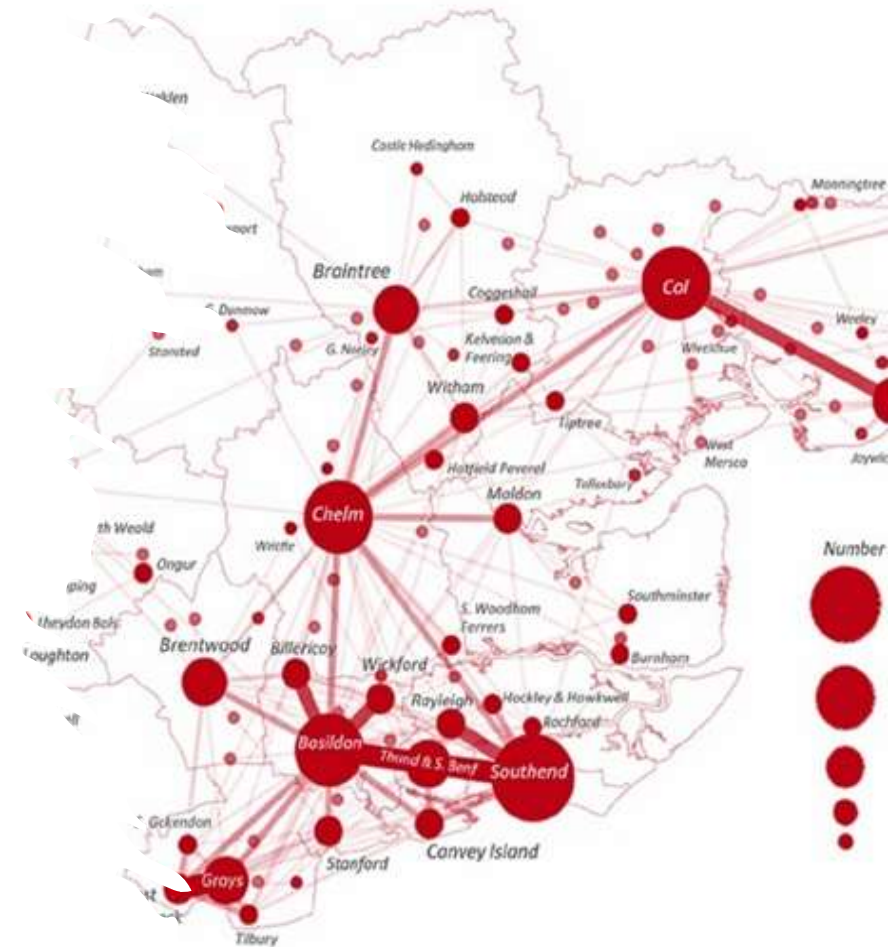
Neighbourhood thinking.....

- This shift towards a focus on ‘neighbourhoods’ very much aligns (through design or otherwise) with the core principles of ‘community empowerment’ and ‘neighbourhood governance’ at the heart of local government reorganisation
- This creates an interesting context for **creative health approaches** – and could be part of a process of increasing community empowerment (and cultural empowerment) through **mobilising local organisations** to support engagement and participation in healthy activities
- In wider government thinking - Pride in Place (Plan for Neighbourhoods), transport and mobility, planning, community energy, policing, local nature recovery.....
- It is worth thinking about what you/your organisation does/offers in a ‘neighbourhood’ sense – interpret this how you will! A focus on being part of a local/neighbourhood ‘system’ is important – make the case



Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

- The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill
- Changes to come across Essex – but Town and Parish Councils will still be around
- The Bill will establish a new requirement for all local authorities to make appropriate arrangements for **effective governance of neighbourhood areas**
- ‘Our proposals for increasing community engagement and empowerment fit alongside these new arrangements and reflect the cultural identity of each place through area committees and harnessing the latent power of a local community network which is unique to its own place, ensuring that nobody is left unheard.’ (Five Unitary Authorities)
- ‘empowered **Neighbourhood Development Committees** provide a sound basis for local place leadership, ensuring that villages, towns and cities can articulate their priorities and concerns within the unitary structure, shape local services to meet local needs’ (Three Unitary Authorities)



Economic capital:

prosperity and access to good jobs

Social capital:

connections and networks of relationships between people

Natural capital:

green spaces and the quality of the local natural environment

Physical capital:

the quality of housing and the built environment

Essex Caring Communities Commission – LGR and Devolution

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution offer ‘*huge opportunities to remake the local state to address the structural challenges we are facing. New unitaries will need to think about operating models that support genuine empowerment at a local level; the Mayor for Greater Essex will have both formal powers and system convening powers that can make a real difference in addressing barriers to better health and wellbeing with a focus on prevention.*’

Three Questions for Later.....

- Question 1 – Given what you have heard in the presentations – what does creative health mean to you or your organisation?
- Question 2 – In terms of the support, advice or programming that your or your organisation currently delivers, what support or advice would you need to deliver more and longer-term impact in relation to public health?
- Question 3 – What future events or workshops would you like to see in the future relating to any of the issues or concepts covered today?



Contact

Giles Tofield

Giles@culturalengine.org.uk

Sean McLoughlin

Sean@culturalengine.org.uk

Do the Culture & Heritage Strategy Survey!

